



# Playful Learning: Develop Your Child's Sense of Joy and Wonder

*Mariah Bruehl*

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## **Playful Learning: Develop Your Child's Sense of Joy and Wonder** Mariah Bruehl

Children are natural scientists, artists, mathematicians, authors, and scholars. From the time they are born they seek out information about the world around them in an effort to construct meaning and further their development. While children have an inherent drive to make sense of their reality, parents have a unique opportunity to harness their children's curiosity and channel it into a love of learning.

Playful learning is the magic that takes place when we meld a child's sense of joy and wonder with thoughtfully planned learning experiences. Through easy-to-implement, hands-on projects you can engage your child in fun and creative ways that encourage learning and impart the joy of discovery. With a little bit of information and forethought, you can play a pivotal role in the cognitive and creative development of your child

Mariah Bruehl has worked in the field of education for over a decade. She has taught in the classroom, developed curriculum in many different subject areas, trained teachers, and implemented programs across many grade levels. She is the mother of two girls and the owner of Playful Learning—a retail space and education center in Sag Harbor. Learn more at [www.playfulearning.com](http://www.playfulearning.com).

## **Playful Learning: Develop Your Child's Sense of Joy and Wonder Details**

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Mariah Bruehl**

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# From Reader Review Playful Learning: Develop Your Child's Sense of Joy and Wonder for online ebook

## Sharon Tyler says

*Playful Learning: Develop Your Child's Sense of Joy and Wonder* by Mariah Bruehl is a great source of ideas and inspiration to parents that want to instill a love of learning in their children. As I was reading the book I became excited and eager to get started in reorganizing and testing out some of the projects included in the book with my own children. This book is due for release on August 9 2011.

My complete review is available here on Associated Content.

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## Cheri says

really a 3.75. great ideas for incorporating learning through play. at first I thought the book was for more school aged kids but as I skimmed through it and saw the different stages for each topic I realized she put together a great resource that can grow with the child. borrowed this from library but may consider buying it as a future reference for teaching things like mapping, data tables and graphs. loved the resources in the back that are reproducible.

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## Cheeyee says

Review At: I Read, I Think,

I Share

Review Date: 5 Feb 2011

Review URL: <http://littlemermybooks.blogspot.com/...>

This book offers fun and engaging learning-based activities for children ages 4 to 8. The subjects covered in this book including reading, writing, math, science, art, music, multiculturalism, and social and emotional development. Through the hands-on projects, parents can engage their children in the fun and creative ways. At the same time, it creates good bonding time for the parents with their children. Each subject area is introduced with an overview of children stages of development, helping parents to understand how their child learns and how they can help. The activities are easy, for example clip counting (putting clips on the cards, count the clips together) , cloud gazing (watching the huge clouds gracefully dance across the sky, evokes an awesome sense of wonder), the life cycle of a seed (watching a simple bean seed sprout).For each project or activity, materials needed are clearly stated, objective and the process are well explained, a More to Explore section and Books to Inspire to further enhance the learning process.

There are 7 subjects covered in this book: -

Nurturing young authors  
The joy of reading  
Mathematicians at work  
Scientific investigations  
Exploration of art and artists  
Glowing globally  
Raising the citizen of tomorrow

The book also include advice for engaging in the learning process with one's children and building a culture within the family that celebrates learning, information on teaching methods and learning models, and creating a space conducive to learning.

Note: I receive the ARC of this book from the publisher via Net Gallery.

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### **Aadel Bussinger says**

When I started reading *Playful Learning*, I expected to read about a homeschooling mother or a teacher implementing new techniques into her classroom. I was very surprised to find out that this book is written from the perspective of a mother whose child goes to school, but supplements that learning with an almost unschooling philosophy. In the description of the book it states:

Current research demonstrates that children learn most effectively when they are actively engaged and enjoying themselves. Ironically, a lot of the conditions for learning that are deemed the most desirable can more readily be practiced at home than in school. With a little bit of information and forethought, parents can play a pivotal role in the cognitive and creative development of their children.

Mariah Bruehl, a former educator turned stay-at-home mom, wrote this book to encourage other parents to engage their children in fun, interactive learning experiences- whether or not they go to traditional school. At first I didn't get the point of sending your child to school when you were already doing these great things at home. However, as I read the book my prejudice lightened and I was able to truly enjoy the author's love for those experiences she was able to share with her children.

The book explains what "playful learning" is and how to foster it in your home. I love the emphasis on the benefits of learning together as a family. As Mariah explains, the family dynamic improves, discussions occur, your children learn to become independent and confident thinkers, the connection from home to school strengthens, and as a family you are reintroduced to the wonder of exploring and learning.

Read the entire review at <http://naturalfamilytoday.com/parenti...>

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### **Mandy says**

I recently read Mariah Bruehl's new book, *Playful Learning*. The book contains some lovely photographs, and the concept of playful learning in itself, while not a new one, is worth speaking of. Play is an important part of learning, not only for children but also for adults. When we persue education and learning by choice and persuant to our individual interests, we are much more perceptive to learning.

However, after reading the book, I was left wondering with what purpose it was written. The author mentions that following a child's interest is optimal and then goes on about how to insert one's own agenda into their child's interests. She hits briefly on multiple topics without fully developing any of them, skipping from organization, to various educational subjects, to playing a poor psychologist.

It also is unclear to what audience she is writing. Bruehl, a former teacher, is clearly enamored with the idea of institutionalized schooling. However, this book would have the most appeal to those families who take a school-at-home approach to homeschooling their preschool and kindergarten age children, in contrast to play based early childhood education. There are some redeeming suggested activities and brief suggested book lists, but all of them have been covered in other, more informative books.

Disclaimer: A complimentary copy of this book was provided by Trumpeter Publishers.

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### **Julie says**

Loved all of Bruehl's "playful learning" ideas, and wish I could devote one room in our house to all these activities, as she suggests. This is not a homeschooling book, but just a bunch of ideas (ranging in all subjects) to supplement your child's school education. I'm happy to say my daughter does most, if not all, of these kinds of things at school - but these are great ways to keep their interests alive at home with YOU, which is so important! Love the sheets/printables in the back and her extra reading suggestions for each topic. After returning it to the library, it's definitely a book I'd want to buy and keep!

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### **SISTERS Magazine says**

Educating your children is one of the most meaningful and rewarding jobs, but it's also a very challenging one. How often have you felt all excited about teaching them a new letter or showing some law of nature at work, but were disappointed because their enthusiasm didn't match yours? The thing is, teaching and being taught can be either an exciting adventure or a dreadfully boring chore. Children are naturally inquisitive and eager to learn, but the manner in which the knowledge is presented to them determines whether they stay attracted or become disinterested. Even the most inventive parents can sometimes run out of ideas of fun things to do with their children, and it's good to have a bookshelf of inspiration to aid us.

I have just started collecting my stock of homeschooling manuals and one of my favourites is Playful Learning. Develop Your Child's Sense of Joy and Wonder by Mariah Bruehl. The title is no doubt appealing, and I was very eager to find out more about the book as soon as I'd seen it on a bookstore website. The book is a collection of activity ideas to promote reading, writing, maths, science, art, social skills and knowledge in children aged 4 to 8. To start with, the author gives us an outline of what playful learning is and why it is important that education is fun. She gives examples of her own experiences - both as a teacher and school director, and as a mother to two girls. There is a long chapter about creating the right learning space in the house to inspire and motivate children's learning and exploration, a list of recommended tools and materials and an appendix with a list of useful books, including a large section of multicultural books.

Next, there are chapters which give us an overview of a child's learning journey through writing, reading, doing maths and science etc. The acquisition of each skill is described in more detail through developmental

phases, and there is advice on how to support your child through each of the stages. So we have the chapter on 'Nurturing young authors' and advice on how to develop a child's sense of communication first through pictures, then through learning first letters and their significance, followed by independent writing. With every chapter, there is a collection of great and easy-to-implement learning activity ideas, a list of books for further exploration and, at the end of the book, there are printable resources to photocopy and use at home.

The book is organised in chapters and many grown-ups might be tempted to just follow it as a curriculum. Yet the author warns about the linear use of the book in the introduction, evoking her own experience of teaching her daughters, who are not always in mood of doing just the activity that has been scheduled for that day. Rather, we should follow their lead and encourage them to explore the world as it catches their attention, and just keep in mind the suggestions in the book are to inspire their further discoveries. It is also a good idea to let the kids look through the book and through various activities and let them choose whatever they find interesting.

I have tried some of the activities with my daughters and they were all good fun. We made some books together and drew a map. I also rearranged the kids' room to make it more inspirational for learning activities. And from the overview of developmental stages, I learnt when it's OK to push children further in their learning process and when it's better to wait and let them develop deeper understanding in some abstract concepts, such as mathematical operations. Another great feature of the book for parents is that it keeps you motivated and gives you assurance, as many homeschooling mums get anxious and uncertain sometimes.

Mariah Bruehl points out: "Children are natural scientists, artists, mathematicians, authors and scholars... While children have an inherent drive to make sense of their reality, parents have a unique opportunity to harness their children's curiosity and channel it into a love of learning". It is also worth pointing out that the author is not exclusively homeschooling her daughters - she participates in their learning journey alongside their institutional education. So the book is worth exploring not only by homeschoolers, but also by any parents interested in supporting their children's drive for knowledge.

The author of the book has great experience in the field of children's education, both as a teacher, a teachers' trainer and as a mother. Mariah Bruehl is also the owner of the [www.playfullearning.com](http://www.playfullearning.com) website, full of ideas and advice on how to get your child more interested and involved in education.

Klaudia Khan is a mum and a writer, always busy playing, creating and learning with her three little daughters.

\*\*This review was written by Klaudia Khan for Issue #71 of SISTERS Magazine. Klaudia is a mum and a writer, always busy playing, creating and learning with her three little daughters.

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### **Charlotte Dungan says**

I wanted to love this book. I thought I would. The ideas are sound and the pictures are inspiring, but there is too much breadth and not enough depth for any of the subjects covered. If someone were just starting to think about learning at home this might be a good primer, but for a thoughtful parent, homeschooling or otherwise, there just isn't a lot of new material. I'd love to see her Playful Learning Spaces ecourse as a book - I can't afford the class but would love the inspiration for an in depth look at one chapter of this book.

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## **Robina says**

The kind of book I originally took out of the library but definitely want to keep on my shelf. It's not exactly groundbreaking, but it's a good compendium of ideas that I may have seen before but that have slipped into various recesses of my brain. In other words, it's a good reference that's also very pleasurable to read. Lovely!

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## **Sarah says**

The ideas in this book are great and very simple to do. It reminded me of little ways to bring letters and numbers to life for my younger children, and to provide them with opportunities to create. It doesn't have to be hard or involved to be fun AND educational.

P.S. I made a little writing basket (like the one pictured on the cover) for my 9yo daughter. She LOVES it!! It was so easy to fill a simple utensil basket with pens, papers, stickers and stamps. Now, she can make cards or write letters with all of her supplies at her fingertips!

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## **Emily Schmader says**

I ended up skimming this book since I picked it up from the library without realizing that it is geared for ages 4 - 8. That said, I'm giving it 5 stars and making a note to pick it up again in the future! (Maybe even purchase it.) The author includes so many great ideas for learning experiences: how to implement, books to enhance the lessons, etc. I also really appreciated the section at the beginning about "playful learning spaces" and how to cultivate independent learning in our kids. Excited to try some of these one day!

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## **Miranda (M.E.) Brumbaugh says**

This is a wonderful and creative resource for homeschooling students from preschool through 2nd grade. I found several new ideas for projects for science, reading, writing, art, math, social skills, and geography. What I really like is that each subject is broken into three stages, stage 1, 2, and 3. You use the different stages to gauge your child's learning progress; lessons, readings, and projects are given for each stage of learning.

The last part of the book is printables, which go hand-in-hand with the lessons and projects throughout the book. The printables are in bright colors, such as the dissection of a flower and graphics of types of clouds. If you are using the book for a single child, you could use the perforated edges to remove the printables for single use. I think that they are so fantastic in color, that you would want to do that rather than try and copy the sheets. Even if you do choose to make copies, you don't have to enlarge these printables, as you do with many other homeschool handouts, so the graphics are not fuzzy and broken.

My favorite part of the book is the chapter dedicated to making your own books. I cannot wait to make a

bunch of twig books using nothing more than a twig, one large rubberband, several sheets of paper, and a hole punch. No staples, no glue, no tape, and voila! You have a great book perfect for little hands. The author describes other types of books that you can make at home, and uses the homemade books throughout the chapters. I'm excited to start with the graphic nature journals!

Some of the other projects include making self-portraits, designing a replica of a room using building blocks, and creating collages Matisse-style. The wire leaf prints and dissecting flowers are other must-do projects. The great thing is that each project is well-thoughtout so you understand how each activity relates to the "bigger picture" of learning. No such thing as busy work here!

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### **Karen says**

Purchased this for our parenting collection. It is organized and written as though you are teaching your child as a student rather than experiencing art/learning. I do not see many parents wanting to do art projects with the child taking this out. Perhaps those who home school might be more interested. I do question some of what the activities and the age appropriateness. I do not think I will be quick to suggest this book for fun filled carefree days with your child. Much more for a structured art experience.

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### **Lindsey says**

Ever since college, I've always wanted to apply what I learned about curriculum development to my life as a stay at home mom. This book is an excellent example of how to do that and I was excited that the author had experience in the Reggio Emilia model of early childhood since that's what I studied.

The book is organized by areas of development with a summary of developmental stages followed by several lesson plans for activities. It's geared toward parents of kids ages 4 to 8 who go to school as additional activities to do at home. I liked the book a lot and plan to implement a lot of the activities. My only problem with it is that it felt a little stiff, but I guess that's the way lesson plans are and she does say at the beginning of the book to really follow the interests of your child and only implement the activities they are drawn to. Overall, I think it's a great resource for parents.

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### **Tabetha says**

Playful learning is a beautiful book that will quickly become a resource for any parent of preschool/elementary school aged children.

We have decided to homeschool our son, and the ideas in this book are practical and very fun!

For those who might be looking to introduce some simple but effective learning into their everyday life, this book will deliver the ideas you need.

There are sections on reading, writing, math, science and more. Each activity is broken down by levels, which makes it ideal when using it with siblings.



It is a frequently reached for book on my shelf, full of great resources!

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