



Connections & Reflections

The GAINS Quarterly

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An Invitation to Play

As we plunged into this edition of the *Quarterly*, we had two questions in mind: Why does play matter in this very serious and troubled world? How do we capture the spirit of play on a piece of paper? A number of our authors have built a compelling case for the necessity of play at all ages – play as a means of connection, expression, and exploration. Play as a way to develop and sustain health in our brains, minds, and relationships throughout our lives. And play simply for its own joyous sake – with all the neurobiological benefits that come with that state of mind. We thought together about what may be happening to our children – and to all of us – as free play is less and less valued in this society. And then we sought to write playfully about play, at least part of the time. We discovered that our very process of creation together can be like playing catch or tag at times, filled with the pure joy of mutual discovery and support. We hope that some of that comes through and catches you up with a smile. So now the question to you is this: How do you read playfully? How do you allow these images and ideas to run around in your mind like joyous children until they reveal the pattern of a new idea that is uniquely yours?

We are pleased to welcome advisory board member Allan Schore as our guest contributor. He writes with conviction about the necessity of developing specific kinds of clinical expertise if we are to help our patients transform their implicit worlds and earn secure attachment – sensitivity, empathy, intuition, and the capacity to provide regulation. He calls us to awareness of our right hemispheres' contribution to the therapeutic process, and to self-responsibility for the health of our inner world. Advisory board member Diane Ackerman's "School Prayer" amplifies that invitation into awareness by opening a vista on the sacredness of all life. Leading off the section on Play, Bonnie Badenoch writes about her joyous experience of visiting GAINS member Mel Lewin's Warehouse, haven of healing for so many children, teens, and their parents. Their time together was rich in stories, images, and laughter – experiences that permeate this piece. Our man in Australia, Richard Hill, writes about the difference for the individual and for society between free play and constrained play – whether constrained by internal or external forces. He shares how the Peckham Experiment in England during the years just before and after World War II revealed that health improves when the opportunity for play is simply made available. Then, in "Playing with Play," Richard and Bonnie share some wanderings and wonderings about play – complete with dancing hippos. Terry Marks-Tarlow returns to the *Quarterly* with reflections on how play allows us to weave our genetic inheritance and relational experiences into a sense of self. Lauren Culp brings us a playful Liberty, Kirke Olson writes about the bi-directional impact of the relationship between teachers and students, and Sue Marriott updates us on Austin IN Connection's collaborative research project. "The Whole Elephant" column will give you a good feeling about daydreaming and down time, too. Just a reminder - as always, all of the references are collected at the end of the *Quarterly*. Enjoy!