

What's New in Reference?

General Reference

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Encyclopedia of Play in Today's Society. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009.

“Children and adults spend a great deal of time in activities we think of as play, including games, sports, and hobbies. Without thinking about it very deeply, almost everyone would agree that such activities are fun, relaxing, and entertaining. However, play has many purposes that run much deeper than simple entertainment. For children, play has various functions such as competition, following rules, accepting defeat, choosing leaders, exercising leadership, practicing adult roles, and taking risks in order to reap rewards. For adults, many games and sports serve as harmless releases of feelings of aggression, competition, and intergroup hostility. The *Encyclopedia of Play in Today's Society* explores the concept of play in history and modern society in the United States and internationally. Its scope encompasses leisure and recreational activities of children and adults throughout the ages, from dice games in the Roman Empire to video games today. With more than 450 entries, these two volumes do not include coverage of professional sports and sport teams but, instead, cover the hundreds of games played not to earn a living but as informal activity. All aspects of play—from learning to competition, mastery of nature, socialization, and cooperation—are included. Simply enough, this *Encyclopedia* explores play played for the fun of it! [This title] provides access to the fascinating literature that has explored questions of psychology, learning theory, game theory, and history in depth. [It] considers the affects of play on child and adult development, particularly on health, creativity, and imagination [It] contains entries that describe both adult and childhood play and games in dozens of cultures around the world and throughout history. [It] explores the sophisticated analyses of social thinkers such as Huizinga, Vygotsky, and Sutton-Smith, as well as the wide variety of games, toys, sports, and entertainments found around the world , [and] presents cultures as diverse as the ancient Middle East, modern Russia, and China and in nations as far flung as India, Argentina, and France. For a subject we mostly consider light-hearted, play as a research topic has generated an extensive and sophisticated literature, exploring a range of penetrating questions. This two-volume set serves as a general, non technical resource for academics, researchers, and students alike. It is an essential addition to any academic library.”

(annotation from booksinprint.com)

