

# The Dr. Joe L. Frost Children's Play and Play Environments Research Collection

J.E. & L.E. Mabee Library University of the Incarnate Word



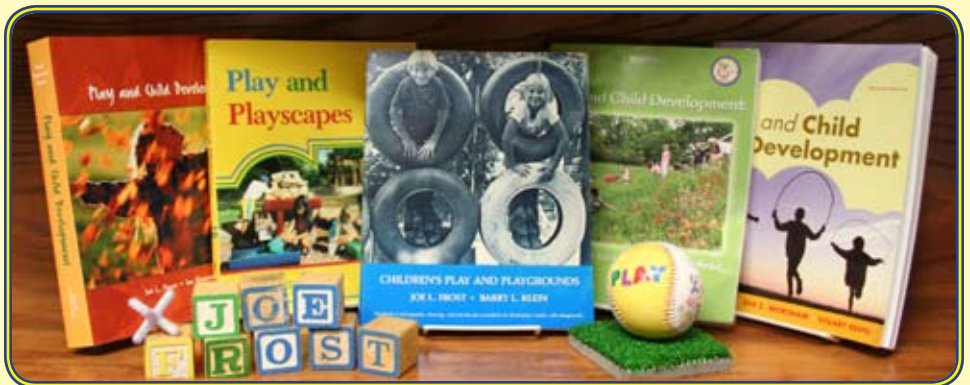
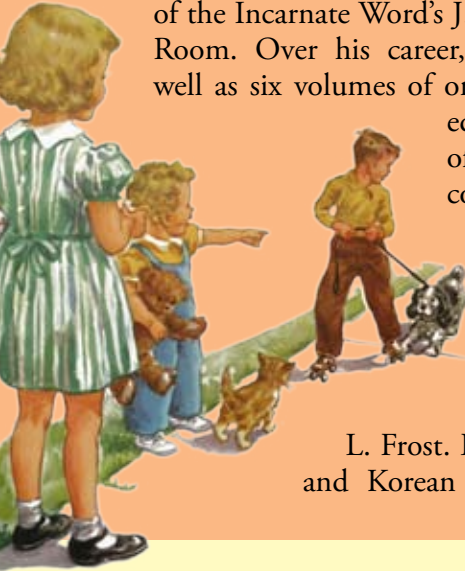
*“Spontaneous play is the delicate dance of childhood that strengthens the mind and body, and nourishes the soul.”*

*—Dr. Joe L. Frost*

The University of the Incarnate Word celebrates the importance of childhood play with perhaps the largest children's play and play environments research collection in the United States. This collection was awarded by Dr. Joe L. Frost, an esteemed author, editor, researcher, developmentalist, teacher, and scholar. Internationally recognized, Dr. Frost has pursued and directed more than 30 years of research on early childhood, the importance of children's play, and children's play environments, and is widely known as the contemporary father of play advocacy.



His life's works and scholarly collection can be viewed in the University of the Incarnate Word's J.E. & L.E. Mabee Library's Frost Collection Room. Over his career, Frost authored more than 20 books as well as six volumes of original papers, reports and articles, and has edited for many texts produced at hundreds of prestigious universities. The entire compilation of his works is preserved in this collection. This unique collection also encompasses books, dissertations, journal articles, original research reports, a vast collection of other teaching materials, presentations, photographs and other media and literature collected by Dr. Joe L. Frost. English, Chinese, French, Spanish, Japanese and Korean are among the languages represented in



the collection. Rare books included in this collection embody the major eras not only in play and education, but also sociology and child development. This collection encapsulates historic literature and reaches into the future of play research in America.

The collection began as Dr. Frost's earnest effort to draw together all books published about the research on play environments, trends in play, and the history of American playgrounds beginning with publications from the nineteenth century including Froebel's *Education of Man* (1887) and *Mother-play and Nursery Songs* (1895). Dr.

Frost and his wife, Betty, chose the University of the Incarnate Word to house his personal collection because the "Playwork Institute of the Americas," an outreach arm of the Dreeben School of Education, is located at UIW. Religious faith is an important cornerstone of Joe and Betty's lives. Since UIW is a faith-based institution, it has always provided for the needs of children. This research collection is about the most basic need for children, which is play.

The Dr. Joe L. Frost Collection at the University of the Incarnate Word is underwritten by the International Playground Equipment Manufacturer's Association. The collection is also annually sponsored by Lakeshore Learning.



The collection includes numerous rare works such as:

*Twenty Years at Hull-House*, Addams, J. (1945)

*Mother-play and Nursery Songs: Poetry, Music, and Pictures for the Noble Culture of Child Life*, Froebel, F. (1895)

*The Education of Man*, Froebel, F. (1826, 1887, 1908)

*Youth: Its Education, Regimen, and Hygiene*, Hall, G. S. (1923)

*Reminiscences of Friedrich Froebel*, Marenholz-Bülow, B. B. V. (1897)

*The series of McGuffey's Eclectic Readers*, (1857-1879)

*Aesthetic Papers*, Peabody, E. P. (1849)

*The Kindergarten Hour: Talks to Children, Volume 4*, Wheelock, L. (1920)

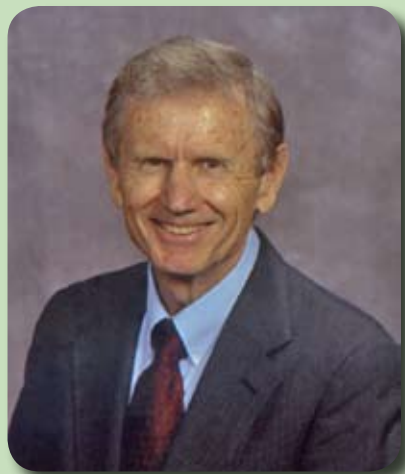
*Kindergarten Principles and Practice*, Wigginn, K. D., & Smith, N. A. (1896)

Born on a small farm in the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas during the “great depression”, Joe Frost’s early life was dedicated to working the fields, tending livestock, and participating in church and extended family activities. His early school days were filled attending a small two-roomed elementary school and being an avid player among the numerous recesses that were granted throughout the day. Play was traditional games passed along by older children and adults. Unlimited access to creeks and hills, farm animals, and wildlife were abundant and were tutored by older peers, parents, and other adults.

The path leading Frost into a career in child development, education, and children’s play took him through several roles - student at eight colleges and universities, farming, construction, automobile and jet aircraft mechanic, teacher in public schools and a university laboratory school. His graduate work included studies in child development at the University of Arkansas, the University of Michigan, and the University of Maryland. His first job after earning a doctorate at the University of Arkansas was Assistant Professor of Child Development at Iowa State University. There he honed his interests in children in poverty, Operation Head Start, early childhood education, and child development.

After moving from Iowa State University to the University of Texas in Austin in 1966, Frost helped build early childhood graduate and undergraduate programs and soon became interested in children’s play and play environments. Barry Klein, then a Ph.D. student, and now a professional counselor in Atlanta, invited Frost to lecture to a group of teachers on the subject of play. The group could not locate a “good” playground for their observations and decided to build one in Lockhart, Texas. From this beginning in the 1970’s, Frost developed graduate and undergraduate courses on play and child development and play and play environments. Then, he initiated a research project on play, using several school sites but centered at Redeemer Lutheran School in Austin, Texas. For several years each graduate class designed and built a free playground at a school or child care center. Frost gives credit to his many graduate students for their enthusiasm, dedication, and scholarly research that still continues today at Redeemer.

Frost retired from the University of Texas in 2000 and is currently writing books and reports, directing Ph.D. students in research, lecturing, designing play environments, and consulting with law firms on children’s injuries. He swaps stories with his friends, Wayne and John, during their regular walks and visits to the neighborhood athletic club. He also serves on the board of the Lutheran Outdoors Ministry of Texas and joins his retired church friends at Redeemer Lutheran Church and School on Monday mornings for coffee and planning for work at the church. Frost prizes his close, loving relationship with Betty, his wife of more than 50 years, and his immediate and extended family.



*Dr. Joe L. Frost*

*The Frost Collection is open daily during library hours of operation and is free of charge. Please call 210-829-6010 for further information.*

*For more information, go to [www.uuiw.edu](http://www.uuiw.edu)*

