

Original Play™

Core Values, Principles and Benefits

O. Fred Donaldson, Ph.D.

“Take time to play. Take Time To Love and be loved.”

Sign on wall of Mother Teresa’s Children’s Home, Calcutta

“Your playing small does not serve the world.”

Nelson Mandela, inauguration speech, 1994.

Original play is based on the following **core values**:

- *Every child needs a sanctuary.*
- *The best sanctuary for a child is a safe, loving human being.*
- *Children should not spend their energy in self-defense.*
- *Safe kind play is inherent in every child.*
- *Love is stronger than fear.*
- *Safe, kind touch and play are essential to a child’s social behavior, emotional well-being, and cognitive development*

A Few Basic Principles

Original play lays a foundation of values and actions that will serve the children, family, and community over both the short and long term.

Isolation, victimization, aggression are health risks. Energy used in self-defense cannot be used for other learning. Being fearful, hurt, or isolated or being safe and loved shapes not only our behavior but also our brains. The experience of being touched, research shows, has direct and crucial effects on the growth of the body as well as the mind. Touch lays the foundation for emotional and intellectual development, communication, learning, trust, and love.

Original play develops people who learn to think beyond conflict and actively move collaboratively beyond aggression and revenge. Original play generates an alternative relationship that addresses the underlying causes of aggressive behavior at a level that these behaviors can be changed. New habits are developed that transcends social and cultural differences without destroying them. Children are mobilized to be catalysts, models, and partners in responsible social change.

Original play's **benefits** include:

- Abilities in children to recognize good and bad touch, improve self-esteem and emotional flexibility, reduce anxiety and defensiveness, promote acceptance of differences, think and act beyond aggression and revenge.
- A sense of belonging that includes everyone.
- Emotional and physical kindness skills that keep everyone safe.
- A physical compliment to the usual verbal methods of conflict resolution used with children.
- An active habit in children that is sustainable and cumulative from year to year. Play's safety, love, and belonging re-pattern the habits of violence and revenge that disrupt children's attachment and decision-making abilities and their ability to accurately perceive threats.
- A process of inclusion that is not dependent on language or socio-cultural traditions the play process can be used with children of any age group, special need, or culture.
- Adult awareness of play's benefits and teaches parents to use positive touch and play with children, and spouses.
- Positive effects on children's immune, endocrine, and cardiovascular systems.
- Calmness, compassion, and self-control. Children are enabled to connect with the world around them without relying on self-defense strategies, thus preventing their coping capacities from being overwhelmed. Sanctuary provides an emotional anchor, or sense of moral groundedness.
- Range of motion, fine and gross motor exploration,, balance, resilience, flexibility, vestibular motion, proprioceptive input, safer body movements and decreases tactile defensiveness, bodily stress, fatigue, and injury. With the improvement in touch skills comes an increased ability to sense other's needs, signals, and fears.
- A positive multiplier effect as children play throughout the family, school, and community.

Join us for a lecture and workshop in The Netherlands, March 28, 29 and 30, 2014!
www.bisho.nl/originalplay