

Understanding Rough And Tumble Play

...rough-and-tumble play (playful fighting and chasing), which may look wild from the outside, is constrained by rules. An always-present rule in play fighting, for example, is that you mimic some of the actions of real fighting, but you don't really hurt the other person. You don't hit with all your force (at least not if you are the stronger of the two); you don't kick, bite, or scratch. Play fighting is much more controlled than real fighting; it is always an exercise in restraint.

Peter Gray
Free To Learn

The term rough-and-tumble play has come to include all play using the full body, including body contact with another individual; body contact with objects; and striking objects with feet, hands, or an object, such as a racket or bat. This definition even includes running, climbing, and other (possibly) solitary activities (Tannock 2011).

Mike Huber
Embracing Rough-And-Tumble Play

While reviewing the literature on rough and tumble play over the last fifteen years, I have discovered no research indicating that roughhousing causes violence....When we create trusting environments for roughhousing, self-expression is encouraged and the need for unhealthy competition is removed.

Dan Hodgins
Boys

Research on rough-and-tumble play in animals and humans has shown that it is necessary for the development and maintenance of social awareness, cooperation, fairness, and altruism. Its nature and importance are generally unappreciated, particularly by preschool teachers or anxious parents, who often see normal rough-and-tumble play behavior such as hitting, diving, and wrestling (all done with a smile, between friends who stay friends) not as a state of play, but a state of anarchy that must be controlled.

Stuart Brown
Play

Roughhousing activates many different parts of the body and the brain, from the amygdalae, which process emotions, and the cerebellum, which handles complex motor skills, to the prefrontal cortex, which makes high-level judgments. The result is that every roughhousing playtime is beneficial for body and brain as well as for the loftiest levels of the human spirit: honor, integrity, morality, kindness, and cooperation.

Lawrence Cohen & Anthony DeBenedet
The Art of Roughhousing

