

Let's Play

PLAY
IDEAS 1

ABOUT
PLAY



Play is a child's 'work'. It promotes learning, development, growth and health. Movement skills, thinking skills, language, social interaction and emotional development all happen best when your child is actively involved in an activity - when they are having fun - when they are playing!



PLAY AND DEVELOPMENT

Babies



Young babies respond actively to people. They watch faces, listen to voices, smile and make sounds. Later they discover objects to shake, drop, suck, bang, roll and crawl after. Their play centres around you: watching what you do; listening to familiar songs and rhymes; enjoying tickling games; looking at picture books with you; clambering over you; imitating sounds and words; clapping and waving bye-bye.

Toddlers



Toddlers become more interested in playing with 'things' - push/pull along toys, blocks, hammering toys, and sit and ride toys, early puzzles, sand and water. They gradually become a little more secure - playing further away from you, but still with you in sight. They will enjoy talking about play - 'all gone', 'more cars', 'big ball'. Most toddlers do not share well.

Young Children



By three and four years, children enjoy pretending: that things are something else and that they are someone else; like a crocodile, a plane, a fireman or a shopkeeper! With practice, they will learn to play socially - initially alongside others, sharing with others and gradually in cooperation with others to plan and make up all kinds of games. They will move more confidently - enjoying challenges such as trikes and bikes, playgrounds and ball games.



P.A.L. PLAY AND LEARNING PROGRAM
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WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Be involved!** You are the best plaything that your child can have. Take the time to just be with your child - blow raspberries on their tummy, let them clamber over you, play peep-o, lie on the grass and look for bugs together, let them brush your hair, make up silly songs together, draw silly faces for them and look at picture books together.
- Incorporate play into everyday activities - changing nappies, at mealtime and bath time, while driving in the car, waiting at the check-out, or hanging out the washing. The possibilities are endless and only limited by your imagination!
- Join a local playgroup. Playgroups are a good way for you to meet other parents and for your child to get to know other children. Find out more at www.playgroup.com.au
- Join your local toy library - a good way for you to try out different toys. Find your local address at www.waatl.com.au
- Turn the television OFF. Have it on only for programmes that you really want to watch or for things you want your child to watch. Having the TV on will distract you and your child from really getting into play activities together.

Take a look at all the other great PAL parent handouts for some fantastic play ideas for you and your child.

HOW TO PROMOTE PLAY

- **Play with your child** - get on the floor, in the sand pit or on the grass with your child.
- **Provide good play spaces** for your child. Put dangerous, precious or fragile objects out of reach. Make sure that the play spaces are where you are - children like to play close to you - so make the kitchen, bathroom or lounge room safe and easy places to play. Create play spaces that are easy to clean up to avoid situations where you and your child are feeling stressed or anxious about making a mess during play. Its easy when you have tables that are easily wiped, floors that are easily cleaned and furniture that can be clambered upon.
- **Follow your child's lead during play.** Let your child make choices about how things are to be done - let them become actively involved.
- **Reassure your child that mistakes are 'ok'.** Play is not about being perfect. Your child will be confident to try new things and 'have a go' at tricky things if they feel secure that you don't need them to get it right all the time.
- **Allow for repetition** - your child will 'master' things if allowed to do them over and over again.
- **Allow time to play** - don't rush your child, but do recognise when they have had enough and need a rest or a change.

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