

Child's play is a parent's business...

"HOW come grown-ups forget what it is like to be a child? They were little once."

Play is one of the most important needs children have. At the heart of play is fun. It is through play that children do much of their learning.

Play fuels all aspects of healthy development:

- ▶ Running, kicking and throwing balls helps children develop balance and co-ordination.
- ▶ Singing and rhyming games help with language development.
- ▶ Puzzles and problem solving games help children's intellectual development.
- ▶ Turn taking and sharing in play help develop important relationships skills and self-control.

“Play is an important way that children can express and work through their feelings. Through watching and joining in child’s play, you can gain insight into how your child is feeling and thinking. Parents play a crucial role in child’s play.”

- ▶ Joining in play builds positive relationships between you and your children in a climate of fun.
- ▶ Playing with your children promotes opportunities for you to support them as they experiment with new skills.
- ▶ The most positive reinforcement for children comes from the approval and praise of a parent.
- ▶ The most important play for young children is play with parents - make sure you make some time for play every day.

Guidelines for playing with children:

- ▶ Playing activities should be at the right level for your child. Too easy and your child may get bored. Too hard and your child may be frustrated.
- ▶ Let your child lead the play, don't take over.
- ▶ Make sure the play is safe.
- ▶ Ask your children what they would like you to do as part of the play.
- ▶ Allow enough time for play.
- ▶ Don't compete with your children, this can discourage them from wanting to play.
- ▶ Be patient if your child wants to repeat the same play over and over.
- ▶ New skills require lots of practice! Stay enthusiastic!
- ▶ Appreciate and encourage their efforts no matter what the outcome.
- ▶ Look for opportunities to engage in play at any time. For example, join your child in making up rhymes or songs about normal daily activities like making the bed.
- ▶ Most of all have fun and laugh with your children.

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