

Reading Part 2

Read the text. Use the sentences to complete the text. Choose the correct sentence for each gap. There is one extra sentence you will not need.

Playing and learning

Throughout history children have played in groups and taken part in imaginative games. They've pretended to be pirates and princesses, heroes and villains. **(1)**_____. However, the way in which children play has changed during recent times. Children now have a much wider range of toys to choose from and as a result spend less time playing pretend games. **(2)**_____.

Pretend games actually help children to develop an important learning skill called 'executive function', which improves their ability to self-regulate. Kids with good self-regulation are able to manage their emotions and behaviour, and display self-control and discipline.

(3)_____. In the late 1940s psychologists carried out a self-regulation study, in which young children were asked to perform a number of different exercises. One of the exercises in the experiment was to stand perfectly still without moving, which most three-year olds were good at. **(4)**_____. They found that today's five-year-old children could only perform at the same level as three-year-olds in the 1940s and today's seven-year-olds were only just reaching the level of a five-year-old then.

A child's level of 'executive function' can have a big effect on the success they have at school, as children learn more when they can pay attention and manage their feelings. One reason imaginative play is such a vital tool for building self-control is because it teaches children to engage in 'private speech'. **(5)**_____. When children's play is more structured, their private speech declines.

Children are now starting their formal lessons in school at a much younger age and classes are often geared towards testing children and preparing them for exams. **(6)**_____. But it now seems that this environment we've created, which was designed to give children every advantage in life, may actually have deprived them of a vital activity. Play time, it seems, is extremely important for children.

- A Parents created secure environments to play in
- B They've improvised and regulated their play by making up their own rules and characters
- C Researchers recently repeated this experiment, and found very different results
- D This recent trend has been shown to have an impact on their imagination
- E As a result some teachers think playing is a waste of time
- F This means that children talk to themselves about what they are going to do and how they are going to do it
- G By comparing two studies, we can now prove that children's ability to self-regulate has been reduced in the past sixty years