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Mathematics and the ecology of pretend play

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Abstract

Social pretend play is acknowledged as the highest form of play, enabling children to connect cultural experiences with imagination and supporting symbolic understanding. In contrast academic subjects can sit uneasily in early childhood education and often result in play, mathematics and literacies that are effectively separated into unconnected terrains.

High quality, spontaneous pretend play affords a potentially rich social-ecocultural niche where social and cultural learning can flourish and revealing the origins of children's cultural mathematical knowledge and emergent processes. Free from adult objectives and goals, children's pretend play is found to be always meaningful and often rich and intellectually challenging.
