

imitative ones. Moreover, new child development scholarship focused on the influence of peers and mass media. Now, rather than performance assisting in recapitulation, learning by doing redirected group influence to more edifying ends.

The book's conclusion suggests that as the goal of training overshadowed production during World War II, the labor of republic-based learning lost much of its economic value.

Light's instructive way of interpreting sheltered childhood helps resolve the paradox of the George Junior Republic. It also introduces a host of new questions. For example, did the children in these institutions interpret their own labor as role-play? Light provides an anecdote of a boy who in 1903 insisted that making a hammock was not work but play (p. 114), but *States of Childhood* is told through the perspective of adult reformers, educators, and scientists rather than from children's points of view. In addition to understanding this history from the perspective of young people themselves, Light opens the door to identity studies. What roles did class, ethnicity, and race play in popular understandings of role-play? Light says that immigrant youth and children of color were deemed most in need of such training. In chapter 6, the author also details police-organized republics for Black children in places like Pittsburgh. But, as Light points out, sheltered childhood was unevenly applied over the course of U.S. history. If role-play depended on a child being seen as categorically different from an adult, what does the introduction of such pedagogies among different groups suggest about the history of dependency and identity? Finally, Light's work invites

others to consider this history through the lens of capitalism. Was children's consumption, for example, considered to be a performance of adulthood or authentic youth experience? What are the larger implications of children's labor being used as a disciplinary tool?

Historians of childhood will welcome Light's book but may question the author's unwillingness to engage with those who similarly work in performance studies, most notably Robin Bernstein. Light suggests *States of Childhood* is also in conversation with educators of the present. Indeed, readers may consider, as I did, the implications of Light's history for graduate student instructors and college athletes today, as well as for project-based learning and Girl Scout cookie fund raisers (the latter of which is described historically in the book). Light's work also provides new ways of thinking through play studies. How do we draw the line between work and play? When should the labor of play have economic value? How do we decide when anything, for that matter, is authentically adult or authentically juvenile? As Light's book makes clear, these distinctions are constructed and historically specific.

—Jaclyn N. Schultz, *Bellevue College, Bellevue, WA*

Serious Fun: How Guided Play Extends Children's Learning

Marie L. Masterson and Holly Bohart, eds.
Washington, DC: The National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2019. Introduction, references, and resources for further learning. 144 pp. \$22.40. paper. ISBN: 9781938113390

The importance of play is widely recognized by those of us working in the field of early childhood education. The book *Serious Fun: How Guided Play Extends Children's Learning*, edited by Marie M. Masterson and Holly Bohart, not only addresses the importance of play in preschool and kindergarten programs but it also explores the importance of guided play and the role of educators in connecting learning goals to children's play.

More than a dozen authors contributed to this collection of research-based ideas for infusing the early childhood curriculum with experiences designed to deepen learning with a balance of child-led and teacher-initiated playful experiences. Each chapter begins with guiding questions, provides real-life classroom examples, and ends with a "try this" section containing practical suggestions for taking the ideas for playful learning back to the classroom.

The editors organized the text into two parts. Part 1, "Intentionally Creating Play Environments for Learning," includes two chapters that ground the case for guided play in neuroscience and behavioral research, showing how the intentional use of guided play, balanced with free play, can lead not only to enjoyment in the classroom but also support all areas of skill development and enhance learning.

Part 2, "Providing Rich Content Experiences through Play," consists of six chapters, each with content-specific instructions and vignettes to inspire educators to put theory into practice. Chapter 3, "Supporting Language through Culturally Rich Dramatic Play," explores strategies for extending language development with culturally relevant dramatic play,

particularly for dual-language learners. The fourth chapter, "Connecting Art, Literacy, and Drama through Storytelling," describes the way one teacher used a work of art to promote skill development across content areas, expanding on children's interest in visual arts and storytelling to build literacy and observation skills. Chapter 5, "Playful Math Instruction and Standards," addresses the false dichotomy of play versus learning, providing examples of developmentally appropriate, playful experiences planned with specific math goals in mind. The sixth chapter, "Fostering Positive Experiences in the Math Center for African American Boys," examines research about African American boys who fall behind in mathematics, a critical area for success in school. It provides ideas for creating math centers that will engage and challenge students to promote mathematical skills and academic achievement. Chapter 7, "What Can You Do with Bamboo? Preschoolers Explore a Natural Material," provides an example of a project sparked by the introduction of a new natural material. Playful practices and intentional teacher guidance were employed throughout the project to support children's personal and social, physical, cognitive, and creative skill development. The final chapter, "Engaging and Enriching Play Is Rigorous Learning," tells of a group of kindergarten teachers who expanded children's interests and experiences to introduce and reinforce new vocabulary and build background knowledge in culturally relevant ways. The book concludes with suggestions for reflection, an environmental checklist, parent handouts, and resources.

Serious Fun is an excellent resource

for early childhood educators, students, and leaders looking for ways to maximize the potential for play to support learning and development and to articulate the importance of play to others. I plan to use it for my next staff book study, and I highly recommend that others do the same.

—Deborah McCoy, *The Strong*, Rochester, NY

Reflective Playwork: For All Who Work with Children

Jacky Kilvington and Ali Wood

London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018. List of illustrations, acknowledgments, preface, introduction, afterword, appendix, references, and index. 184 pp. \$26.95. paper. ISBN: 9781474254038

Playwork as a term for a methodology and service is well known (if not fully understood) in the United Kingdom and a few other geographic regions, but it is not one commonly used in the Americas. Fortunately, playwork does exist and is beginning to flourish in the Americas thanks to the efforts of a few revolutionaries. In addition, many professionals who work with children incorporate elements of playwork in their everyday practice, although they may not be aware of it. This book can help these professionals ground their practices in theory as well as improve them.

Readers will find the aptly named reflective playwork peppered throughout with the authors' reflections on their experiences with children. These reflections illustrate the applications presented

in the book. The authors also prompt readers to engage in their own reflections and apply them to their own situations. These prompts not only bring to life the kinds of questions that some casual observers might ask themselves as they observe children at play, they are also essential to adults who work with children on a daily basis.

Organized into eight chapters that build upon each other but that could easily stand alone, the book offers readers the flexibility to start and stop wherever they wish. Chapter 1 focuses on the purposes and methods of reflective practice, which virtually every playwork text has deemed of utmost importance. Chapter 2 examines the concept of play, the purpose of play as viewed through different paradigms, and three theoretic perspectives about play that greatly influence playwork practice: play as therapy, play as development, and play as part of evolution. In chapter 3, contemporary ideas about the play process and the benefits of play are fleshed out. A solid understanding of these concepts underlies the practice of playwork. Chapter 4 provides a brief introduction to psychosocial theories of child development and concludes with an engaging discussion about the different professional paradigms that frame our understanding of children, childhood, and play.

Although each chapter ties concepts directly to playwork, chapter 5 specifically addresses the practice of playwork—how to create engaging, challenging, and psychologically liberating environments; the materials that allow a range of interactions and cognitive, physical, and social engagement; and adult intervention. Chapter 6 deals with the process of risk assessment