

CREATIVITY

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Prof. A. Ceciliani defines child play as a framework for action, a spontaneous and self-motivated form of behaviour supported by pleasure and fun, characterized by flexible and modifiable rules. It is an emotional and affective experience, a tool of knowledge and learning and a source of education and social development.

The child does not always play in the same way; he/she is able to be creative and to respond in a new and different way to what the environment, objects and others offer. Man is able to be creative throughout his entire lifetime, above all if nurtured during childhood.

Creativity comes at a very young age: the child first discovers the object, then the relations between object and environment and finally, the unprecedented combination of objects in relation to the environment, in what Piaget calls tertiary circular reactions.

Objects and situations that mean nothing or little to us, suggest new ideas of use and connections to children. In this creative exercise, they are able to consider the point of view of the other that expands their knowledge. In his poem, *Zibaldone*, Leopardi claimed: “Children find everything in nothing, men find nothing in everything”.

Let us take chairs, for example, which we only use as tools to sit on. In symbolic play, everything can become something else and give life to a new world that did not previously exist. At first, a class of three-year olds saw chairs as trains or as bodies of long animals and, later, made three heaps of chairs in three points of the classroom and decided they were the three little pigs’ houses. They entered this new world in total independence and spontaneity, using their imagination. When a table at the crèche is overturned, the children see it as a new object, where the legs of the table are used as object holders or a new place where it is exciting to understand how many can fit inside it.

When adults nurture and do not hinder this competence, children are able to create increasingly complex and enriching worlds and situations that will enhance their inner world more and more.