



Why play with your child?

- Develops concentration skills
- Develops early learning skills
- Promotes bonding
- Develops social skills such as turn taking
- Meets child's need for attention
- Develops language skills
- Develops imaginative skills
- Its fun!

How can I play with them?

Talking and listening with your child:

- Provide a commentary on the activities that you and your child are taking part in
- Ask questions related to their play/activities
- Read with your child or just share books
- Make up plays together or re-enact stories or rhymes
- Make sure your child has the chance to finish what they want to say.

Things you can make and do with your child:

- Cooking
- Playdough
- Paper mache
- Snowflakes
- Junk modelling
- Puppets.

Physical play with your child:

- Building dens
- Obstacle courses
- Treasure hunts
- Bike/scooter rides
- Hide and seek
- Ball games.

Top tips for play

- Let your child lead the play – allow your child to choose the role that you take.
- Wherever possible make the play as practical as you can.
- Make sure that you keep the communication going between whoever is involved, such as running commentaries/asking questions.
- Be spontaneous – take advantage of things that are happening around you such as snow (sledging) or sun (paddling pools).
- Join in with their play – if they are building something ask if you can join in but sometimes they may want to play alone.
- Let them decide when they have finished an artistic creation – don't make lots of suggestions about how it could look better - it's the process that counts!
- Enjoy the experience – if you are relaxed they are more likely to be relaxed too!
- Encourage them to problem solve – don't provide all the answers for them.
- There should be a balance between your child playing on their own and you joining in.
- Physical play can be inside as well as outside.
- Play doesn't have to cost lots of money.

Examples of play

Physical:

- Rough and tumble
- Going to the park
- Cycling/scooters/skates
- Dancing
- Action songs
- Making dens (inside as well as out)
- Paint brush and water
- Construction toys
- Supastrikers.

Intellectual:

- Jigsaw puzzles
- Music play
- Mark making
- Collecting things
- Cutting and sticking
- Shape sorting
- Board games.

Emotional:

- Laughing
- Sharing a book
- Stories and rhymes
- Singing
- Role play
- Gardening.

Social:

- Board games
- Team games
- Role play (shops/doctors)
- Junk modelling
- Playing cars
- Cooking
- Puppet shows
- Sand and water play.

