

Early Learning Website



User Guide

<http://galileonetwork.ca/earlylearning/>

Table of Contents

About the Early Learning site.....	P. 3-6
• For Parents.....	P. 4
• For Professionals.....	P. 5
• Research.....	P. 6
 How to use the Early Learning site.....	 P. 7-10
• Search for information.....	P. 7
• View videos.....	P. 8
• Download PDFs.....	P. 9
• For Parents.....	P. 10
• For Teachers.....	P. 11
• For Learning Coaches.....	P. 12

About the Early Learning Website

The Early Learning website is where teachers, parents, early childhood and other education professionals foster play-based learning. **What does what it look like? How do you design an environment for effective learning?** Each page contains the latest research and videos from leaders in the fields of child development, neuroscience and education. Download tip sheets on how play-based learning can be part of a child's early education. The site is fully searchable by topic and by individual experts.

The website is organized into four sections: Welcome, For Parents, For Professionals and Research. Information in each section can be explored by clicking on the links in the green menu bar found on the left-hand side of the screen.

Early Learning

- ▼ Welcome
 - About This Site
 - ▼ Why Play?
 - Play: The Cultural Context
 - ▼ How Do We Learn?
 - How Learning Evolves
 - Studies of Infant Learning
 - ▼ The Key to Learning
 - Ideal Learning Conditions
 - ▼ Learning Language
 - Studies of Babies and Language
 - ▼ Learning Math
 - Studies of Babies and Mathematics
 - Contact Us

Welcome

This section serves as an introduction to the site. Play is an essential childhood experience and the most important skills one needs for success in life are developed through play. Videos and downloads explain play-based learning. There is also information on how children and babies learn.

Other pages in this section include:

Why Play?: Play isn't just for fun - it's a biological drive as integral to our health as sleep and proper nutrition. This page contains videos and information from several well-known researchers who explain why play is so important. There is also information on the role of play in different cultures.

How Do We Learn?: From infancy to preschool, it's incredible to see how much children learn during the early years. So, how do they do it? This page, and others in this section explain how biology and a child's relationship with parents and caregivers form an essential foundation for language and mathematical learning. Read about studies that prove infants are capable of learning. Videos illustrate what happens in classrooms that are learner, knowledge, assessment and community centered.

For Parents

This section is dedicated to parents and caregivers who want to extend their child's learning without interfering with free play. There is also advice and tips on what to look for in an early learning classroom. Videos, links and downloads offer practical advice and insight on play-based learning for both parents and caregivers.

▼ For Parents

▼ The Learning Environment

▼ The Importance of social interaction

- Social Milestones
- Why Is Rough and Tumble Play Important?

● Assessment and Learning

▼ Getting the Most Out of Play at Home

- Object Play
- Literacy at Home
- Mathematics at Home

▼ Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?

- Skills and Advice
- The Classroom

Other pages in this section include:

The Learning Environment: The entire world serves as a young child's learning environment. By surrounding children with opportunities to explore what's around them, parents and educators can create a world where it's safe for children to take risks and test their own abilities. Discover why rough and tumble play is essential for the development of self regulation, and why learning without feedback, or assessment, is impossible.

Getting the Most Out of Play at Home: Unstructured, free play is vitally important. Videos and downloads offer advice on how to recognize and enhance what children learn through play and how to infuse language and mathematical concepts into everyday activities.

Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?: Learning to share, recognizing others' feelings and making new friends - when it comes to school readiness, these skills lay the foundation to academic learning. Advice on adjusting to school and insight into what the most effective early learning classrooms look like, are also found in this section.



Parents can infuse language and mathematical concepts into play, without interfering with their child's creativity.

For Professionals

The best early childhood programs are clearly focused on intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth. This section offers research-based, practical advice and ideas for designing a learning environment that supports this growth, and also allows for self-initiated play.

▼ For Professionals

▼ Designing the Environment

- An Indoor Playground
- Yoga Studio
- Friendly Forest Preschool

▼ Effective Teaching

- Mathematics

▼ Technology and Learning

- Blogging
- Robotics

▼ Assessment

- Designing Rubrics
- Entre-Amis Preschool

Other pages in this section include:

Designing the Environment: A child's learning environment includes everything from materials in the classroom, to their personal background and the influence of the wider community. View a video and download tips on how to create and maintain a well-designed classroom. Learn why environments that are learner, knowledge and assessment centered are optimal for most children. You can also see examples of how other educators have set up their classrooms.

Effective Teaching: Effective teaching engages students and encourages deeper learning. When effective assessment practices are used, a child's true understanding of the subject is revealed. Videos show what this looks like in an early learning classroom and downloads reveal how ordinary play scenarios can reveal opportunities to enhance math and language skills.

Technology and Learning: Great potential exists when technology becomes part of the classroom. But its mere presence does not guarantee effective learning. As you'll see in a series of videos, the use of technology - whether it's in the form of digital pictures and videos, or posting on a blog, should not be seen as an accessory to learning. Rather, it should support, enhance and enrich learning.

Assessment: Providing assessment, or feedback, is essential for learning. Teachers use a variety of assessment practices to determine a student's level of understanding. A series of videos illustrate what children gain from effective assessment. By learning how to constructively critique others' work, they're able to make their learning visible, both to themselves and their teachers. There is also a section on designing rubrics and another on what assessment practices can look like for younger children.

Research

This section contains the research supporting the play-based theories and practices throughout the site. Here, you can find biographies, web links and articles from leading educators, researchers and psychologists. The PDF Downloads page is where you can find one-page tip sheets on facilitating children's play, and infusing play into math and language activities.

▼ Research

▼ Video Collection

- Sharon Friesen
- Robbin Gibb
- Jane Hewes
- Bryan Kolb
- Sergio Pellis
- The Experts
- Articles and Summaries
- Glossary
- PDF Downloads

Other pages in this section include:

Video Collection: The Video Collection page is an easy place to watch interviews with Alberta's best minds in childhood development, neuroscience, and education. These video interviews can also be found throughout the site.

The Experts: Find background information on researchers and educators featured on the Early Learning Site. Each expert has a link to the Article and Summaries page, where you can read about their work.

Articles and Summaries: Research articles, summaries and links to educational institutions and organizations can be found here.

Glossary: What's the difference between cognition and metacognition? What does assessment really mean? Find out on the glossary page.

Math

Math Landmarks: This document contains information about core math skills, such as compensation, patterns and cardinality. The skills are also identified in the math-related play outlined in the files below:

Jumping Frogs: Read how one child develops correspondence and compensation skills, thanks to a simple game of jumping frogs, rocks or marbles.

Marble Soup: Ratios are the name of the game when a young child decides to make "soup" out of different types of marbles.

Measuring Blocks: Mathematical reasoning and problem solving are just some of the math skills gained by playing with a simple set of blocks.

More Toast?: Breakfast time can be a great opportunity to think mathematically, as one mom and her son discovered.

Dice: A simple set of dice provides opportunities for numerical recognition, addition and subtraction.

The Sleepover: A simple bedtime story can open the door to another "what if" conversation that involves math.

A Remainder of One: Many children's books address mathematical ideas in fun and interesting ways. Simply reading them, however, won't instill deep mathematical understanding. But when kids can model the stories and are encouraged to find ways to generalize the mathematical ideas the stories contain, books can provide great opportunities for deepening mathematical understanding.

Hungry Monsters: Embedding problems in a rich way is something many teachers struggle with. Find out how a good problem encourages students to reason about what can change, by how much, and what must stay the same in order to preserve certain aspects of the original problem.

Language and Literacy:

Learning A Second Language:

How can you create an ideal environment for learning another language? Also, find out why maintaining proficiency in the home language is key to a young child's success in school.

Literacy At Home: Create a learning environment that supports language and literacy development.

Play

Facilitating Children's Play:

Dr. Jane Hewes has tips on how you can create an environment that allows children to explore their environment and learn through play.

Object Play: Creating a play environment where children are encouraged to pick up, explore and manipulate objects results in endless learning opportunities.

PDF Downloads:

The PDF Downloads section (shown on the left), houses the tip sheets and activities that support play-based learning, both in the classroom and at home. These downloads can also be found at the bottom of several pages throughout the site.

How to use the Early Learning site:

Search: Have a topic you want to explore? Looking for an article written by an early childhood expert? The **search button**, located at the top of the page below the early learning logo, is the best way to find specific information. The search function will find everything within the Early Learning site - from articles, to videos, to expert biographies.

The **site map** is another way to look for information. It offers a complete list of all pages on the Early Learning site.

Using the search feature to find specific information:

You want to learn more about assessment. Type the word into the search engine:

Click on the **Search button**. You'll get a list of results on the topic of assessment:



Search

Enter your keywords:

assessment

Search

Search results

[Assessment](#)

Providing **assessment**, or feedback, is essential for learning. Teachers use a variety of **assessment** practices to determine a student's level of understanding. In an ... further feedback on how to continue with the lesson. **Assessment** is an ongoing process, where children's learning is documented ...

Book page - rgaskell - 11/23/2011 - 10:41 - 0 attachments

[Video Collection](#)

... to improve and learn. 0:23 **Assessment** ... from his classmates. 2:15 **Assessment** ...

Book page - rgaskell - 11/23/2011 - 10:49 - 0 attachments

[Assessment and Learning](#)

... feedback is impossible. As a parent, what kind of **assessment** practices should be in your child's early learning environment? **Assessment** is an ongoing process, where children's learning is documented ...

Book page - rgaskell - 10/31/2011 - 11:48 - 0 attachments

[Glossary](#)

Assessment: Providing **assessment**, or feedback, is essential for learning. Teachers use a variety of **assessment** practices to determine a student's level of understanding. In ...

Book page - kenevold - 12/08/2011 - 07:39 - 0 attachments

[The Key to Learning](#)

... - to the degree that it's learner, knowledge, **assessment** and community centered - plays an essential role. These four ...

Book page - kenevold - 12/05/2011 - 16:45 - 0 attachments

[The Experts](#)

... and 150 articles on topics ranging from instruction and **assessment**, writing and implementing standards, cognition, effective ...

Book page - kenevold - 12/05/2011 - 16:07 - 0 attachments

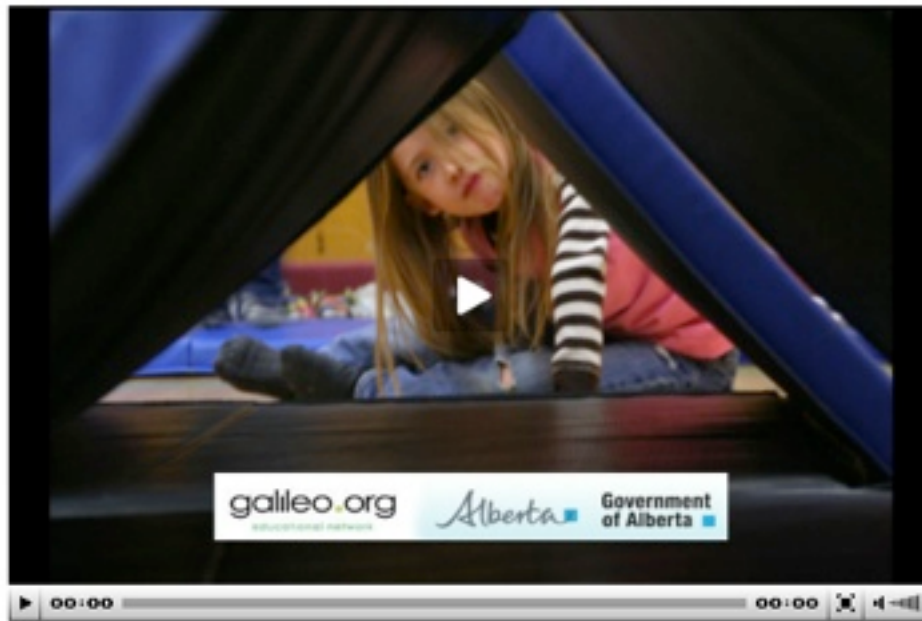
[Effective Teaching](#)

... they're able to deepen the learning by using **assessment** practices where their true understanding of the subject matter is ...

How to use the Early Learning site:

Videos: In 2011, Galileo Educational Network conducted a series of video interviews with some of Alberta's top neuroscience researchers, early childhood educators and child development experts. These experts - many of whom are known internationally for their leadership in their fields - share their findings on the benefits of play-based learning. Other videos take you inside the classroom, where effective teaching and learning is caught in action.

To view, simply click on the Play button in the centre of the video image. Videos are found on most pages within the Early Learning site. The Video Collection page in the Research section of the site is a one-stop place where all videos are housed.



Dr. Jane Hewes talks to early-learning professionals about the characteristics of free play, how to recognize it and how to organize indoor environments to invite children into play. (running time 3:21)

How to use the Early Learning site:

PDF Downloads: These one-page documents can be printed, emailed and shared with others. (see the About this Site page in the Welcome section for conditions on this). Facilitating play, math and literacy are some of the topics that can be downloaded. They can be found at the bottom of most of the web pages on the site. If you want to view all the documents together, visit the PDF Download page in the Research section.

How to download PDFs: Depending on your web browser, the pdfs may open automatically by clicking on the title, or a box may appear, like the one shown here. You can choose to either open the document immediately (as shown), or you may choose to save it on your computer and open it from there.



Some of the pdf downloads available on the site.

How to use the Early Learning site:

I am a parent. How can I get the most out of this site?

- **Start in the Welcome section.** Here, you'll gain background information on how children learn and why learning through play is so important.
- **Check out the Parents section.** Here are some highlights:
 - There are two introductory videos from Dr. Robbin Gibb on the For Parents page that explain why a parent's influence is so important. At the bottom of this page, you'll find a PDF download called Facilitating Children's Play. It offers important tips on what you can do to help your child get the most out of play.
 - Similarly, the Getting the Most out of Play at Home page offers links and more tips on encouraging and fostering free play.
 - More downloads and advice can be found on the Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten page.
- **The Professionals section and the Research section are also of interest.** You can see what a well-designed early learning classroom looks like, find out what assessment is and how teachers can use different methods to ensure your child understands the lesson at hand. The Research section offers a glossary of terms and additional information on the latest in early childhood development and education.



See what a well-designed early learning classroom looks like, and learn what your child can gain through a variety of play-based experiences.

How to use the Early Learning site:

I'm a teacher. How can I get the most out of this site?

- **Start in the Welcome section.** Here, you'll gain background information on how children learn and why learning through play is so important.
- **Explore the Professionals section.** Here are some highlights:
 - On the For Professionals page, you'll find links to a growing body of research that suggests many young children aren't emotionally ready to start school. Many lack executive functioning skills, which is strongly developed through free play. In two videos and a downloadable document, Dr. Jane Hewes of Grant MacEwan University talks about the value in recognizing free play in early learners and how to foster it.
 - On the Designing the Environment page is information about creating classrooms that are learner, knowledge, assessment and community-centered. Click on the Friendly Forest Preschool and read about the play-based philosophy of a team of teachers who work there.
 - On the Effective Teaching page, there are two videos that show how a class of Grade 2 students conquer very different problems. In each case, effective teaching not only engages these students, they're able to deepen the learning by using assessment practices where their true understanding of the subject matter is revealed.
 - On the Technology and Learning page are multiple examples that show what happens when technology supports and enhances learning, rather than acting as a mere accessory. Blogging, robotics and social issues are addressed here.
 - The Assessment page is where you'll find classroom videos and tools to help design and maintain a classroom rich in assessment opportunities.
- **The Research section** offers a glossary of terms and additional information on the latest research in early childhood development and education. The Video Collection and PDF Downloads pages are one-stop locations for all videos and downloadable documents on the site.

How to use the Early Learning site:

I am a learning coach. How do I use this site?

Since 2010, Galileo Educational Network mentors have facilitated a series of early learning workshops for teachers. Much of what they took away from these sessions is illustrated throughout the site. At the completion of the workshop, participants are invited to become learning coaches and conduct early learning sessions for their school community. Galileo will conduct a further series of workshops especially for learning coaches in early 2012. Learning coaches can help workshop participants use the site by introducing it in the following way:

- **Start with the Research section.** The best place to begin is with an understanding of how children learn, and the latest research that underpins the benefits of play-based learning. By encouraging workshop participants to explore this section first, they gain a foundation of knowledge that will help them work through the rest of the workshop.
- **Visit Designing the Environment, in the Professionals section.** Here, you can gain insight into what needs to be in place for an early learning classroom to be most effective. There are links, videos and downloads on this page that will help workshop participants determine what learning they will design, and what resources and materials are needed to support an early learning environment that is learner, knowledge, assessment and community centered.
- **Visit the Assessment page, in the Professionals section.** It's essential teachers participating in these workshops understand the practice and benefits of effective assessment. How does current research support how teachers will look at assessment? Videos on this page show assessment in action and there are tools teachers can use to accomplish this in the classroom.



Teachers can acquire the tools and knowledge to create a more stimulating early learning environment.