

# Can We Play Now?

The Meaning of Play Throughout Lifetime Development

Introduces the

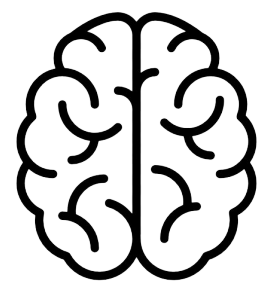
## Play Development Paradigm

“ Play is the architecture of development. ”

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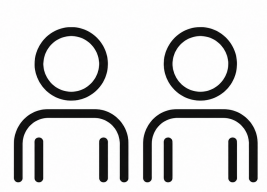


Introduces a new **integrative framework** for understanding play as a developmental, relational, and neurobiological process, offering new perspectives for assessment and therapeutic intervention across the lifespan.



### Theoretical Integration

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development
- Attachment Theory
- Developmental Neuroscience
- Psychodynamic Psychotherapy
- Object Relations Theory.



### Contemporary Clinical Relevance

The book further explores trauma, neurodiversity, sensory regulation, attachment, and the impact of technology on contemporary development through the lens of play.

“ Play is not a recreational luxury but a neurobiological and relational necessity through which psychological needs are met, pathways of regulation and imagination are formed, and identity, meaning, agency, and relational intelligence develop. ”

## The Play Development Paradigm

Developmental Needs	Form of Play	Core Achievements of this Play stage	Brain system Necessary for this stage
<b>5</b> <b>SELF-ACTUALISATION NEEDS</b>	 <b>COMPETITIVE PLAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of self-agency and goal-directed behaviour</li> <li>• Capacity to engage with rules, fairness and social negotiation</li> <li>• Integration of motivation, effort and achievement</li> <li>• Ability to tolerate success, failure and comparison</li> <li>• Persistence, resilience and integrity</li> </ul>	<b>Prefrontal cortex integration</b> <i>Advanced executive functions, planning, inhibition, flexibility, and future orientation.</i>
<b>4</b> <b>ESTEEM NEEDS</b>	 <b>FANTASY PLAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagination, creativity and symbolic thinking</li> <li>• Emergence of self-concept, self-worth and inner narrative</li> <li>• Expression and transformation of emotional experience</li> <li>• Expansion beyond immediate reality into possibility</li> <li>• Beginning of mentalisation and flexible perspective-taking</li> </ul>	<b>Prefrontal-temporal networks</b> <i>Symbolic thinking, imagination, language, narrative, and mentalization.</i>
<b>3</b> <b>BELONGING NEEDS</b>	 <b>CONSTRUCTIVE PLAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity exploration and formation</li> <li>• Social skills and social rehearsal</li> <li>• Social positioning and belonging</li> <li>• Cooperation and empathy</li> <li>• Problem solving and executive functioning</li> <li>• Planning and cognitive integration</li> </ul>	<b>Parietal-frontal integration</b> <i>Visuospatial processing, problem-solving, perspective-taking, and cognitive integration.</i>
<b>2</b> <b>SAFETY NEEDS</b>	 <b>ATTACHMENT PLAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional regulation and self-soothing</li> <li>• Trust in self and others</li> <li>• Secure attachment and relational safety</li> <li>• Co-regulation and attunement</li> <li>• Internalised sense of safety and predictability</li> </ul>	<b>Limbic system integration</b> <i>Emotional processing, attachment circuits, stress regulation, and relational memory.</i>
<b>1</b> <b>PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS</b>	 <b>SENSORY PLAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body awareness and interoception</li> <li>• Sensory processing and integration</li> <li>• Arousal regulation and nervous system stability</li> <li>• Meaning making</li> <li>• Foundation for all learning and behaviour</li> </ul>	<b>Brainstem and primary sensory systems</b> <i>Arousal regulation, sensory processing, motor integration, and foundational neural pathways</i>

Play does not end in childhood. Play remains active across the lifespan and reflects how psychological needs are organised, revisited and transformed over time.

**LEARN MORE**  
Find out more about the book and order your copy.

