



What playing is about?

By Jessica Gamboa

Summer camps, soccer teams, softball and baseball practices, communal swimming pools, river afternoons, and outings with friends. These, like many other activities, may sound familiar, right? During the summer season, educational practices move completely out of the classroom; new teachers, new friends, and new spaces to share; they are now part of the enjoyment during summer.

For a long time, the game has been spoken of as a fundamental part of educational processes. In fact, Piaget in his theory of cognitive development, refers to the game as a way to explore the world, to know how things work, and the reasons why each element works. He talks about children as little explorers, always waiting to get into the sandbox and dig as deep as possible; and leave without anything more than three pounds of sand on the clothes, but again ready to try it one more time.

However, the game is vitally important as it is the opportunity to generate direct interactions with the immediate reality and the individuals that compose it. Like when you leave the task of sowing a seed and observe the growth process. This is one of the many tasks that all adults remember and; that still, small explorers still have. As a teacher in training, I can affirm that the meaning of this famous activity lies in teamwork, it is the fact of putting parents and children to work together for the same goal (to obtain the greenest and largest plant in the room).

In that sense, summer vacations are the perfect space to generate close ties between parents and children. This is the perfect time to create disorder, total chaos in the house and then create a race against time to put everything in its place; There is no way to have a water fight during a hot day, create combat rules and get creative with the obstacles around the back garden; or go for a walk, ride the bike and learn together about the trees in the park, the birds or the kinds of flowers, and how about collecting rocks in the river and then looking for the reason why the rocks have different colors.

Finally, it is necessary to see the game is more than a moment of fun. Through the game, feelings of freedom are created, bonds of trust, respect for the rules, values of coexistence are developed, and learning is generated through direct contact and experience. So, do not underestimate the laughter, the disorders, and the races and always remember that learning to play is just relaxing and having a good summer with the little explorers.