



## What are we doing outdoors in the EEC? **Promoting constructive play!**

Constructive play involves manipulation of materials to create things: sand, art materials, different sizes and different types of blocks. **Constructive play is the kind of play children engage in when building, creating, making –constructing.** It differs from purely motor play in that children are doing something with the materials: using mud and water to create mud pies, digging in the sand to create a tunnel for little cars, siphoning water out of the water table to fill the bucket. And constructive play is the kind of play children engage in when moving dirt from one area to another, collecting rocks in the wagon, and building a fort. It includes building a city in the sandbox; painting a mural on the fence; constructing a playhouse with sticks, fabric and leaves, and fashioning a boat on the woodwork bench.

“Constructive play is important because it develops specific skills (nailing wood, painting a picture, cutting a post, digging a garden, balancing a beam between two posts), creates a sense of control in children, and develops positive self-esteem. Children who create feel good about themselves.

Constructive play also develops children who are flexible problem solvers: if a child can construct with concrete objects, the child will learn to construct with words and ideas. Ideas and concepts that are developed under the creative and low-stress environment of constructive play can be transferred to high-stress problem-solving situations. Further, as children learn to plan ahead regarding their construction activities, they learn strategies needed to plan ahead regarding problem-solving situations.”

*Taken from the **Exchange** magazine article “Supporting Constructive Play in the World” by Francis Wardle.*