

Kathy Sylva



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- Kathy Sylva is an American psychologist who graduated at Harvard University, who has lived and worked in Britain since 1975.
- On her arrival in Britain, Kathy Sylva joined the research team of Jerome Bruner in Oxford. At this time, the team were investigating the everyday details of small children's play and learning, producing a series of books as a result.

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- Kathy Sylva's own book being called *Childwatching at Playgroup and Nursery School*. This book broke new ground by questioning the widely held belief of 'free play' in nurseries.
- Sylva was asked by the Thatcher government to look into High Scope and The Royal Society of Art asked her to coordinate a 3 year enquiry into early years education called Right Start. From both she came to a conclusion which has influenced her work ever since. This is: You get what you pay for. Better investment produces better results.

# Research Methods

- Kathy Sylva worked alongside Carolyn Roy and Marjorie Painter and conducted naturalistic observations on 120 children between the ages of 3 and 5. Detailed observations were made of every aspect of the children's day. Each activity was evaluated for contribution it made to social and intellectual development.

# Theories

- Kathy Sylva believes that children benefit from a balance between free play and structured play. She thought that this balance could be achieved through well-run playgroups and nursery schools. Children would learn best when exposed to a variety of adults who provide models and suggest alternative ways of carrying out tasks.

# High Scope

- High Scope was an idea that Sylva explored during her research on Early Years Education. She was investigating a more structured curriculum for children under 5.
- “High/Scope is ... about teaching children to initiate, discover, experience, and learn about ideas, events, and people; it is about children creating, experimenting, problem-solving, and resolving conflicts as they learn. High/Scope builds children up and changes lives.” — Alice Escobar