

Physical play and a timely revision

Embracing Rough-and-Tumble Play: Teaching with the Body in Mind

Written by Mike Huber. Redleaf Press, 2016 (\$39.95)

I'm OK! Building Resilience Through Physical Play

Written by Jarrod Green. Redleaf Press, 2016 (\$24.95)

Over the past five years, early care and education teachers have received an important wake-up call: Physical development is as important a domain as the other three—cognitive, social, and emotional. All four domains interact in children's growth, and skill in one invites improved skills in the others.

Because of long-standing fears related to child injury and displeased parents, developmental supports in the physical domain have focused on the fine

motor skills (holding a spoon or paintbrush) that predict later academic success.

Unfortunately, large motor skills—like running, stomping, climbing, and throwing—often have been minimized in importance or regarded as a venue for behavioral missteps and hampered

by an adult chorus of “No,” “Stop,” and “Don't.” However, new research coupled with a number of new books focusing on healthful, safe, boisterous, and vigorous physical play may help realign the early childhood curriculum.

In 2011, Frances Carlson described physical play—sometimes rough and tumble and sometimes soli-

tary—in *Big Body Play: Why Boisterous, Vigorous, and Very Physical Play is Essential to Children's Development and Learning* (reviewed at www.childcarequarterly.com in Summer 2015). Carlson set the stage, Huber and Green populate it with scenarios, definitions, teacher (and parent) support and guidance, exceptional photographs, lists, and foundational theory.

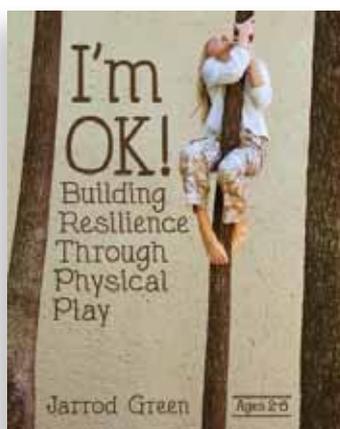
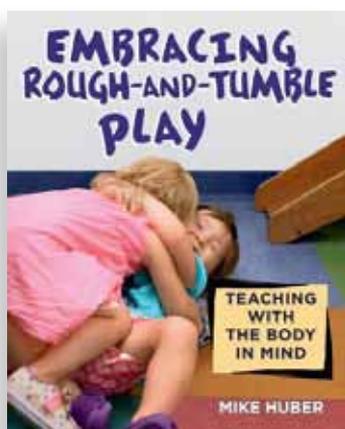
Mike Huber and Jarrod Green, both experienced early childhood educators, have each added a book to the expanding library on children's large motor play. Huber and Green take slightly different paths to help teachers recognize the connections between physical play, cognitive problem-solving, and social-emotional empathy, self-regulation, confidence, and resilience.

Especially strong in Huber's book are sections on the importance of risk in establishing self-regulation,

and courage and trust that includes descriptions of big body play without contact (learning to play chase), play with equipment (jumping rope, throwing balls, or climbing up the slide), and contact play (roughhousing and wrestling)

through a typical day and in standard classroom interest areas. Social comparison, competition within boundaries, and self-awareness are hallmarks.

Green, in contrast, offers an in-depth examination of children and resilience—the ability to bounce back after one of life's setbacks. Most valuable is his discussion of safety and risk, starting with the obvious: Children get hurt. His interest is in helping children



recognize that injury is natural and important as a tool for building resilience. His intent is to help adults help children measure risk and reward, evaluate consequences, and determine (without the adult chorus) whether the risk is worthwhile—because the outcome isn't too bad or isn't at all likely.

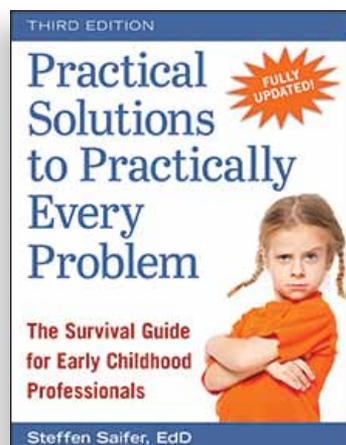
Both Green and Huber offer practical suggestions on equipment use, scaffolding techniques for children between the ages of 2 and 8, tips for working with parents and teachers who are resistant to the idea of large motor play, and frequent reader reflections (making the books appropriate texts for adult learners).



Practical Solutions to Practically Every Problem: The Survival Guide for Early Childhood Professionals, 3rd. Ed.

Written by Steffen Saifer. Redleaf Press, 2016 (\$34.95)

Steffen Saifer, an experienced early childhood teacher and administrator, offers an update on his



valuable how-to guide that addresses near-universal program problems—before teachers encounter them. The encyclopedic volume addresses more than 200 common issues from daily dilemmas and classroom issues (including paint-covered clothes and lost shoes), to partnering with children's parents, addressing challenges with co-workers, and taking care of oneself to avoid burnout.

The exceptional introduction sets the tone by looking at rules and problem-solving with humor, encouragement, and a strong dose of anticipatory guidance.

As with all interactions, if a teacher can anticipate and plan, the problem is quickly resolved with minimal crisis. Saifer gives appropriate attention to new trends in early childhood programs including suspensions, technology, standards, and assessment. A strong resource section includes print materials, websites,

videos and clips by topic including advocacy, inclusion, professional development, testing, and media literacy. The clearly stated, theoretically sound volume is perfect not only as a program resource but as a tool for teacher meetings and in-service training sessions dedicated to positive guidance and support for developmental self-regulation. ■