

Play!!!

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What is play?

- Play is children's work!
- Critical for Brain Development
 - Brain uses all five senses during play
 - Sound, sight, taste, touch and smell
 - Experiences create foundation for future learning



Common myths about play



- Play wastes time and prevents learning
 - Play is a fundamental tool for helping children develop relationships and understand their environment
- Play is really nothing more than fun and games
 - It is fun! It is also the ideal environment for helping children understand how to live happy, healthy lives.
- Play isn't important until children are older
 - Play helps infants develop relationships with their caregivers
 - Simple games like Peek-a-boo stimulate a baby's brain!
- Children only benefit from structured play directed by adults
 - There is a role for structured play; however, independent play help children develop interests and imagination.

Six Types of Play

1. Solitary or independent play
2. Parallel play
3. Cooperative Play
4. Skill Mastery play
5. Sensory Motor play
6. Rough and tumble play



Solitary or Independent play

- Child plays alone
- Promotes independence
- Children build self-esteem
- Helps develop creativity



How parents can support...

- Let them know it's okay to play alone sometimes
- Encourage them to choose their own activity
- Give your child enough time to organize play without interruption

Parallel Play

- Child plays alongside another child but not with them
- Teaches children
 - Observation skills
 - How to get along with others
 - Work independently



What Parents Can Do!

- Play alongside of your child and comment while you are playing
- Be a Bridge- Watch your child to see if they are mirroring others- if so, encourage them to get closer and share materials

Cooperative Play

- More organized play
- Play with a larger group for a common goal
- Ex. playing restaurant with defined roles

How parents can support...

- Be an example
- Play games with turn taking
- Talk about roles
- Encourage communication



Skill Mastery play

- Child is learning something new
- Uses trial and error to do something over and over
- Ex. Throwing a ball, riding a bike, swimming...



How can parents support?

- Encourage them to keep practicing
- Support them if it gets hard
- Don't force them- if they are tired let them move on



Sensory Motor Play

- Using the five senses and motor skills
- More interested in exploring the toy than playing with it
- Ex. Playing with sand, mud, water, clay



How to support...

- Encourage your child to explore all aspects of the toy
- Play with them and talk about the ways you can use the items
- Allow them to explore and follow their lead

Rough and Tumble Play

- Large movement activities
- Activities with intensity and energy
- Dads are more likely to engage
 - Ex. throwing the baby in the air
 - Spinning the child around



How parents can support...

- Provide a safe area to play
- Watch your child's reactions and follow their lead



Stages of play

- Unoccupied Play (Birth- 3 months)
- Solitary Play (Birth- 2 years)
- Spectator/ Onlooker (2 years)
- Parallel Play (2 + years)
- Associate Play (3-4 years)
- Cooperative Play (4+ years)



Five Essentials to Meaningful Play

1. Children make their own decisions

- Experience freedom making choices
- Open-ended materials can provide more meaningful choices (ex. Ribbon, wood sticks)
- Ex. Child can decide how to use a block

2. Children are intrinsically motivated

- Play comes from a natural desire to understand the world
- Impulse is as strong as desire for food or sleep
- Learn self-control as desire to play with friends grows



Five Essentials to Meaningful Play

3. Children become immersed in the moment

- Become so fully engaged they lose awareness of their surroundings
- Opportunity to experiment

4. Play is spontaneous, not scripted

- Totally unplanned
- Child makes changes

5. Play is enjoyable

- Has an emotional response attached to it
- Enjoyment is the direct result of play!



How to select toys...



1. Is this toy safe? Any potential hazards?
2. Is it fun? It should be enjoyable and provide skill practice.
3. Is it age-appropriate? Will it hold the child's interest? Will they be happy?
4. Is it well-designed? Easy to use?
5. Is it versatile? Is there more than one use?
6. Is the product durable?
7. Is the product engaging to the child?
8. Will the product expand creativity?
9. Will the toy frustrate or challenge the child? Will they know how to use it?
10. Will the toy nurture childhood?
11. What will the toy teach?
12. Can it be cleaned and reused?

Considering electronic toys

- Often electronic toys take over attention and we forget to interact with others
- Cannot replace the need for real human interactions
- Playing a computer game vs a board game
- Social interaction is most important for full human development and well-being



Types of toys

- **Activity toys**
 - Develop coordination
 - Improve small and large motor skills
 - Ex. balls and beanbags; jump ropes as they get older
- **Creativity toys**
 - Stimulate self-expression
 - Learn to follow directions
 - Ex. finger painting, making musical instruments
- **Learning toys**
 - Help to create knowledge
 - Ex. Books, puzzles, board games, puppets



Open-ended Toys

- Encourage your child to use a variety of toys
- Provide materials to support their creativity
 - Blocks
 - Puppets
 - Dolls
 - Art supplies
- Turn off the TV and Turn on playtime for more fun, memorable, and meaningful family time



Prop-Boxes

- You can create learning centers in your home!
- Use plastic bins or shoe boxes with materials related to one topic



Prop Box Ideas

- Blocks
 - Variety of block with clipboard, paper and crayons
- Pretend play
 - Variety of clothes and accessories
 - Can create separate boxes ex. Going to the office
- Art
 - Paper
 - Writing utensils
 - Scissors
 - glue



Prop Box Ideas

- Math

- Board games and puzzles.
- Empty egg cartons or ice trays for sorting items like buttons or bottle tops
- Paper, crayons, and dice
- Pennies
- ruler, tape measure or other items to measure

- Reading

- Fiction and non-fiction books
- Use a basket that children can carry around the house
- Add some of your books to their book shelves



Prop Box Ideas

- Writing center

- Markers, pens, pencils
- Notebooks or stationary
- Envelopes
- Ruler
- Note cards

- Water play

- Use bathtub, kitchen sink, small basin
- Sponges, basters, colanders, strainers, pitchers, measuring cups

- Cooking (bottom drawer in kitchen)

- Child size apron
- Recipes
- Bowls and utensils



Prop Box Idea

- Music

- Use oatmeal containers
- Yogurt cups
- Google making instruments with kids

- Science

- Tools
- Magnifying glass
- Prism
- Magnets
- Binoculars
- Paper and pencil
- Collect items around the house or yard (leaves, rocks...)



Playdough Power

- Social-emotional development
 - Let's them feel confident
 - Inviting others to join their creations
- Creativity and imagination
 - Symbolic thinking by using the playdough to be something else
 - Older children- more detailed play
 - Ex. construction workers or pastry chefs
- Language and literacy
 - Variety of ways to play (roll, pound, squish, etc...)
 - Inventing stories about the playdough
 - Making playdough together- reading recipes



Playdough Power

- Math
 - Measuring and counting when making dough
 - Shapes, sizes
 - Counting objects
 - Sorting
- Physical development
 - Develops small muscles in hands and fingers
 - Eye-hand coordination
 -

PLAYDOUGH counting activities



Playdough

- Keep a variety of props to add to the playdough (many recipes available)
 - Birthday candles
 - Blocks
 - Bottle Caps
 - Cookie Cutters
 - Combs
 - Garlic press
 - Large buttons or other objects
 - Feathers
 - Leave, twigs, pebbles
 - Plastic utensils
 - Rolling pin or bottle
 - Small people or animals



Including child in chores

- Weeding the garden
 - Exploring the dirt, discovering sticks, watching for bugs
- Folding laundry
 - Sorting objects, Colors/ textures, Toss an object to see how it fall
- Sweeping the floor
 - Let them have a small one
- Watering plants
 - Watch how the water falls into the plant
 - Let them help
- Washing dishes
 - Provide a drawer of storage containers they can stack




Play in Puddles on Rainy Day

- Puddle jumping
- Floating and sinking
- Puddle music
 - Songs: Row, row, row your boat
 - It's raining, it's pouring
 - There's a hole in the bucket
 - Singing in the rain
- Puddle soup



Takeaways...

- Repetition may be boring for you but not your child
 - Make time to play!
 - Get involved but let your child take the lead.
 - Let your child determine the pace
 - Take time to watch and listen
 - Say what you see- instead of “good job”; You did it! Wow, look at that! The water made the wheel turn!
 - Extend play- offer other materials
 - Play alongside your child
 - Remember it’s fun!
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