

# Learning Through Play

Information for Parents and Carers



# What is Play?

Play can be any activity, imaginary or with toys, that is:



interesting  
for them

chosen by them

fun for them

something they  
want to do

# Children Have the Right to Play

Article 31 of the United Nations on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) affirms

‘the right of the child to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child’



# Why Should Children Play?

Play is essential for developing:

**cognitive skills**

**social interaction**

**physical skills**

**imagination**

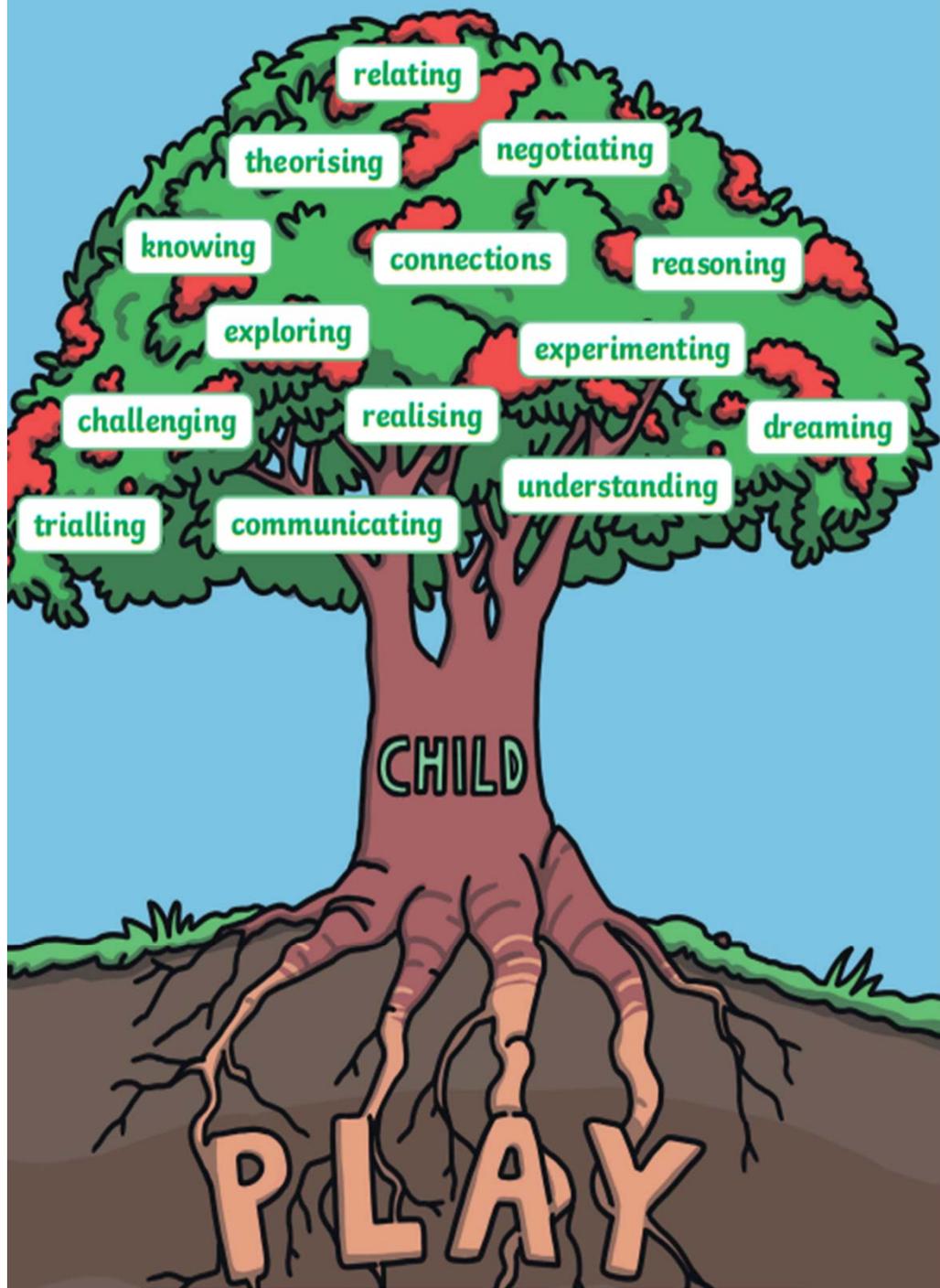
**creativity**

**emotional regulation**

**communication skills**

**resilience**

**wellbeing**



Plants the seeds for later learning.

Leads to making connections and helps me understand the world.

Allows me to follow my own unique path and learn in ways that are meaningful to me.

Yields the ability for life-long learning and development.

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**A**llows me to follow my own unique path and learn in ways that are meaningful to me.

**Y**ields the ability for life-long learning development.

# Why Learn through Play?



Young children naturally explore and learn through play. Play is a fun, motivating and meaningful way to learn. It enables children to learn at their own level and pace while making connections.

Learning through play can also provide continuity between Nursery and F2 and help to support transitions as we often build in progression .

# The Role of the Adult during Play

The adult will:

- observe the child playing;
- interact with the child and participate in their play when appropriate;
- challenge the child's thinking by commenting, modelling, pondering and questioning;
- add resources to extend and deepen learning;
- plan activities, next steps and evaluate learning.



# Playing to Learn and Learning to Play

## Expanding your child's play

When you and your child are playing with blocks, trucks and cars

### Ask:

- What kinds of buildings do these trucks need?
- Where are people in the car going?
- What will they do there?
- What do they need to take with them? Food? Clothing? Tools?
- Are they going alone or with others? Who?
- During the day, or at night? Will they go someplace different at different times of day?



# Playing to Learn and Learning to Play

Talk, talk, talk while you're playing

Reflective Questions...

expand the play and lead your child to think more deeply

- Who will live in the house you're building?
- Why do you think the boy decided to follow the giant?
- What do you think the princess is feeling?
- How are you planning to attach the brown triangle to the pink one?
- What do you think will happen if you take that block out of the tower?



- **FACT -Our brains develop faster in our early years than at any other time in our lives.**

- It can create up to **one million neural connections every second.**
- But **children need your help.**
- Children's healthy development depends on these top five things

**connecting talking playing a healthy home community.**

- All of this helps their brains reach their full potential.
- So what's something **you can do** that can really make a difference?
- Scientists call it **serve and return.**
- That's just a grown-up way of saying **connect, talk and play** with children.

## Playing to Learn and Learning to Play

### Build-a-Brain Yarn Activity

**Part 1.** We are going to make a model of how our brains grow through play. When the ball of yarn comes to you, share an activity you like to do with your child(ren). Then toss the yarn across the circle to someone on the other side until everyone has had a turn.

**Part 2.** Now we will show how repeating an activity thickens and strengthens the connections in the brain. I will throw the yarn and we'll throw it back and forth representing a fun activity that is repeated many times. Watch what happens to the connection.

**Part 3.** The connections will get weaker if they are not reinforced by being used, but they can be built up again with more activity.

Brains are made up of billions of neurons, with trillions off connections between them. We just showed how they are bundled together into neural pathways.

A recent discovery is that we learn best when a lot of these brain pathways are all operating at the same time.

A great way to use and grow multiple pathways at the same time is . . .

Drumroll . . .

**Play!!!!**



# Types of Learning through Play at Red Oaks

## Free Play or Child-Lead Play

Free play or child-led play is entirely initiated and directed by the child. The adult's role is to observe and interact if the opportunity arises to extend learning, following the child's interests.

## Adult-Led or Active Learning

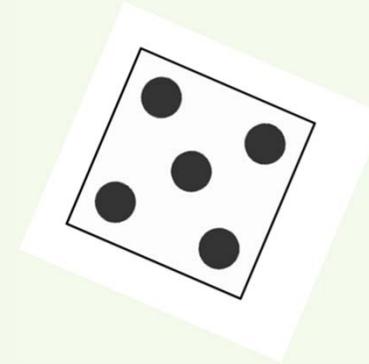
Adult-led play, sometimes called Active Learning, is initiated and directed by the adult. Specific learning intentions are planned for by the adult.



# How Can I Support My Child's Learning through Play?

- Value play as a valid form of learning.
- Talk to your child about what they enjoy playing with at nursery or school.
- Spend time playing with your child at home following their interests.
- Extend your child's learning through quality interactions (questions, comments, wondering out loud, modelling language).

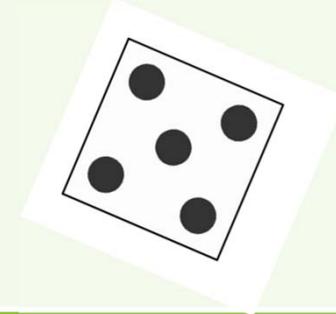
# Subitising



Children can learn to recognise the amount of objects in a group without having to count each object.

We often do this without thinking when we throw a dice so playing basic games is really important.

Playing dominoes, cards and even snakes and ladders teaches so many skills and don't require a tablet, phone or controller!

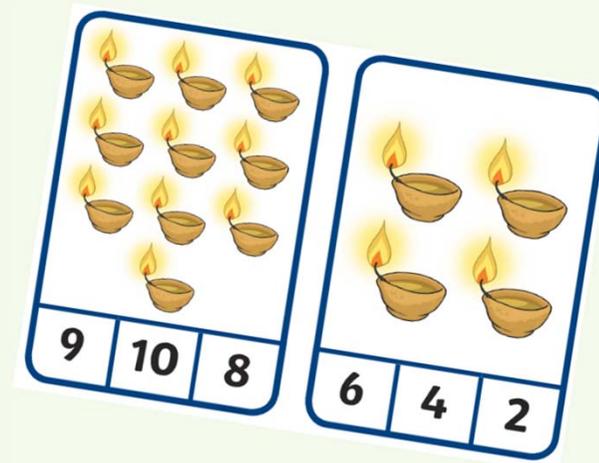




# Subitising

Children will be encouraged to sort objects into groups to make counting easier.

Children practise recognising quantities in 'frames.'

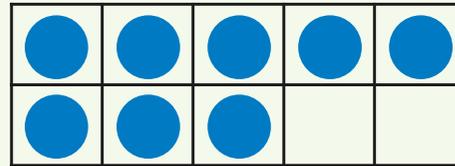




# Number Bonds

Using 10 frames helps children see the patterns between numbers.

8 objects in the 10 frame.  
2 objects missing,



$$8 + 2 = 10$$

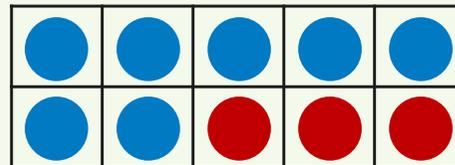
$$10 - 2 = 8$$

$$2 + 8 = 10$$

$$10 - 8 = 2$$



We use different colour in the 10 frames to help too.





**v - a - n**



**m - a - n**



**c - a - n**

# Play writing CVC Words

Read out simple 3-letter words for your child to write down.

Encourage them to think of other 3-letter words that rhyme.

Create lists of rhyming 3-letter words.

Use post it notes to spread the Phase 2 phonemes like s, a, t, p, i, n around the house and go on hunts to find 3 that make a word.

# Play using Loose Parts?



- Loose Parts are objects and materials that can be used for open-ended play.
- They can be natural materials or man-made objects. They can be large or small.
- Loose Parts can be carried, moved, sorted, stacked, taken apart, joined together and used to create new things.
- They offer endless potential for imagination and creativity.



# Examples of Natural Loose Parts



## Shells

Coconut shells

Conkers

Bark

## Sticks

Tree stumps

Pine cones

Moss

## Stones

Flowers

Acorns

Logs

## Driftwood

Leaves

Seeds



# Examples of Man-Made Loose Parts



**Pans**

**Corks**

**Beads**

**String**

**Keys**

**Wooden Pegs**

**Cardboard boxes**

**Spoons**

**Tyres**

**Wool**

**Crates**

**Bottle tops**

**Washers**

**Guttering**

**Ribbon**

**Pipes**

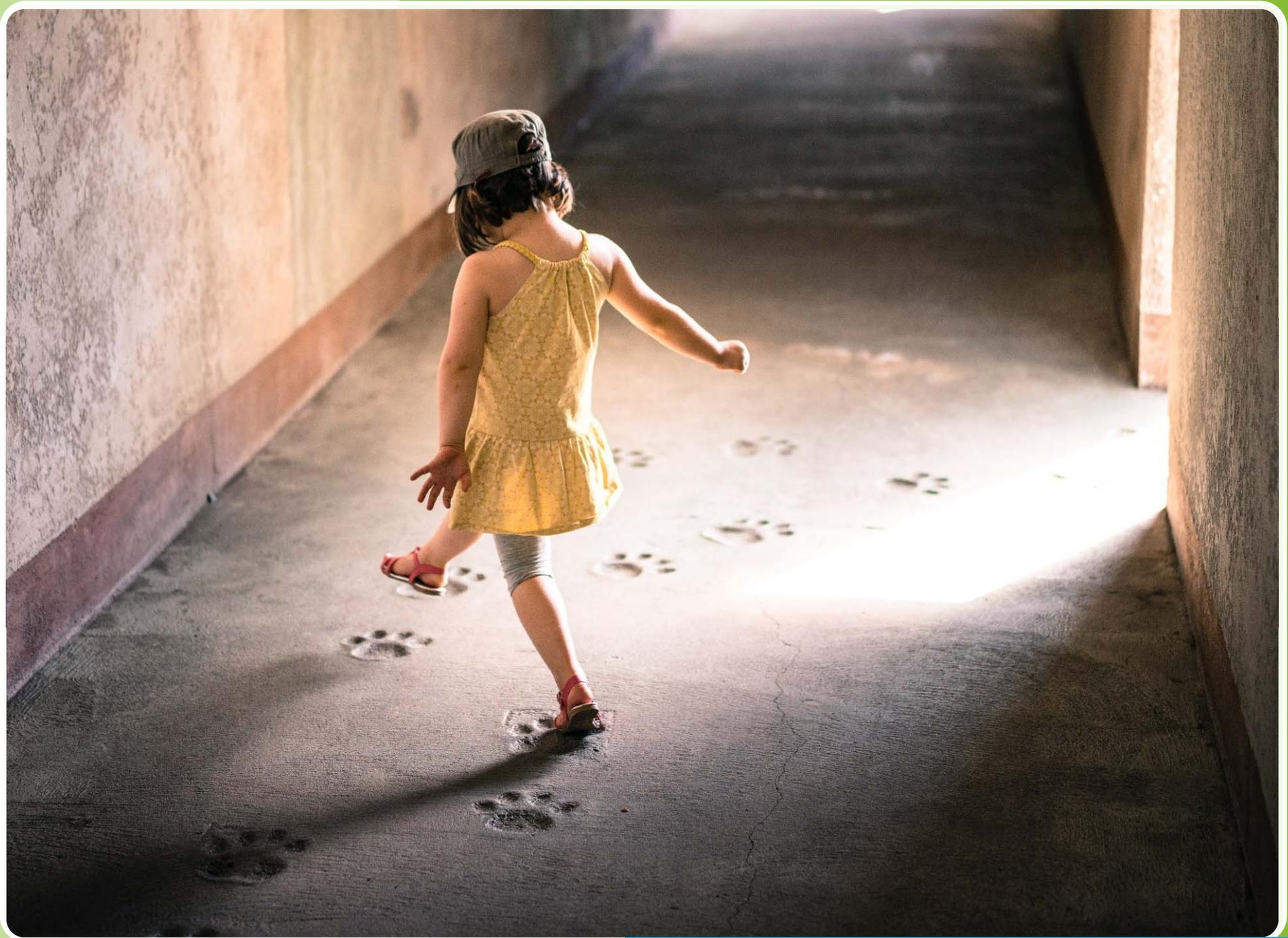
**Curtain Rings**

**Sieves**

**Buckets**

**Pallets**





Following a story in the correct order



Role play story telling



Having time to reboot and absorb learning



Using our imagination



Following a pattern



Building sentences where one part relies on another



Experimenting taking risks



Segmenting / blending words

# Some of you may have answered:

- they are playing;
- they are learning about their world;
- they are investigating;
- they are exploring.



You are right - because these children were doing all of these things.

**But how many of you thought:**

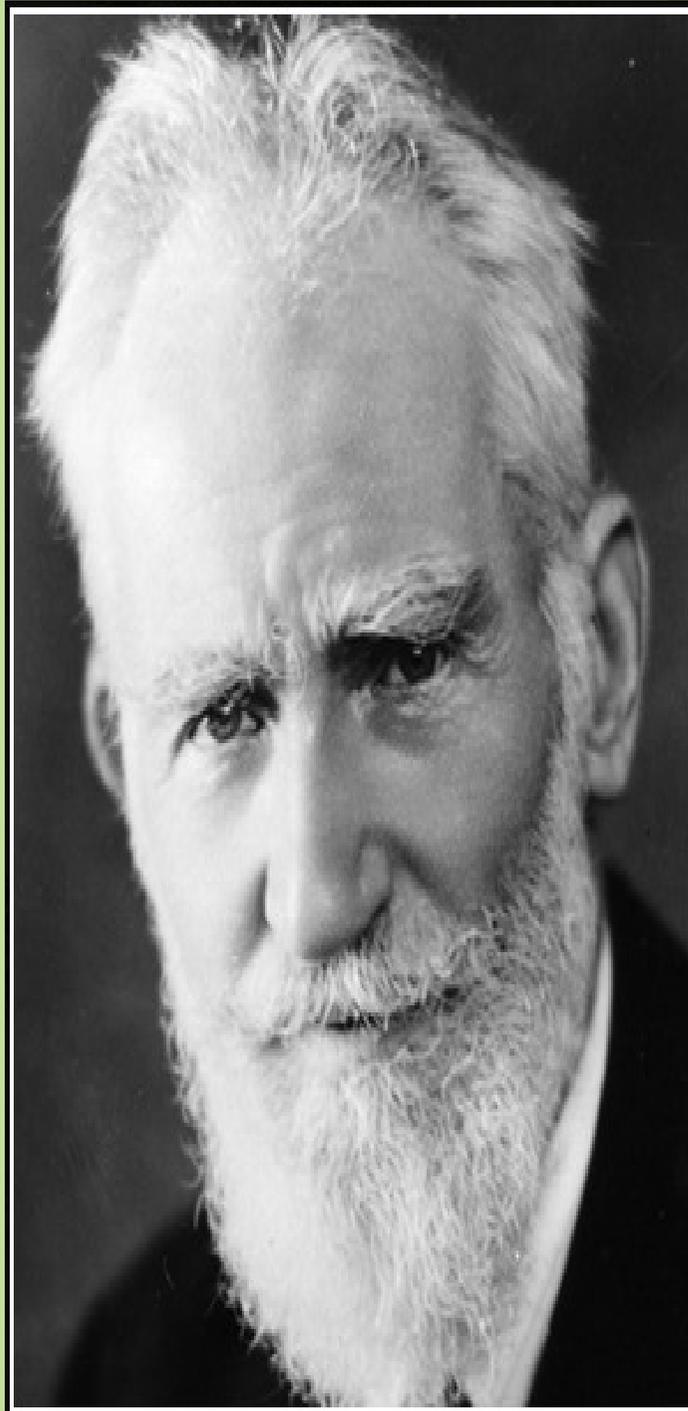
**These children are actually all learning  
to read.**

**All of the play which children do is  
interconnected.**



**“A child loves  
his play, not  
because it’s  
easy, but  
because it’s  
hard.”**

Benjamin Spock



We don't stop playing because we  
grow old; we grow old because we  
stop playing.

— *George Bernard Shaw* —

AZ QUOTES