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Autore	Smith Peter K
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Nota di contenuto	Intro -- Children and Play -- Contents -- Series Editor's Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Chapter 1 An Introduction to Play -- Why Play? -- Examples of What Is and What Is Not Play -- Characteristics of Playful Behavior -- Types of Play -- Things That Are Probably Not Play: Exploration, Stereotypic Behavior, Work, Rule-Governed Games -- Methods of Studying Play -- Plan of the Book -- Chapter 2 A Brief History of the Study of Play and of Play Theories -- Early European Educators and the Role of Play -- Evolutionary Theory and Play: Darwin, Spencer, and Groos -- Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Play -- The Play Ethos -- Anthropological Perspectives on Play -- Psychological Perspectives: Vygotsky and Piaget -- Developmental Sequences in Play: Piaget, Smilansky, Rubin -- More Recent Play Theorists -- Chapter 3 Animal Play: Definitions and Descriptions -- Possible Play in Birds, Lower Vertebrates, and Invertebrates -- Play in Mammals -- Some Examples of Mammalian Play -- Do All Mammals Play? -- Play in Monkeys and Apes -- Chapter 4 Animal Play: Theoretical Perspectives on Function -- Theories and Evidence Concerning the Evolution and

Adaptive Value of Animal Play -- Examining Possible Benefits of Play -- General Views on the Benefits of Play -- The Possible Relevance for Human Play of Studying Animal Play -- Chapter 5 Play in Different Cultures -- Parakanã Children -- Factors Contributing to Cultural Similarities and Differences -- Similarities and Differences across Cultures -- Chapter 6 Physical Activity Play: Exercise Play and Rough-and-Tumble -- Stages in Physical Activity Play -- Rough-and-Tumble Play -- Sex differences in Physical Activity Play -- Functions of Physical Activity Play -- Chapter 7 Object Play -- Sensorimotor or Functional Play -- Beyond the Sensorimotor Period -- Functions of Object Play. Experiments with Object Play and Creative Problem-Solving -- Chapter 8 Pretend Play: Description -- Definitions of Pretend or Fantasy Play -- The Development of Pretend Play in Children -- Solitary and Social Pretend Play -- Sociodramatic Play -- Imaginary Companions -- Distinguishing Fantasy and Reality -- Gender Differences -- Pretend Play and Friendship -- Other Factors Affecting Pretend Play -- A Universal Human Feature? -- Children with Autism -- Pretend Play as a Lifespan Activity? -- Chapter 9 Pretend Play: Theories and Functions -- Arguments for Benefits of Pretend or Fantasy Play -- Theories Concerning the Function of Pretend Play -- Models of the Role of Pretend Play in Development -- Evidence for the Functions of Pretend Play -- Experimental Studies -- Chapter 10 Some Practical Issues Concerning Play -- The Role of Parents in Encouraging and Structuring Children's Play -- The Role of Play in the Early Childhood Curriculum: Play Training -- Attitudes to War Play -- The Arguments For (and Against) Recess Breaks -- The Role of Play in Helping Children under Stress, or with Illness or Disability -- Chapter 11 Concluding Comments: Play and the Middle Way -- Play: Ignored or Idealized? -- References -- Author Index -- Subject Index.

## Sommario/riassunto

"Peter Smith is to be congratulated for producing the first truly comprehensive synthesis on the subject of juvenile play. The work's breadth and thoroughness make it the definitive reference, while the quality of the prose enables the book's use as a textbook. Smith's treatment of methodology and theoretical history is especially thorough and insightful. Smith's unique contribution to play scholarship has been his identification of the play ethos. This social movement has had a distorting effect on research by inflating evidence for the value of play for children and of the necessity for parent-child play. In this volume, Smith almost surgically removes the play ethos cataract that obscures play scholarship. In doing so he reminds us that there are still many important questions regarding juvenile play which await serious research." -Professor David F. Lancy, Anthropology, Utah State University, USA "Peter Smith's book, *Children and Play*, is what one would expect from one of the leading figures in the field of play. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of evolutionary theory and the human developmental and comparative play literatures, Smith presents a comprehensive picture of the complexities of the place of play in human development as well as measured analyses of its place in schools. This book is a crowning achievement to his close to 40 years of careful study of the field. I learned a great deal from it." -Professor Anthony D. Pellegrini, Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota, USA "This book is an excellent synthesis of what is currently known about the play of children. Peter Smith, one of the leading play researchers of our time, sheds new light on some long-debated issues such as the definition of play, play's role in development and evolution, and the relationship between play and culture. In addition, individual chapters provide rich detail about particular types of play, including the much

neglected category of physical play. The volume concludes with a very interesting discussion of practical issues, including parental involvement in play, play's role in education, the importance of school recess, and war play. I was very impressed with Professor Smith's balanced, objective discussion of play research. He effectively argues for a "middle way" of viewing play, a view that neither idealizes nor denigrates its importance in the lives of children." -Professor James Christie, Curriculum and Instruction, Arizona State University, USA.

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