

INVITATIONS FOR LEARNING

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Why Do Children Play Superhero?

- Power to dominate
- They come up with their own solutions
- Gives them feelings of strength
- Everybody listens to a superhero
- Gives that feeling of superhuman traits
- A powerful and different vocabulary
- Speed -"faster then a speeding bullet"

Superhero Play: It is Important

Schools across the country are banning dodge ball, tag and Red Rover. They are banning the use of the word "Pow" or "Bang." Schools are forbidding the pointing of a finger at another child unless you have a PERMIT. Finally this week many schools are considering hugging as inappropriate behavior.

It is not okay to ever be bullied. Because of this major concern many parents/teachers and schools are reacting by establishing Zero Tolerance Policies and Anti-Bullying Policies that often don't get to the core of the problem.

Dr. Stewart Brown, founder of the National Institute for Play says, "In authentic rough and tumble play, children squeal, smile, and

laugh while diving, wrestling, chasing and heckling and they remain friends after the bout is over" While I doubt that providing superhero play alone will prevent the problem of bullying it is an essential step, especially in early childhood programs.

Bullies often like to dominate and crave attention. The more we remove the opportunity from young children to achieve POWER the more they seek experiences to attain it. Superhero play benefits young children by:

- creating feelings of belonging
- trying out both sides of power
- helping to develop problem-solving skills

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In a child's social and moral development "good versus bad guy" play is normal and important.

Guiding Superhero Play

- **redirect hurting**
- **play with them**
- **have parent education experiences relating to monitoring what and how much children watch on television**
- **provide lots of power play**
- **encouraging running, climbing, building**

Superhero/ Power Pretend Play

- **batman, superman, spiderman, pirates and other current television characters**
- **playing firefighters**
- **emergency hospital play**
- **playing mechanics**
- **playing construction workers**
- **playing builders**
- **playing police officers**
- **playing teachers**

All provide lots of opportunity for attaining power and control....