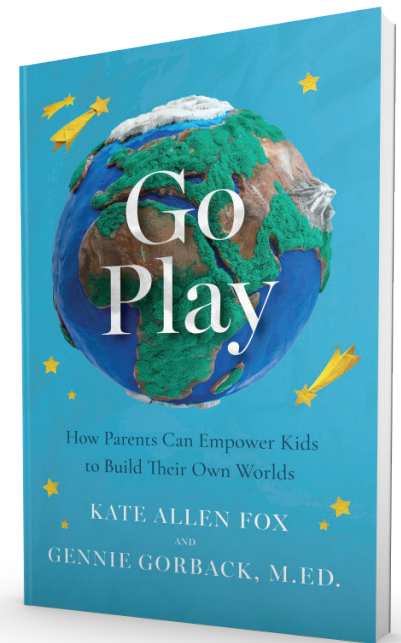




Go Play Discussion Guide

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Introduction

- What is one memory of play that you have from childhood? Where did it happen? Who were you with?
- How do the realities of modern life keep you from embracing play as much as you'd like to?
- What beliefs do you hold—positive or negative—about play?

1. Play Theory for Tired Parents

- What are your child's favorite games?
- What skills is your child learning in their favorite games that will serve them well in life?
- What play schema have you seen your child engage in? What play schema was your favorite as a child? (See list on pages 20–21.)
- What forms of play is your child naturally drawn to?
- What forms of play were you most drawn to as a child?

2. Play FAQs

- Have you ever seen your child in a “play crouch” (see page 27)? What kind of activity were they engaged in?
- Have you observed your child playing longer with friends or in new locations?
- If friends are the best “loose parts,” how can you find ways for your child to spend more time playing with other kids?

3. Screen Time: Friend or Foe?

- What beliefs and norms do you have about screen time in your family? Does managing screen time cause stress in your home?
- What roles—positive or not—does screen time play in your home?
- Do you see a trade-off between screen time and play for your kids? Conversely, does screen time ever support or inspire play for your kids?
- What changes in screen time routines—if any—might you try in your home?

4. Creating a Playful Environment

- How can you “yes, and . . .” your child’s play?
- How does the idea of “celebrating failure” feel—exciting, scary, wrong, or something else? Are there easy ways you could celebrate failure in front of your child?
- Are there ways to make play items more accessible to your child in the home? How can you foster autonomy for them to access items (and clean them up)?
- How can you be the “guide on the side” for your child’s play?
- Have you ever created an “invitation-to-play”? If so, did your child engage with it?
- Does clutter make you shudder, or are you at peace with a good-natured mess?

5. Geniuses at Play: Play and Academics

- How do your family’s values around academics intersect with your values around play?
- What are some ways your children practice academic skills through play?
- Do you notice that your children learn better when relaxed? How can you bring the idea that “the emotion of learning is joy” to your children’s education?
- Have you observed your children’s play to see what academic skills they are working on? If so, how did that change your perspectives on your children’s play?

6. Play and Emotional Well-Being

- How might play help you approach a sticky parenting issue with your child?
- Does your child find that certain sorts of play are calming or help them cope? Do you use play in your life to regulate emotion?
- Have you ever tried “self-sportscasting” (see text box on page 113)? If not, in what situation can you try it?

7. Finding Time to Play

- Do you find it challenging to build in time for free play?
- Where in your schedule might play most easily fit in?
- How does your children’s school situation affect their time to play?
- What items could you incorporate into a “play-on-the-go” bag (see pages 127–128) that cater to your children’s play preferences?

8. Building Play Independence

- How can you consider environment, connection, and novelty for your child’s play in order to support their play independence?
- How can you “get out of the way of play” (even just a tiny bit)?
- How can you help build your community for play?
- What does play independence look like in your home currently—and what would you like it to look like eventually? How can you gradually build the skills and environment to foster that independence?

9. Easy Sensory Play

- What forms of sensory input/play do you enjoy (see page 153)? What about your kids (see examples on page 156)?
- Have you ever created a sensory bin? If so, what was the result?
- Do you have the items to build your sensory pantry (page 160)? What materials do you already own that you could use to create a simple sensory invitation-to-play?
- Have you tried potions play with your kids (see page 162)? If so, how did it go?

10. Nature Play

- When and where does your child already engage in nature play?
- How can you incorporate the idea of “small nature” in increasing your family’s time outdoors?
- Does your child like playing outdoors, or is it a struggle?
- How might you introduce novelty into your outdoor routines to encourage more play?
- How does weather affect your time outdoors?
- Have you ever made “nart” (nature art) with your child?
- Thinking back on your child’s activities in nature, what benefits did they derive from those experiences?

11. Open-Ended Play Around the House

- Do your children like playing with cardboard? If so, how do they engage with it (building, going inside, playing pretend, etc.)?
- Could you create a cardboard-based invitation-to-play with materials you already have in your home?
- What household objects in your home might lend themselves to play (see pages 202–203)?
- Do you ever use the bathtub as a play area, especially for messy play?
- Have your children engaged in loose-parts play? What types of items might work best for your children (see pages 204–205)?

12. Music and Movement

- Does your child enjoy musical or dance-related play?
- What materials at home could lend themselves to musical play?
- How do you feel about singing and dancing? Do you love it, or does it make you feel self-conscious?

- If you have multiple children, do they engage in musical play together?
- On page 218 is a list of ways to encourage movement-based play. Which of these might appeal to you and your child?

13. Open-Ended Art Play

- Do your kids have opportunities to engage in process art, as opposed to focusing on an end product?
- What less-common art materials (see list on pages 231–232) could you incorporate into your children’s art play?
- How can you make space for art (either in your home or in your calendar)?

14. Building Your Family’s Play Culture

- What does “success” look like for you and your child?
- How do you like to play? If nothing comes to mind, how did you like to play as a child or teen? Consider how you can reconnect with those playful impulses.
- How can you respect your child’s—and your own—play preferences?
- How can you be part of the movement to support play for all?
- If you answered the questions in this chapter, did you notice any patterns or insights about how you can build your family’s play culture?
- How have your beliefs around play shifted since starting this book? Have you changed your child’s environment to encourage more play?