



Transcript for the video:

Nurturing Preschool Children's Emotional Health Through Active Play

NARRATOR: Research shows that active play is very important for children's social and emotional development. During active play, children form relationships with their peers, gain confidence in their abilities, and learn to express emotions. One thing that is important for children's emotional health is something researchers call "mastery motivation." This is an internal desire to master new skills. Children with mastery motivation are driven to try new things, and they take pleasure and pride in their accomplishments. This desire to achieve becomes especially important when they start school. Teachers, parents, and other family members can do several things to support children's mastery motivation. First, children should be able to participate in activities that are enjoyable.

Class: (singing)...mouth and nose. Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

NARRATOR: Children are more motivated to practice motor skills when they are engaged in activities that are fun.

NARRATOR: Another thing adults can do is to introduce challenges in play that require children to try out new movements. Figuring out how to solve a problem with their bodies gives children feelings of competence and self-control. Introducing a new game, an obstacle course, or a music activity might encourage even the most reluctant child to move and learn in new ways. As children experience success with one task, they gain the confidence and motivation to try other things.

Child: Hop.

Teacher: Hop, that's right. Hop.

NARRATOR: Research shows that giving children choices over how they move and play also builds their motivation to master new skills.

Teacher: Do you think you guys would like to design your own obstacle course sometime?

Children: Yeah!

Teacher: What would you add, Sadie?

Child: I would add, like, hula hoops that you could, like, um, like, over, jump over them, like I have a hula hoop here and this is me, and I go, “joop.”

Teacher: Hah! Do you think we can add that someday when we make our own obstacle course? And what would you like to add to an obstacle course, Alex?

Child: A tunnel.

Teacher: A tunnel? Something that you crawl through, or over, or both?

NARRATOR: Another way that active play contributes to emotional health is by helping children develop self-regulation. When children learn to control their own body movements, they activate the same part of their brain that is used to control their emotional impulses. Adults can help children develop self-regulation by playing stop and go games.

Teacher: (singing fast): No more weeping and a-wailing, no more weeping and a-wailing, no more weeping and a-wailing, children get on board – Freeze!

(singing slow and quiet): This train is bound for glory...

NARRATOR: Active play provides many benefits to children’s social and emotional development, giving children the confidence, motivation, and social skills they’ll need to be successful in life.