# Play Hubs & Unstructured Play



Play hubs encourage a range of different activity levels and types, and facilitate positive social interactions among children.<sup>1</sup>

## Resilience

why unstructured plays Explorative and risky play allows children to balance the fear necessary to keep them safe with the positive emotions associated with thrill and excitement.3

Soft skills such as empathy, emotional intelligence, kindness, mindfulness, adaptability, integrity, optimism, self-motivation, grit and resilience, which are effectively developed through play, are highly sought after in the job market. They are crucial success factors.<sup>2</sup>

### Health

Unstructured play promotes healthy, active lifestyles which reduces the risk of obesity, diabetes, depression, and other physical and mental health concerns associated with sedentary lifestyles.3,4

Social skills

The hubs provide

a "framework of getting them to kind of come out of their shell and talk and interact with people who are outside their age group. It's been really helpful."

- A Dad from Beddington Hub

The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) recognizes unstructured play as a child's right and a critical component to child and youth health and well-being.<sup>5</sup>

The social, emotional, cognitive and physical benefits that children appear to gain from playing freely early in life come from engaging in play that is less supervised, less structured, more adventurous and that includes elements of challenge and risk.<sup>4</sup>

## Creativity

"I loved that the things were set up in provocation... they were able to walk into something and have an idea of how to get started playing with it. Having it set up for them already in that way helps them make that that leap, and really allows their imagination to shine."

- A Mom from Coventry Hub



"To a kid that has never played with loose parts or been given this opportunity, it's just a box. To another kid, like our Benjamin, it's a computer, it's a vending machine, it's all these things he can create. It's whatever his imagination wants that day."

- Care Workers at Huntington Hills Hub



"Age doesn't matter... now they're creating together, and there's no boundaries for them."

- Care Workers at Huntington Hills Hub



Play hubs and loose parts facilitate different play types and encourage creativity, discovery, and innovation.

References:



Play ambassadors actively support child-led play, stepping in to provide inspiration, help build relationships, and smooth over any tense moments between children.



"They can just come and play, you don't have to pay... It was just there available for the kids, and that's so nice as a parent, that your community cares about the kids that are here and wants them to build relationships with each other."

- A Mom from Panorama Hub

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