

Self-Initiated Play – 8 ways to create it!

From the Sept. 20, 2023, WECAN Parent Evening
'*Self-Initiated Play - The Beginning of Lifelong Learning and Developing Trust*' with Philipp Reubke .

Go to <https://store.waldorfearlychildhood.org/collections/events>

Summarized by Cristina Drews from notes.

1. **Slow down:** Create a mood of time. Speedy and quick makes it difficult for children to engage in free play.
2. **Adult Working:** The adult nearby engages in concrete physical 3D work that motivates themselves (bake, garden, clean, repair, woodwork, sew etc.). This is a model for young children who learn by imitation.
3. **Distance and Inner Relationship:** Can't be too close, don't hover, keep a distance, but don't forget them either, maintain an inner relation. Attitude of constant direct attention hinders free play.
4. **Simple Materials:** The toy is simple thus the child's imagination can be strong. Simplicity in the outer world, richness of the inner world.
5. **Make space for furniture to move:** If everything is finished, there is nothing left to do. Allow the children to re-arrange a space.
6. **Assess risk calmly:** Don't scare the children, don't panic. This builds the child's confidence. Look at one's own fundamental attitude to fear.
7. **Gentle determination:** Show with your bodily attitude that you are determined to keep limits on inappropriate noise and/or aggression that arises in the play. A warm positive not nervous imposition of boundaries.
8. **Inner Attitude of Mood and Soul:** Carry the children in our hearts when we don't see them. The children will imitate this inner attitude.

Children who have free play will learn to discern what they can control and what they cannot, and thereby develop trust in life and confidence in the world.