

About the Project

For more than a quarter century we have been collecting stories from people around the world about their play experiences as children. Children's play is freely chosen, intrinsically motivating, child-initiated, and joyful activity with many benefits for learning and development. Play is multi-faceted, and wonderfully diverse. How has the play of children changed over time and in different cultures? What can we learn from play experiences of previous generations?

Play stories reflect who we are, where we came from, things we treasure most, what we want to preserve and pass on, and the kind of culture we wish to have.

The goal of the Childhood Play Memories Project is to chronicle children's play over generations and around the globe, to better understand the importance of play in life. Results of the study will be available in print and on the internet.

We appreciate your participation in our project. Most people find thinking about and recording childhood play memories to be a pleasant experience; we trust you will as well. If you would like to participate but prefer to talk with us about your experiences, please contact us for an interview (contact information at the bottom of this page).

Completing the Questionnaire

We want to capture **all sorts of play** experiences, **from earliest recollections to early teens**: playing alone or with friends, inside or outdoors, children's games or informal ball games, using real or imaginary objects, or any activities that were part of your play world.

The **stories** about play that people recall from their early years are vital to our study. We welcome detailed descriptions of your childhood play experiences. To put play stories in context, we also ask for some demographic information (e.g., gender, age, country, etc.).

Confidentiality: Your responses to all questions are voluntary and any personal information you provide will be treated confidentially. Play experiences will be reported by first name only (if given) or anonymously. If you provide contact information so we can follow up with you, we will use it for that purpose only and will not share it with others.

Please mail your completed questionnaire to us at the address below. If you would prefer to complete the questionnaire online, please do so at www.surveymonkey.com/r/childhoodmemories.

Thank you for sharing your childhood play memories with us.

Dr. Garfield Pennington
Chair, Childhood Play Memories Project
Associate Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia

Mailing address: c/o Sechelt Public Library
PO Box 2104, Sechelt, BC, Canada V0N 3A0

Phone: (604) 803-9164

Email: childhoodplaymemories@gmail.com

Blog: playfullearningcenter.net

Facebook: [facebook.com/childhoodplaymemories](https://www.facebook.com/childhoodplaymemories)



Background/Demographic Information

1. What is your name?

First name
Last name (optional)
2. In what country do you currently live?
3. What is your gender? Male Female Other, please specify:
4. In what year were you born? Please write in a four-digit year, e.g., 1976.
5. Where were you born?

City/town/village
Province/state
Country
6. Where did you live as a child? If you lived in more than one place, please choose the place you think of most when you remember your childhood play.

City/town/village
Province/state
Country
7. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? Please check one or describe in your own words.
 Asian Black or African descent First Nations or Aboriginal
 Hispanic or Latino White or Caucasian
 Other ethnicity or multiple ethnicities, please specify:
8. What was your first language, your mother tongue?
9. When you were a child, where did you live for the most part?
 City Suburbs Country, rural community
10. When you were a child, what was the economic level of your family?
 Lower Middle Upper Unsure
11. Which best describes you?
 Only child Youngest child A middle child Oldest child
 Twin, please specify if you also had younger or older siblings:
12. How many siblings did you have? Brothers: Sisters:
 Foster siblings / other sibling situation, please specify the sibling relationship and number:
13. Were you raised in a single or dual (two) parent family?
 Dual parent Single parent, mainly with mother Single parent, mainly with father
 Other situation, please describe:

Your Childhood Play Experiences

We want to learn about your play experiences during childhood, **up to early teens**. We're focusing only on play—freely chosen, child-initiated and led activities, inspired by curiosity—not organized sport or formal leisure activities driven by adults. Play can occur anywhere, be done alone or with others, involve creating or destroying things, be vigorous or calm, competitive or cooperative, pretend or real ...

Please answer these questions as fully as possible—**the more depth, the better**. Tell us your **stories**. *Feel free to attach pages or use the space on the last page.*

Play Spaces and Places

Children play in all sorts of places—backyards, balconies, houses, bedrooms, apartment hallways, streets or sidewalks, parks, woods, beaches, forts, hiding spots or cubbies, pools, schools, playgrounds ...

14. What were your **favourite places** to play or special play spaces? Why?

15. How important was **nature** to your childhood play? In what ways was it important? What things did you most enjoy about playing in nature?

16. Did you have **freedom to roam and explore** as a child? Did you feel safe doing so? What sorts of things did you do?

Playmates and Others in Your Play World

Friends of different ages, genders, or cultures may shape childhood play experiences. Childhood play may also be influenced by children outside the friendship group and by neighbours, family members and relatives, pets, babysitters, teachers, coaches, and others.

17. In what ways did **other children** influence your play experiences? Did you have a best friend, a close group of friends, or siblings you played with a lot? Did you encounter any bullies?

18. In what ways did **adults** influence your childhood play activities or opportunities? And who were they (parents, other family members, nannies, teachers, or other adults)?

19. Did your play involve **pets, farm animals, or wildlife**? If so, what are your favourite memories of playing with them?

Playthings: Toys and Other Objects You Played with or Collected

Children play with and collect all sorts of things—store-bought toys, toys made from things they found, musical instruments, balls, marbles, pebbles, sea shells ...

20. What were your **favourite playthings** during childhood? Why?

21. Did you **collect things** as a child—bought things, things found in nature, things you made? If so, what did you collect?

22. What was the **best gift** you received as a child? Why was it so special to you?

Play Activities: Types of Play You Enjoyed as a Child

Childhood play includes many types of freely chosen and child-initiated activities—informal games, constructing things with improvised materials, expression through creative arts, pretending and imagining, special clubs or groups, risky physical activities, thrill seeking and mischief, and much more.

23. Did you play **games** (children's games like tag or kick the can, informal ball games) with your friends? If so, what were your favourites? Why?

24. Did you **build or construct things**, from craft materials, items in nature, "junk," or other found materials? If so, what materials did you use and what did you make?

25. Did your childhood play include any **creative arts**? Did you draw or paint, sing or chant, play musical instruments, dance, or put on plays? If so, what did you most enjoy doing? Why?

26. A common expression among children is, "Let's **pretend** we are ...". Did you and your friends do this? What were some of the things you pretended to be? Was your pretend play ever based on a movie or TV show?

27. Did you and your friends form your own **special clubs or groups**? Clubs or groups with your own rules, maybe a secret meeting place, rituals, passwords, or special language? If so, please tell us about them.

28. Did your childhood play involve **risky physical activities** that could have resulted in injuries (climbing trees, jumping off ledges, playing in creeks, doing unsupervised gymnastic moves, bike stunts)? If so, what kinds of things did you like doing? Were you ever seriously injured from these activities?

29. What “**great adventures**,” if any, did you have when playing as a child—things that gave you a thrill?

30. What types of **mischief**, if any, did you get up to as a child? Did you get in trouble for it?

Childhood Play Influences and Impact

Play is vitally important to us during childhood, but it doesn't end there—childhood play contributes to our development, our preparation for adulthood. Influences on children's play may include family needs, living conditions, moving, geography, weather, media and technology, and other factors.

31. What were some **key influences** on your childhood play time, opportunities, or experiences? What things enhanced your play opportunities? What things limited them?

32. What influence, if any, did **media and technology** have on your childhood play? Listening to music or other programs? Watching TV or movies? Playing video games or using computers?

33. What are some of the main things you remember **day dreaming or fantasizing about** as a child? For example, a different kind of life or what you wanted to be when you grew up?

34. How do you think your childhood play **contributed to your development**? What things, if any, did you learn from play activities? Did play help prepare you for adulthood? If so, in what ways?

35. Do you remember any play experiences that **caused you sadness** or were not enjoyable? If so, what were they and why did they make you feel that way?

36. Of all your play experiences, what stands out as having **brought you the most joy**? Why?

Follow Up

Thank you for participating in our project on memories of childhood play—an important part of our cultural history. We hope that sharing your memories has been a pleasant experience for you. Please consider asking family members and friends to participate. We are particularly interested in gathering childhood reflections from people in the same family.

37. Would you be willing to give a personal interview about your childhood play experiences?

- Yes (please tell us how to contact you below, question 40) No

38. Do you have any photographs or objects from your childhood play that you feel would be helpful to our project?

- Yes (please tell us how to contact you below, question 40) No

If yes, please tell us what you have:

39. Would you like a summary of the results of our study?

- Yes (please tell us how to contact you below, question 40) No

40. If you would like us to contact you, how may we do so? *Please give your name and at least one way of contacting you: mail, phone, or email.*

Name:

Mailing address:

Phone number(s):

Email address:

41. How would you rate the experience of sharing your play memories with us?

- Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor

42. Are there other questions we should be asking, or anything else you would like to share about your childhood play? Anything at all that may help us understand play in your generation and culture.

Additional information?

