

Children Need Play



Every Day

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What play is

- Play activities are fun, spontaneous, and open-ended.
- Children lead and make the rules; they decide and control what happens.
- Activities have no fixed schedule. Children begin and end activities as they see fit.
- Children focus more on the activity itself than on the outcome or result.

Children have a natural need to play. Play is one way they learn about their world. Through play children explore, create, and figure things out.

Not all learning is through play. Children also learn in other ways. And not all play is learning. Sometimes play is just play.





Play is important

For children, play is like good food. It helps them develop social and emotional skills, creativity, and a healthy body and brain.

During the first five years of life, a child's brain develops faster than at any other time. And how it develops affects their ability to learn new things in the future.

Children are naturally playful. Play helps them:

- Learn about their world; how to do things; how to solve problems.
- Become confident.
- Get physically strong.
- Learn to get along with other people; deal with feelings.





Adult roles in children's play

Parents (and other adults) are children's first and most important teachers.

- Put lots of toys, books, and other play things where children can easily reach them.
- Be sensitive to individual needs. At different ages, different children need different things.
- Give children time to play — alone, with other children, and with you.
- Keep play areas safe.
- Allow children to lead; follow their lead.
- Watch and wait. Support children to help them play.
- Present new challenges when children are ready.
- Balance children's play time with time on computers or other screens.
- Be creative and have fun!

Playtime—0 to 5 years

birth to 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Using all the senses: eyes, ears, nose, hands, and mouth.▪ Learning cause and effect.
1 year to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Imitating real life; solving problems.▪ Becoming more mobile and independent.▪ Doing things over and over and over again.
2 years to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Becoming more social and cooperative with other children.▪ Copying adults and other children.▪ Growing language and physical skills.
3 years to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Expanding vocabulary.▪ Growing physical skills and imagination.▪ Becoming more social and independent.

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- Talk to babies. Imitate their sounds.
 - Play peek-a-boo.
 - Listen to different kinds of music. Sing a song.
 - Explore a ball or other object that has different colours and textures.

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- Play running, climbing, and action games. Take turns.
 - Sing songs and read books with rhyming words. Dance or play an instrument. Move, sing, listen to music.
 - Use hands to push buttons, open boxes, turn pages, colour, finger paint, mould playdough, squeeze water from a sponge.

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- Play with friends or visit the park; play musical games.
 - Include quiet play: books, stories, arts and crafts.
 - Play dress-up with clothes and lots of different props.

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- Play make-believe with other children or adults, or alone; act out different roles (real or imagined).
 - Do lots of crafts to use hands and practise words, colours, and concepts such as time.
 - Play lots of active games, inside and outside. Build things.
 - Read books, sing songs, dance.
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Books, puppets, stories

With books, puppets, and stories children develop language and learn new things.

- Put age appropriate books in every room.
- When children are ready, read books that push them to the 'next stage'.
- Snuggle up together to read, tell stories, or play with puppets.

Pretend or imaginative play

Children make up stories and play many different roles. They see adults do things and imitate what they see.

- Use cardboard boxes and other everyday materials.
- Use toy tools, dolls and strollers, trucks and cars, or other toys from stores.
- Explore 'small worlds' such as: fishing camp, doll house, playground, and so on.





Messy play

To help contain the mess, do these activities outside or in the kitchen or bathroom. Use a tray or plastic sheet.

- Pour water, sit in it, splash it, make bubbles or soap suds.
- Play with straw or hay, sand or mud, packing noodles or shredded paper.
- Squeeze play dough; stick things in it.

Playing with objects

Babies can do this as soon as they sit up. Be creative; use everyday things.

- Make a basket full of 'treasures'.
- Sort and stack bowls.
- Fill and empty a cake pan or other container.
- Open and close a box.





Outside play

With proper clothing, children can play outside in all seasons and all weather.

- Go to the playground; plant a garden; sleep in a tent.
- Run through a puddle; build a snowman; learn to swim.

Creative play

Creative play includes art, music, crafts, and drama.

- Finger paint, colour, tear paper, glue and print things.
- Create textures with paint; make a collage, use paper or fabric.
- Sing, clap, dance, drum; use everyday things as an instrument.

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