**Weekly Email 2**

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ELA 20

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1. What and how do play, a sense of wonder, imagination, and discovery contribute to the development of healthy children and youth?

Play, wonder, imagination, and discovery all are very important to children’s development. Play allows children to have fun, and develop skills to rely on later in live such as social skills, and healthy living. Imagination allows children to think up new and creative things, often expressed through their play. Wonder is the gateway to knowledge, because when a child wonders, “How come?” or “Why?” it leads them to seek out knowledge and gives them a greater understanding of our world. Discovery is a rewarding experience to a child, either from having their wonderings answered, or from learning about new and exciting fields to learn about.

1. What are the benefits of developing imagination and a sense of wonder?

It is extremely beneficial to develop imagination, as imagination will enable you to come up with new and inventive ways to accomplish a task, ways of overcoming obstacles in you path and will give a spark of life compared to having no imagination and stuck in a 9-5 cubicle office job. A sense of wonder is important to develop because it encourages a love for learning. With a love for learning, one will seek to gain knowledge of our world wherever they can.

1. How can a sense of wonder and imagination be fostered?

A sense of wonder and imagination can be fostered by taking trips, both structured and unstructured, to places like zoos, aquariums, science centers, museums, local places (such as a forest, a farm, historical structures). These trips give the freedom to the child to wonder about their world and ask questions about it. One thing I feel that I have to do is give my opinion on these trips. I do not think that if the trip is a forced thing, or the child does not want to go, it will be very effective at all in developing wonder and imagination. Also, I think that set time to take in certain parts of a trip (say having a strict schedule while on a field trip to the Smithsonian) is only a good idea as a guideline, not a strict written-in-stone timetable. If the child is enjoying a part of the trip and they are learning from it, what good does it do to take them away from it to move onto the next? Sure, you only have so much time, but in my opinion, that time is better spent learning what you like, not trying to cram everything in.