

GAME-BASED LEARNING

The Benefits of Game-Based Learning for 3-4-year-olds

Play is often overlooked as a learning tool for children. Dictionary.com defines play as “engaging in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose.” It is seen as a type of “free time” when nothing else important is happening. However, this couldn’t be further from the truth. For 3 to 4-year old’s, play is vital to their overall development and learning.

Children between the ages of 3 and 4 years old are growing physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially, at a very rapid rate. They are discovering new things daily and are attempting to navigate the world with very little information and abilities. Because of this, it is important that they are involved in activities that help develop them in all areas, or what the SKILLZ program calls “4-dimensional instruction.”

As Maria Montessori best said it, “Play is the work of the child.” Children learn best through play and, therefore, game-based learning is a major contributor to learning and retention. But not only does it stimulate the brain, game-based learning also enhances social skills, builds emotional confidence, and develops children physically. This whole child approach to development and learning is exactly what 3 to 4-year old’s need.

After years of research, the SKILLZ program was created with this approach in mind. The curriculum for 3 and 4-year old’s was developed with more emphasis on building early fundamental skills training with a strategic balance of Martial Arts. With this innovative curriculum, the SKILLZ program uses game-based learning to take learning to a whole new level.

There are numerous benefits to this innovative way of learning. For 3 and 4- year old’s, participating in a program that utilizes this approach, gives them a jump start into enhancing their brain structure and function, developing social skills, and better control their strong emotions, all the while, building a stronger body.

As the SKILLZ program focuses on building the 8 early skills for 3-4-year-olds using martial arts as the approach, the system of game-based learning makes this learning process easier. The games

are balanced in that they are fun but teach early developmental concepts at the same time. All SKILLZ games and drills are approached in this way. This, coupled with the teaching skills and the 10 laws of instruction, make the benefits of game-based learning even better.

For example, one drill for the 3 and 4-year old's is "Helping Each Other." In this drill, the students are partnered up to hold kicking pads for each other. They are to shake hands and say, "Do your best." During this drill, they are physically working on kicks to help with their muscle development. Intellectually, they are utilizing their language to communicate with their partner. Emotionally, they are giving and receiving positive words of encouragement. Socially, it helps them by working together during the drill.

Children are more focused on games than any other form of learning. Because they are excited about "playing" they are more motivated and put forth more effort. With game-based learning, 3 and 4- year old's will have more opportunities to gain more physical strength and control, increase their language development, learn to control their emotions, and communicate better with others.