

Be Happy—Play!

Wimana Mukankusi

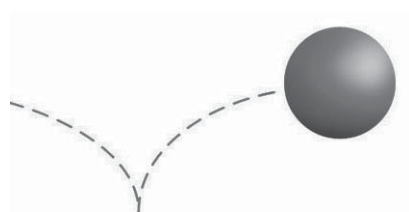
BEFORE YOU READ: Learn the vocabulary word “bounce.” What games have you played that involve a bouncing ball?

In Africa when I was little, I played with my friends. My favorite toy was a red rubber ball. It was the size of a tennis ball. In the summer at school, I would stand in a circle with my friends. One person would bounce the ball under her leg and between her feet in a shape like a number 8. When the person missed the ball, the next person would get it and do the same. We called this game Bouncing. I felt happy when I played this game because I was good at this game.

I think that children should study *and* play in school. They learn better if they have time to play. Play helps children know many things. Children learn skills like counting (1, 2, 3) when they play. They also learn to tell stories. Play helps children learn how to be good to friends and how to work together. Children are happy when they play.



Wimana Mukankusi came to the U.S. three years ago from Congo. She is married and has four children. She enjoys going to English classes. Instead of playing with a ball these days, she has learned how to knit and now likes to sit in a knitting circle with friends at Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) in New Haven, CT.



BOUNCE: When a rubber ball hits a hard surface, it will come back up. What else bounces? Try using this word figuratively. For example, describe a time when you had a difficult experience, but you bounced back.

Discussion Questions

1. What question do you have for Wimana?

2. Why did Wimana like to play Bouncing?

3. According to Wimana, what do children learn from playing?

4. In your opinion, what else do they learn?
