

What the Experts Say

Play

*Patti Bokony, Teri Patrick, Stacy Fortney
UAMS Division of Health Services Research*

CONCERN

For a variety of reasons, play is a major concern of parents, educators, and physicians. Parents of preschoolers often express concern when their child's classroom activities seem to focus on play rather than academic activities. Educators face the push for a more academic focus in early childhood settings in spite of the research supporting the educational and developmental usefulness of play. The American Academy of Pediatrics, which considers play to be essential to children's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development and overall wellbeing, is concerned about fewer opportunities for children to play.¹ Time for play has been greatly reduced for many children in the United States. Hurried lifestyles, more single-parent families or two working parents, and an increased focus on academics and enrichment activities at the expense of child-centered play has limited children's play time, both indoors and outdoors. For optimal physical and mental health and development of children, it is important for families, school systems, and communities to understand the benefits of play and find ways to ensure children have opportunities for play.

RESEARCH

The research is clear that young children learn best when they have hands-on experiences. That is to say, more academic learning will occur in early childhood classrooms in which children play and explore.² Quality early childhood classrooms are those with knowledgeable teachers and quality materials that encourage learning through play. With time to explore, practice, and experience success, children develop cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional skills. For this reason, children need consistent play times both at home and at day care or school.

Montessori described play as the work of children.³ A review of early childhood research concluded play is critical to healthy brain development.⁴⁻⁶ Play is also a powerful motivator for learning – it is self-initiated, enjoyable, engaging, active, and allows children to learn through discovery. Play with others contributes to children's social and emotional development. Cognitively, play helps children adjust to school and enhances their school readiness, learning behaviors, and problem-solving skills. Failure to learn play skills may lead to challenging behaviors during play and later conduct problems and hyperactivity in the classroom.^{7,8}

What is Play?

There is no formal definition of play. Instead, play is described by its characteristics.⁹⁻¹¹ Play is spontaneous, voluntary, and fun with no other purpose in mind.¹² Play is directed by children. For example, in pretend play, children choose the play theme (house, pirates, familiar story), identify the roles (mother/father, pirate/captain, troll), organize the props (dishes, swords, dress-up clothes) and set and change the rules at their will. Children become completely engaged in the play and end it when it is no longer fun or interesting.

Games with pre-set rules, whether competitive or cooperative, do not meet the criteria for play if they require children to follow rules created by adults.¹³

Play is:

- *fun*
- *voluntary*
- *spontaneous*
- *directed by the child*
- *completely engaging*

Play and School Success

Children develop many skills during play. As play skills improve, so do children's cognitive, social, emotional, and communication and language skills.^{14,15} Piaget (1951) viewed play as a learning process where children master new developmental skills.¹⁶ Vygotsky (1978) viewed play as the time when preschool children are working at their peak, displaying their highest level of development.¹⁷ Both views emphasize the skill development that occurs during play.

Play, in many ways, is necessary for young children's development.¹⁸ Play stimulates children's brains, enhancing the development of creativity, problem-solving, logic, social knowledge, and language. Playing with others builds social competence¹⁹ and facilitates problem-solving, perspective-taking, emotional and social skills, and the development of a sense of self.²⁰ Symbolic play (pretending a block is a car) or pretend play (acting as a teacher) promotes young children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.²¹ This was seen in the study of an orphanage which found children made significant gains in motor, cognitive, and social skills when a 90-minute play session was added to their daily routine.²²

To support children's play and encourage skill development, adults must understand how play influences development. A skilled teacher understands she may be encouraging a future scientist when she provides opportunities to explore, compare, predict, and look at cause and effect through block and construction play or in the science center. Children who learn to communicate, understand others emotions, cooperate, problem-solve or negotiate during pretend play develop the skills to become social workers, teachers, politicians, and much more.

Cognitive skills. Play involves children in many cognitive tasks as they make choices, sort, compare, combine, think, understand cause and effect, solve problems, direct the play activity, and use mental trial and error to solve problems.

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- When children have a variety of materials available, they **choose** between what is useful or not useful, what will fit or not fit.
 - As early as infancy, children understand **relationships between objects** (baby and blanket), **relationships between objects and words** (say “ball” to get a ball), and **relationships among objects, words, and ideas** (play mother takes care of baby). This prepares them to move to higher level cognitive skills later in school such as understanding more abstract relationships in geometry.
 - Play is where children first **learn symbolic representation or that one object can represent another** (block can be a car). This is a precursor to understanding abstract symbols (i.e. numbers and letters) and the development of mental abilities of association, logical memory, and abstract thinking.²³ Higher order thinking skills are necessary for the demands of high school, college and later, many if not all professional careers such as law or medicine.
 - Play is the most common way children learn about the **math concept of sets** (farm animals or zoo animals) necessary for basic math skills. Play provides opportunity for the child to **discriminate and classify**, which are both important precursors to math, reading, and science. Discrimination and classification skills allow the child to distinguish differences between sensations, sounds, objects, self and others, functions of objects, and characteristics or attributes (color, shape, and size) of objects. The child practices this cognitive skill by putting all the same size pebbles in one container, putting all the dinosaurs in one area, or putting the rectangular blocks together on the shelf. This practice during play is the foundation for development of pre-academic skills and allows for more complex discrimination of categories and associations later in science (mammals, reptiles) math (odds, evens) and language (bear, bare).
 - Because play is enjoyable and engaging, it fosters the development of **focus, concentration, and persistence** during preschool which later helps children more easily adapt to classroom demands. Children who have not learned persistence through their play in preschool will be less likely to be persistent with later school demands including homework.
 - Pretend play in which children **plan time, action, sequences, and roles** leads to academic skills of listening, storytelling, expression, reading and math skills, and social-emotional skills of self-regulation and problem solving.^{24, 25}
 - As preschool children learn **rules about play**, they understand breaking certain rules (play fair; not putting away toys) stops play and also understand that more able players support less able players to keep the play going.
 - Children who play with many **literacy materials** (books, magazines, signs, paper, pencil) in preschool are more likely to be spontaneous readers and talk more at age 5.²⁶

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- **Complex block play**, which involves a high level of symbolic play, during preschool age is related to higher seventh-grade math test scores and higher high school math grades, math courses, and honors courses.²⁷
 - Children learn primarily through **imitation** and imitative abilities are based on a child's experiences. Beginning about 9 months, children imitate simple gestures (clapping, pursing lips, 'kissing'). Around 15 months they are able to defer imitation that is, imitate behaviors and roles seen at an earlier time. Verbal imitation begins with familiar sounds then moves to being able to imitate new or unfamiliar sounds. As children learn words they imitate first familiar, then unfamiliar words. Imitating adults or more mature peers helps children move from simple to more complex play:²⁸
 - Children move from **single scheme** (pushing a car) to **complex, symbolic scheme sequences** (imitates a tow truck picking up a car and calling for help).
 - Children move from copying simple marks and strokes, to copying shapes and later more complicated designs or images.
 - **Problem solving skills** develop from simple use of movement and senses to being able to understand rules and relationships, observe, listen, and begin to use diplomacy.²⁸
 - How to get an object (reaching and grasping) and make actions recur (shake it again to hear rattle) 6-9 months
 - How to perform actions and use adults to achieve results (knock cup off tray, point or vocalize to get something) 9-12 months
 - How things work (balls rolls; squares do not), how they relate to other objects (nesting blocks), and cause and effect (push the button to get the pop-up or noise) 12-18 months
 - How to make more precise actions, and take instructions from adults (simple stacking of blocks; go get the ball) 18-24 months
 - How to apply skills to new situations by reasoning from a past situation (trial and error) 2-4 years
 - How to help another person solve a problem (child says to another having difficulty with a puzzle or multi-step task, "It's my turn. Watch me.")
 - Advance planning (looking over various blocks to decide which would best make a fence; deciding who will play which role and how the pretend scenario will unfold) 4 years and up

Cognitive skills learned in play:

making choices • sorting • comparing • combining • problem solving •
discriminating • making sets • using symbols • planning • reasoning •
pretending • imitating

Motor skills and coordination. Active play allows children to develop large muscle motor skills such as throwing, catching, running, skipping, hopping, tumbling, and climbing. Physical activity in childhood sets the stage for a life time of healthy active living. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommends that preschoolers have at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play and several hours of unstructured play daily.²⁹ When children repeat movements or sequences of movements, they stimulate the growth of neural pathways in the brain so their movements become quicker, smoother, more accurate, and more complex. Fine motor tasks such as building with small items, inserting puzzle pieces, painting, using tongs or spoons to move small items, molding playdough, and stringing beads develop the skills and eye-hand coordination necessary to handle writing tools as well as focus attention.³⁰ Using large and small muscles in play also contributes to the growth and control of sensory systems such as visual-motor perception necessary for writing and reading. For children who have risk factors for academic failure, having fine motor skills when they enter kindergarten, particularly good visual motor skills, predicts better math and reading achievement at the end of first grade.³¹ Therefore, play in preschool that allows for development of fine and gross motor skills increases the likelihood of school success.

Motor skills developed in play:

throwing • catching, running • skipping • hopping • tumbling • climbing • riding tricycles • handling small objects

Language skills. Young children enjoy learning new words, songs, rhymes, and using words to get attention and share their thoughts and feelings. As children learn one object can represent another in play (block is a car or a building), they learn words represent objects as well (the word car is a mental representation of a car; the squiggly lines of the word dog is a symbol for a dog). Experts who explored the relationship between children's play and language found a relationship between the complexity of play and the length of verbal utterances (sentence length). Simple play schemes are linked with single-word utterances and more complex play is linked to longer sentences and language competence.³² It is important to note that children use more symbolic and spoken language during play with peers than during play with adults. Other children, parents and other adults encourage children to develop and practice socially acceptable speech and language during play. When playing with peers, children are more likely to practice sounds, intonations, spontaneous rhyming, word play (fantasy, nonsense, and humor), and rules of conversations. Pretend play is a critical and rich opportunity for language when adults use open-ended, questions that continue the child's topic. Pretend play leads to more spoken words, longer sentences, play-related speech, and a larger vocabulary.^{33,}
³⁴

Language skills developed in play:

words • songs • rhymes • communicate thoughts and feelings • mental representation • rules of language

Social-emotional skills. Children who are able to play well with their age mates are more likely to be actively engaged in classroom learning activities while children who have difficulty playing with others are more likely to display inattention, passivity, and lack of motivation.⁷ Playing with peers gives children an opportunity to practice and improve social and relationship skills.³⁵ With adult facilitation during play, preschool children learn to share, take turns, cooperate, negotiate, compromise, try on different roles, take another's perspective, be empathetic, make friends, be a leader, be a follower, follow rules, and get along with adults and peers. During play with others, children learn that for the play to continue, they must control their impulses and aggression, follow rules, and respond to the others' behavior. Children who are disruptive or unable to control their emotions during play often have conduct problems and are hyperactive in the classroom.⁷ Children constantly monitor each other to make sure everyone is following the rules (not moving when someone calls "freeze"). Through play, children learn to distinguish between fantasy and reality and to read and interpret intentions of others.³⁶ As children encounter problems with friends, they figure out strategies that work and those that do not. For example, they learn how to solve problems in ways that maintain friendships (e.g. take turns, share, wait).

Play promotes the development of children's emotional skills because it requires children to think before acting and to understand and respond to the perspective of others.²⁰ Pretend play in a safe place allows children to express their feelings, work out different ways to handle their feelings, and find ways to feel in control. Children under stress often use play to work through issues, complications, fears or anxieties, let off steam and reduce stress, anger, and anxiety which might lead to aggressive or other acting out behaviors. During play, children can direct the action. This allows them to feel in control and handle feelings of helplessness, anger, and frustration. During play children often re-enact big events in their lives such as the birth of a brother or sister, moving to a new home, or the loss of a familiar caregiver, trying out different solutions or endings, allowing them to work out their feelings and feel in control.³⁷

Social-emotional skills developed in play:

share • take turns • cooperate • negotiate • compromise • role play • perspective taking • empathy • making friends • being a leader • being a follower • following rules • control impulses and aggression • solve problems • interpret intention of others

Motivation. Mastery motivation is the ability to stay with a task until a problem is solved. Children are born with an internal drive to master a skill, behavior, outcome, or achieve a goal. Mastery motivation is also called persistence or the ability to "stick-to-it."³⁸ Mastery motivation is most easily developed during play when children determinedly and enthusiastically practice a new skill until they can do it easily. Motivated children enjoy completing a task and solving a problem without relying on adult praise or approval. Learning based on one's interests is enjoyable and eagerly approached, rather than being tiresome or boring. Children who play with a specific

interest in mind (e.g. music, planes, fashion, sport) are more likely to be more motivated, play at a deeper level, and acquire more knowledge than children with no particular interests so it is important for adults to notice what interests a child has and encourage the exploration and development of those interests.³⁹

Preschool is a critical period for developing motivation. Mastery motivation developed in preschool predicts school success by age eight.⁴⁰ By the teenage years, youth who are highly motivated are generally more satisfied and have higher family satisfaction, self-esteem, interpersonal relations, grade-point average and school belonging, and significantly lower depression, anxiety and social stress than youth with low motivation.⁴¹ During the preschool years, persistence practiced and learned through play can become a lifetime habit. Being responsive to children, considering their developmental level, and allowing appropriate choices and independence during play greatly supports the development of mastery motivation in infants and young children.⁴²
⁴³ Caregivers promote the development of motivation when they:⁴²

- Respond (e.g. smile back, respond to infant's vocalizations and child's questions or comments, praise effort).
- Provide a variety of toys and toys that are interesting and respond to child's actions.
- Allow children to choose and explore with support (but not interference) as needed, versus choosing for the child and/or directing them.
- Provide a single demonstration and then allow the child to explore.
- Encourage children's interests.
- Rekindle a child's interest when it is waning or redirect to a new interest.
- Encourage children to talk about their activities through commenting ("You wrote a lot of words") or asking open-ended questions ("What do you think the people are saying?").
- Use rewards sparingly and cautiously and avoid giving rewards for activities that are already interesting to children.
- Stay near, intervene early in conflict and help children problem-solve by asking leading questions ("What else could you do? What would happen if...?").
- Simplify the task or provide assistance when the child is frustrated or fearful until the child is ready to take on more of the responsibility (i.e. point to where a puzzle piece might fit but let them insert it; draw a line on the glass to show when to stop pouring; standing near the climbing structure until the child has the confidence to hang alone).
- Allow the child to stay with the project to completion.

Development of Play

Children's ability to play matures over time in a predictable sequence. Children move through levels of play with increasingly more sophisticated engagement, social interaction, object use, symbolic and representational play, imitation, problem-solving, and classification skills. An understanding of the developmental sequences for these skills can help teachers and parents know what types of play to expect from children and what types of toys or props might be most useful to children at their current level of play and to move to the next level of play. It is important to note that children who are under stress may revert to earlier levels of play, but generally should make progress toward increasingly more mature play.

Play both reflects children's current development and simultaneously influences the ongoing development of language, social-emotional, and physical skills.^{44, 45} Children function near their optimum level of development during play. They test their limits, practice new skills, rehearse new roles, and solve problems.¹⁷ By kindergarten, children's play has progressed from an infant's simple sensorimotor exploration of objects to sophisticated pretend and cooperative play with others. During the preschool years, social play with other children gradually replaces solitary play and children begin to rely less on adults and more on their peers. The development of play can be considered by both the level and types of involvement with others (social skills) and the how the child thinks and plans (cognitive skills).

- **Levels of engagement** – The two key elements of engagement in play are how deeply children are involved in the play and how well they connect with others. The level of engagement may range from nonsocial and passive play to fully engaged and interactive social play. Nonsocial play is divided into three types: 1) ***solitary and passive*** (quietly involved in exploratory or constructive play such as building with blocks or drawing); 2) ***solitary and active*** (infant repeating sensorimotor activities such as banging or shaking); or 3) ***reticent play*** (onlooker and unoccupied). Solitary passive play is common among preschoolers but solitary active play is rare.⁴⁶ Solitary play has implications for development:^{47, 48}
 - When a child does not engage in play or does not play well with others, he is likely to be socially isolated which can lead to poor academic and mental health outcomes.
 - Onlooker or unoccupied play has been linked to high self-control (overcontrol), anxiety and negative emotions.
 - Solitary active play has been associated with negative mood, low self-control, poor emotion regulation, and social isolation.
 - Passive solitary play has been linked to more positive emotions and being easily soothed when upset.

Disengaged children are unoccupied or are onlookers. The unoccupied child is not involved in any particular activity. He observes what seems interesting at the moment.

When nothing of interest is happening, he walks around, looks around, or plays with his/her fingers, hair, or an object. The onlooker child watches other children playing, staying close enough to interact. She may talk to the children who are playing but does not join in the play. Children entering preschool for the first time may spend the first weeks exploring the classroom and school as an onlooker before they determine that it is safe and begin to play.⁴⁹ Adults can help by inviting a disengaged child to join a play group and gradually withdrawing as the child gains confidence.

- **Social stages of play** – Social play culminates in cooperative play and develops as children learn to coordinate their own thoughts and actions with those of others.⁵⁰ In cooperative play, children play with others in a way that is not overly active or rough and results in few instances of misinterpretation, aggression, or accidental injury. Examples of cooperative play include jump rope, hopscotch, holding hands, investigating what things are heavier and lighter on a scale, playing a circle or hand game, and creating a pretend play scenario with multiple roles.⁵¹ In preschool classrooms, more cooperative play occurs in the computer, block, and housekeeping centers than in the manipulatives center.⁵² Adult modeling (“I’m going to share my red blocks with you”) and verbal descriptions of play (“You are driving your car really fast today – like a race car driver.”) increases children’s ability to take turns and have variety in their play.⁵³ Observations of children’s stages of social play provides clues to supporting social play:²⁰

Solitary play
0 – 24 months

Child plays alone with toys that are different from those of the other children and is focused on his personal activity with no interest in others; is predominant during the first year when the child focuses on exploring self and objects with their senses.

Adults help by providing a variety of objects or toys; note which sounds, sights, textures child appears to explore for longer periods; be aware of signs of boredom and provide changing stimulus.

Parallel play
2 – 3 years

Child plays beside other children rather than with them and while there is no interaction between them, the toys are similar.

Adults help by providing multiples of similar toys in group setting; playing near child with a different object or toy and exchanging at child’s request; make comments on what child and self are doing.

Associative play
2 – 6 years

Child plays with other children, sharing toys and interacting; is involved in similar but not identical activity, doing what he wishes but is part of a large group.

Adults help by playing along while modeling and verbalizing social skills such as sharing and taking turns (i.e. “I’m sharing my blocks with you.”); help children problem solve when

	disputes arise; comment on children's actions to help them notice each other's play.
Cooperative play 4 years +	<p>Child participates in organized play; is part of a group focused on a specific project or scenario involving assigned roles, a theme, or leaders and followers; requires a mastery of a range of play skills, a degree of self-control, and the ability to understand the perspective of other children.</p> <p>Adults help by continuing to model and verbalize social skills; facilitate problem-solving; praise cooperative skills; allow children to develop their own games rules; help children with less mature social skills use words and actions to join others; remain near enough to step in and help if needed without dominating.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cognitive Stages of Play. The cognitive development of play moves from an infant's exploration of their world using their senses and motor skills to complex play involving a variety of skills such as discrimination, symbolic representation, and problem-solving. As cognitive, language and communication skills develop, play becomes more mature and sophisticated.^{28,32}
Exploratory or sensorimotor play 0 - 24 months	<p>Infants explore objects by repeating sensorimotor actions such as mouthing, grasping, banging, or shaking. They gradually show increased attention to the characteristics or attributes of the objects (color, size, shape, texture) and begin to wave, push, pull, poke, tear, and turn objects.</p> <p>Adults help by imitating the child's actions (bang on the book), allowing the child plenty of time to explore and bang, and then modeling something else to do with the object (turn the pages of the book rather than banging it). Introduce simple objects that can later be used in constructive or pretend play.</p>
Relational or functional play 9 – 24 months	<p>This type of play predominates from 15 – 21 months. Toddlers begin to act on more than one object at a time and relate one object to another. At first, without knowledge of the typical use of the objects the child will stack, bump together, or put one object in another. As the child moves through this stage, the play becomes more consistent with the actual purpose of that object (rolling a ball, feeding a doll, pushing a car).</p> <p>Adults help by modeling the functional use of objects if the child continues to use mostly exploratory play (talk on a play phone after child has put it down). Provide simple functional toys (balls, drums, cars), everyday objects (cup, spoon, brush), and objects that are related spatially (child can put in, on, or</p>

	<p>together). Examples would be nesting cups, form boards, boxes, or dishes.</p>
<p>Constructive play 24 months +</p>	<p>After a child is able to play with related objects and have an intended goal, constructive play begins. When children have a goal in mind and construct using various materials (blocks, stringing beads, Legos) they are practicing coordination, symbolic play, and creative thinking.</p> <p>Adults help by providing a variety of blocks, clay, sand, and recycled household items such as empty cereal boxes or popsicle sticks. Adults can model creating a structure that goes along with the child's play theme. For example, if the child is playing with cars, adult may say "My car is going to the movies. What can I use for the movie?" And then begin to put blocks or other items together to create a simple building.</p>
<p>Symbolic or representational play 21 – 72 months</p>	<p>In early pretend play, toddlers use everyday objects and the action is on self. Actions may be a routine that normally occurs at a different time (pretending to sleep when it is neither nap time nor nighttime) or imitation of other (driving a car, feeding a baby). Preschoolers include others in their play schemes and they move from sequences with 2 or 3 steps to several steps (feeds baby, changes diapers, puts to bed, does dishes, goes to store).</p> <p>Early symbolic play has a single schemes or scripts. Around 15-24 months children begin to combine and sequence more than one event in a play scheme (feed the doll, put it in bed). This progresses to multiple schemes and the complexity and planning involved increases (what do we do first, next, etc?). Play schemes/scripts become increasingly spontaneous, varied, complex, and longer with age. Preschoolers act out an increasing variety of roles with greater differentiation, use of props, and interaction with others. They are also able to substitute non-realistic objects (use a hairbrush for a microphone). Eventually, some of their pretend play can be done without props. The child may use imaginary objects and then create imaginary characters (the entire playground is the ocean and the imaginary bad pirates are put in an invisible jail).</p> <p>By age 4, a child will incorporate at least two roles that interact (teacher and student; doctor and patient) and by 5 years, play may involve three roles. By 6 years, children understand that one person can have multiple roles (teacher and mother).</p> <p>Adults help by providing props and by sensitively entering the</p>

	<p>play, building on the scheme or actions the child has initiated, commenting on child's actions and modeling extending the theme, being more than one role (mother and dancer). Adults can provide prompts to facilitate problem solving as needed, and be aware of when to back away and just observe if not needed.</p>
<p>Rough & tumble play 36 month +</p>	<p>This type of play predominates for 5 – 6 year olds. It is not aggression. In this type of play children practice cooperation, reading others cues, entering a play group, learning and following rules (mostly child created rules). It helps prepare children for higher level play of games with rules.</p> <p>Adults can help by coaching child in how to read cues, avoid aggression, and providing props to help extend a dramatic play theme.</p>
<p>Games with rules 60 months +</p>	<p>This level of play can foster imagination, curiosity, and experimentation. Early on children make their own games and rules and as they mature are eventually able to follow established rules. Some games may involve both physical and cognitive skills such as hopscotch and or soccer. Some games require memory and strategic thinking.</p> <p>Adults can help by providing easy games such as “Go Fish”, “Chutes and Ladders”, or organizing a game like freeze tag. Be tolerant of rule bending and help children talk about why a particular rule is useful. Avoid emphasizing competitiveness (winners and losers). Instead guide children to cooperate, and problem solve how to “do your best”, play fair, and understand others thought and actions.</p>

The categories or stages of cognitive play are in hierarchical order. Play at one stage helps the child be ready for the next stage; but, as the child moves to higher level play, the lower levels do not drop out. An older child might explore a new object using all senses in a more mature manner (rather than mouthing).³² Scientists and doctors continue to explore with their senses. Carpenters and architects continue to construct.

Environmental Influences

Children's environments support and encourage play or stifle play. The goal for all young children should be that their learning environments at both home and school encourage play.⁵⁴ Play is influenced by socioeconomic status, culture and nationality of children. The most powerful influence on children's play is adults' support of children's play.

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- **Structure** – Adults help children structure play by providing a safe place to play (yard, park, indoor play space), promoting a sense of emotional security, providing appropriate materials (blocks, transportation toys, dress-up clothes, climbing structures) and providing physical assistance as needed to complete a task (fit objects together or dress the doll) until the child becomes more able. Children’s play is influenced by the number of children, child to adult ratio, monitoring and supervision, location (i.e. inside or outside), the materials, classroom arrangements in child care, and toys (e.g. degree of sex stereotyping, open-endedness).

 - **Adult-Child Relationship** – Children’s relationship with their parents influences their play. Children with secure attachment have pretend play that is richer, has greater flexibility, is more complex, and involves a greater range of emotions. In contrast, children with insecure attachment have play that is “unpeopled” (e.g. lacking people figures in play).³⁷ Watching children play or joining in their play offers parents a glimpse into the child’s world as well as providing opportunities to give children their full attention, talk with them, and offer gentle, nurturing guidance and care.⁴ Parents can share in children’s delight when they make discoveries or accomplish new tasks or skills. Play provides an opportunity for parents to interact with their children in a positive way. Because conflict in the parent–child relationship is linked with aggression at school, positive parent-child interactions that occur during play can be an important strategy to prevent aggression.⁵⁵ Thus, talking and playing with children helps to build enduring relationships between parents and children.^{6, 25}

 - **Adult Support of Play** – A major role of parents is to provide quality learning experiences (stimulation) for their children. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends pediatricians encourage children to play by helping parents understand the importance of play for all areas of development (cognitive, language, social, physical, and emotional development).⁵⁶
 - Parents who expand their children’s horizons by providing new information and ideas stimulate their children’s early language and cognitive development.⁵⁷
 - When parents express emotional warmth and sensitivity to their children’s cues and let their children take the lead in play, they contribute to their children’s early cognitive, language, and social development.^{58, 59}
 - Parents provide high quality supervision when they support positive peer interaction without taking over or dominating the play (e.g. help them find solutions to problems during conflict).⁶⁰ For girls, close monitoring during play is linked with less conflict in friendships, higher positive qualities, higher prosocial behavior, and less depression.⁶¹
 - When adults know the skills of high-level play and are able to guide children towards those skills, children’s play is richer and more imaginative – which has positive effect on cognition, language, emotion regulation, social skills, and use of symbols.⁶²

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- Children whose parents provide choices and affirmations (positive statements) engage in more symbolic play – which is necessary for cognitive development.⁶³
 - When adults use open-ended questions that continue the topic of interest to the child during conversations, children speak in longer and more complex sentences – which is a pre-reading skill.³⁴
 - When parents model (pretend to cook a meal) and provide brief directions (“First, we cook the bacon, then the eggs.”), children can learn how to act out various roles in pretend play.

Vygotsky (1976) emphasized that adults help children learn when they provide opportunities for children to play within their ‘zone of proximal development’ (i.e. just beyond their comfort zone) where they can stretch and go without getting frustrated.²³ Adults help children do this through scaffolding. Scaffolding occurs when more skilled play partners support the development of new play skills. For example, a parent scaffolds an infant’s engagement in play when they get their attention, give a clear “play face” and use a high-pitched voice. Caregivers expand children’s play when they:⁶⁴

- Provide information (“The straight side goes against the edge), help think of a play idea (“I wonder if we can build a house with our blocks”), ask leading questions (“Wow you are driving fast – are you a race car?”), introduce ideas such as suggesting blocks can be used not only to build a tower, but to build a bridge or a house.
 - Show interest by listening and paying attention to what children are saying and doing.
 - Talk with children to encourage them to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, use longer sentences, and take turns talking on a topic.
 - Provide open-ended toys that help children engage in symbolic play (pretend the hairbrush is a microphone, build a house with Legos©).
 - Show physical affection.
- **Fathers** – Although most research on parent-child play focuses on mothers, research does support the importance of fathers’ play with children. Fathers’ play does differ from mothers’ play with their children. Mothers tend to engage in more pretend play, particularly with girls, while fathers tend to engage in more physical play, particularly with boys.⁶⁵ Fathers often provide a greater variety of play experiences than mothers provide. Compared to mothers, fathers spend more time playing than doing caregiving tasks with children, interacting with them primarily as playmates.⁶⁶ Because of the quantity and quality of their play, fathers are often the primary and preferred playmates in the home.⁶⁷ Father-child play not only is fun, it supports early development. A father’s responsiveness and instruction during play is strongly related to children’s early cognitive development.⁶⁸ Father involvement and engagement with their infants and toddlers is related to children’s development of cognitive competence.^{69, 70} Greater

complexity in father-toddler social play with toys (i.e. exchange toys, have conversation, play games, and respond to the other) has been found to predict better outcomes in cognitive and social development for young children.⁷¹ Fathers' support of toddlers' exploratory play is critical to the development of secure attachment which is an essential component of social-emotional development.⁵⁸ Interventions focusing on father-child play have been found to positively influence father-toddler interactions in ways that enhance early development indicating this is an important target for interventions.⁷¹

- **Gender Differences** – Boys and girls follow the same developmental pathway in their play. Both boys and girls progress from non-symbolic to symbolic play and from parallel to cooperative play at similar rates. If given equal opportunity to play with materials such as markers, blocks, and dolls, boys and girls play at the same level. However, differences do exist: boys are more likely than girls to develop extremely intense interests for play⁷² and be involved in physically active play while girls are more likely to engage in pretend play.⁶⁵ Boys and girls begin to play separately between 3 and 4 years of age.^{73, 74} As early as age three children identify 'girl toys' and 'boy toys' and behave as they think they 'should.'⁷⁵ Girls know they are expected to play with dolls and dishes and boys to play with cars, trucks, and tools.

Many reasons for this have been suggested: boys are naturally more active and aggressive than girls, cultures socialize children into gender roles, and media advertising stereotypes genders. Children learn about gender-related characteristics during preschool.⁷⁶ Children begin to understand gender identity by age three. By age 4 to 5 years, children understand the concept of gender stability (i.e. gender will not change with the passing of time).

Parents are a major influence on children's development of gender identity. At three years of age, children can accurately predict their parents' opinions about cross-gender play. In fact, there is often a mismatch between parents self-reported beliefs about gender stereotyping of toys and preschool children's perceptions of the messages they have received about gender and play from their parents.⁷⁷ Fathers' beliefs are more closely associated with their children's gender beliefs than mothers.⁷⁸ Generally fathers encourage more gender typical play with both boys and girls while mothers encourage more gender neutral play in boys than girls.⁷⁹ Preschool-age children of parents with more traditional values (i.e. emphasize importance of separate roles and rules for each gender) tend to be early labelers of gender (i.e. more aware of cultural stereotypes) and play with more gender stereotyped toys; children of parents who are less rigid identify gender at an average age.^{80, 81} Children of more egalitarian families (i.e. father more open to female equity) are slower to acquire gender knowledge.⁸² Fathers who are more involved in their child's caregiving have children who have less knowledge about gender stereotypes and who have less stereotyped preferences for toys and future occupations.⁷⁸ All children 'bend' a little, or act like members of the other gender (gender-bending), during pretend play as their interests emerge within the play scheme.⁸³ Gender-bending occurs as children explore the categorical concept of gender (e.g. a boy can put the doll to bed, a girl can use a hammer to repair the broken

sink).⁸⁴ Gender-bending is consistent with a preschooler's increasing ability to use their imagination to act out an increasing variety of roles with greater differentiation.

Threats to Play

Although many families can successfully meet their countless and varied commitments without sacrificing high quality parent-child time, some families find it difficult to schedule in time for parent-child play that supports their child's growth and development.

- **Family structure** – Changes in family structure influence the amount of time and supervision children have or need for play. The increased number of single-parent homes, two parent homes where both work outside the home, and lack of available extended families reduce the number of adults who are available to watch children or play with children in the home as parents must balance the demands of work and home.⁸⁵
- **Space**– Children have less time to play and fewer opportunities for exploratory play. Neighborhoods have been generally associated with more spontaneous free play; however, many parents report giving less freedom for their children to play outside and unsupervised than they themselves had due to lack of available play space and parents' fears of strangers, unsafe neighborhoods, and traffic.⁸⁶ Play opportunities for a child who lives in an unsafe neighborhood will differ significantly from a child living in safer conditions. Family income also influences the places where children play. Children from low income families spend significantly more time playing close to their homes and have less access to commercial activity facilities than those from middle and high income families.⁸⁷ Low income children have fewer opportunities to play in natural environments and with naturally occurring play materials. For children in poverty, quality early education is an opportunity for enriching materials, nature study, and safe, adult-supervised play.
- **Academic pressure**– Children are increasingly hurried to prepare for their future at earlier ages.^{88, 89} The increased pressure on secondary schools to increase the number of students obtaining scholarships and excel on national exams has resulted in a national trend to focus on the academic fundamentals of reading and arithmetic in early childhood.¹ Parents report children have less free time at home and free time is often replaced by structured activities focusing on academics.^{85, 90} Valuing academic preparation over play may reflect parent's misunderstanding that play undermines early academic learning.
- **Marketing**– Marketing messages convey the idea that good parents are those who provide their children every opportunity to excel, buy an abundance of commercial enrichment materials, and ensure their children participate in a wide variety of activities.⁸⁸ Parents are encouraged to purchase educational videos, computer programs, and specialized books and toys to promote learning.⁸⁵ Academic and activity enrichment programs designed for children are available in many communities.

The heavy marketing of these tools and programs convince many parents that they are a requirement of good parenting and are necessary for optimal development.²⁴

- **Organized activities**—For many children, less time is available to fully develop a play episode due to scheduling of adult directed and adult supervised activities. This is especially true for middle class families in which the emphasis on organized activities (sports, classes) has reduced children’s opportunity for free play. Significant time and family financial resources are spent arranging special activities or transporting children between those activities.^{89, 91} Like a domino effect, when children’s schedules become tightly packed with organized, adult-directed activities, the downtime that allows parents and children productive time for interaction decreases and children have less time for free, child-directed play which protects against the effect of pressure and stress and enhances development.⁸⁹
- **Electronic Media**—Electronic media have become a key strategy for managing households.⁸⁵ Rather than actively playing, children are being passively entertained through television or computer/video games. Although children may enjoy electronic media, it is not considered play and takes away from precious time that could be spent in enriching play. Evidence is mounting that this passive entertainment may have some harmful effects. For example, watching either violent or nonviolent television before age three has been found to be significantly associated with later problems with attention.⁹²

RECOMMENDATIONS

When adults can identify mature play skills and understand the sequence in which children develop them, they can better support children’s play in a way to promote learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other developmental experts offer recommendations for parents to encourage learning through play:⁹³

1. **Educate families regarding play as a healthy, essential part of childhood.**
Emphasize that although parents should monitor play for safety, a large portion of play should be directed by the child, not by the adults.
2. **Emphasize adult role in ensuring play.** Allow children to explore a variety of interests in a balanced way without feeling pressured to excel in each area, emphasizing self-correcting practice to learn new skills.
 - a. **Provide time** – The child’s daily schedule should include time for outside play, both at home and school. Children should have a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous play daily. This may be a challenge for many families due to long hours at work and child care and use of electronic media (TV, video games, etc.).

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- b. **Provide space/place** – Play space and play varies depending on the age of the child. It may be in the home, yard, or neighborhood. The space should be safe, but at the same time allow the child enough freedom to move. Parks and playgrounds are great, but space at home that is available routinely is important. For a baby, it might be a blanket under a tree; for older children, a tree to climb or space to run.
 - c. **Provide materials** – Materials can be purchased toys, but many natural items found outside and recycled materials can be just as good as or even better than expensive, purchased toys. Provide a variety of play experiences and materials in the home.
 3. **Educate parents regarding the stages of play.** Give parents concrete examples of developmentally appropriate play activities for infants – preschoolers. Provide information on the progression and acquisition of cognitive and social skills and how adults can enhance this process. Describe how these levels of play are the foundation for later academic learning and life skills.
 4. **Educate families regarding threats to play.** Encourage parents to ensure their children have ample, time to play away from electronic media, academic pressure and competitive, adult organized activities. Provide information on why these are not true forms of play. Provide information on safe play spaces in their area and on how to include play time throughout daily family routines. Help parents be creative in providing time and space for their child to play and unwind.
 5. **Model and discuss how adults support children’s play.** Adults promote more mature play when they help children to engage in play and provide enriching materials that help children develop complex and varied play schemes to have in their repertoire.¹⁵
 - a. Reinforce the message that parents provide learning experiences (stimulation) when they spend time playing with their children. Show and tell that children make more gains toward academic learning with hands-on experiences in which children play and explore both at home and school. When parents let their children take the lead in play, ask open-ended questions, and share in their child’s delight they contribute to their children’s early cognitive, language, and social development.
 - b. Model imaginary play. Expand their play schemes (feed the doll, put the doll to bed) into longer and more complex sequences (plays the mother who takes care of family, goes to work, visits with friends, etc). Read stories with children to help learn words related to themes and plan roles for pretend play.
 - c. Positive parent-child interaction during play can reduce or prevent aggression at school. Remind parents that valuable and useful character traits that prepare children for success arise from a firm grounding in parental love, playing together, role modeling, and guidance, rather than organized activities or academic commitments. Parent-child bond is enhanced through playing together.
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6. **Educate parents about quality child care.** – Educate parents that quality child care and early education programs help children learn through well planned play opportunities and offer more than “academic preparedness” when they emphasize physical, social, and emotional development of children as well as cognitive development. Teachers facilitate learning by providing quality materials and supporting play.
 7. **Educate parents on strategies to promote mastery motivation** – Scaffold children’s play to allow them to have control (i.e. set goals, make choices); provide moderately challenging activities; recognize children’s effort, persistence and attention; emphasize enjoyment of trying and partial success; and encourage them to evaluate their own accomplishments.^{42, 43}

RESOURCES

Books on play for parents:

Elkind, D. (2007). *The Power of Play: How Spontaneous, Imaginative Activities Lead to Happier, Healthier Children*. Da Capo Press.

Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R.M., & Eyer, D. (2003). *Einstein Never Used Flash Cards How Our Children Really Learn-- And Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less*. New York, NY: Rodale Books.

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Quick Reference

**PLAY – WHAT IS IT?
02-A1a**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 2*)

- Play is critical to healthy development in all domains.
- Play is fun, active, spontaneous, voluntary, child directed, and has no end goal in mind.

Parent Skills:

1. Defines play as voluntary, fun, active, and child-directed.
2. Identifies skills child displays during play.
3. Provides a variety of play opportunity for child.

Parent tip:

PLAY – WHAT IS IT?

02-A1a

Parents,

All children play. Play is fun, active, spontaneous, and voluntary. Play is directed by children with no end goal in mind. Play allows children to explore, use imagination, and express feelings. They test their limits, practice new skills, rehearse roles, and solve problems. Children enjoy making up the rules and changing them. All of these things prepare children for school and adulthood.

By watching children play, we can see their development. They move from playing by themselves to playing with others, from banging a toy to building with toys, and from imitating to creating new stories in their play.

True play is not adult-directed. Electronic games, video, and TV are not play.

JUGAR – QUE ES ESTO?

Padres,

Todos los niños juegan. Jugar es divertido, activo, espontáneo, y voluntario. Jugar esta dirigido a los niños sin ninguna meta final en la mente. Jugar les permite a los niños explorar, usar la imaginación y expresar sentimientos. Ellos prueban sus límites, practican nuevas habilidades ensayan nuevos roles, y resuelven problemas. Los niños disfrutan inventando las reglas y cambiándolas. Todas estas cosas preparan a los niños para el colegio y la edad adulta.

Mirando los niños jugar, nosotros podemos observar su desarrollo. Ellos se mueven de jugar por si mismos a jugar con otros, de golpear un juguete a construir con juguetes, y de imitar a crear nuevas historias con sus juegos.

El verdadero juego no es dirigido por adultos. Juegos electrónicos, video y TV no son juegos.

Quick Reference

**PLAY AND LEARNING
02-A1b**

Parent Message (see *Experts page 2-7*)

Play is important to healthy brain, physical, and social development which contributes to school success.

Parent Skills:

1. Identifies benefits of play for children's school success.
2. Enjoys listening to teacher talk about child's learning through play at school.
3. Reports to teacher on child's learning play at home.

Parent tip:

PLAY AND LEARNING 02-A1b

Dear Parents,

There is more to play than meets the eye. Playing now helps my brain grow so I can be ready for school. Watch me play and learn:

- Math - When I play with toys, I count, sort, compare, and combine toys.
- Language – I practice sounds, rhyming, humor and conversations.
- Attention – I learn to focus and concentrate when I play.
- Motivation to learn – I get practice “sticking to it” when I can play for long periods of time. If I have not learned to persist (stick to it) during play, then it is not likely that I will be able to do it with my schoolwork later.
- Social skills – I learn to share, take turns, cooperate, and solve problems nicely. Kids who get along with friends, do better in school.
- Behavior – I let off steam during play. That helps me mind better later.

Love,
Your Child

JUGAR Y APRENDER

Queridos Padres,

Hay más por satisfacer que jugar. Jugar ahora ayuda a mi cerebro a crecer entonces puede estar listo para el colegio. Obsérvenme jugar y aprender:

- Matemáticas- Cuando yo juego con juguetes, yo cuento, clasifico, comparo, y combino estos.
- Lenguaje – yo practico sonidos, ritmos, humor y conversaciones.
- Atención – Yo aprendo a enfocarme y a concentrarme cuando yo juego.
- Motivación para aprender – Yo obtengo practica “No abandonando” cuando yo puedo jugar por un largo periodo de tiempo. Si no he aprendido a persistir (abandonar) en el juego, luego esto no me gustara y seré capas de hacerlo después con mis trabajos de el colegio.
- Habilidades Sociales – Yo aprendo a compartir, tomar turnos, cooperar y a resolver problemas gustosamente. Niños que pueden estar solos con amigos, se desempeñan mejor en el colegio.
- Comportamiento – Yo me desahogo mientras juego. Esto me ayuda a cuidarme mejor mas tarde.

Los Amo,
Su Hijo

Quick Reference

**PLAY – TIME, SPACE, MATERIALS
02-A1c**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 12-14*)

- Parents are responsible for providing time, space, and materials for children’s play.
- Play materials don’t have to be expensive, purchased toys.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides a daily routine that includes ample time for free play indoors and outside.
2. Provides open-ended materials such as blocks, dolls, recycled materials, or things found in nature.
3. Monitors for safety during play.

Parent tip:

PLAY – TIME, SPACE, MATERIALS

02-A1c

Dear Parents,

Because I can learn so many things through play, please make sure I have time, space, and materials for play. It will help me play longer, play better, and learn more.

- Time – I need to play every day, inside and outside. Schedule time to play as part of our daily family routine.
- Space – I need space that is safe and allows me freedom to move.
 - Monitor me at all times for safety, both inside and outside.
- Materials – Some toys are good, but recycled things (empty boxes, plastic containers) and things in nature (leaves, twigs, rocks) can be as good as or even better than expensive toys. I can use my imagination!
 - For outside - balls, jump ropes, water hoses, and sidewalk chalk can provide hours of active enjoyment for me.
 - For inside - blocks and dolls let me use my imagination.

Love,
Your Child

JUGAR – TIEMPO, ESPACIO, MATERIALES

Queridos Padres,

Debido a que yo puedo aprender muchas cosas a través del juego, por favor estén seguros de que yo tenga tiempo, espacio y materiales para jugar. Esto me ayudara a jugar más tiempo, mejor y a aprender más.

- Tiempo – Yo necesito jugar todos los días, adentro y afuera. Programen tiempo para jugar como parte de nuestra rutina diaria de familia.
- Espacio –Yo necesito un espacio que este seguro y me de la libertad de moverme.
 - Obsérvenme todo el tiempo por seguridad, tanto adentro como afuera.
- Materiales – Algunos juguetes son buenos, pero cosas reciclables (cajas vacías, recipientes plásticos) y cosas de la naturaleza (hojas, ramitas, rocas) pueden ser tan buenas como los juguetes más costosos. Yo puede usar mi imaginación!
 - Para juegos afuera -Balones, laso de saltar, mangueras de agua, y tizas para hacer caminos pueden proveer horas de diversión para mi.
 - Para juegos adentro – Bloques y muñecas me permiten usar mi imaginación.

Los Amo,
Su Hijo

Quick Reference

**PLAY – 10 MINUTES TO GOOD BEHAVIOR
02-A1d**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 13-15*)

- Regularly scheduling 10-15 minutes of parent supported play helps build a positive parent-child relationship and can aid in behavior management.
- Parent-child play helps the child develop more mature play skills.

Parent Skills:

1. Schedules parent-child play time most days.
2. Supports the child's play by following the child's lead, commenting on what the child is doing, and praising appropriately.
3. Provides structure for playtime, by telling the child when special play time starts and then giving the child a one minute warning when the play time will be over.

Parent tip:

02-A1d

PLAY – 10 MINUTES TO GOOD BEHAVIOR

Dear Parents,

When you play with me, I learn more and you get to see the world through my eyes. I will behave better when you pay attention to me. If we can play together for 10 to 15 minutes, I will cling and whine less. To make us both happier, let's have a special time each day to play together. You tell me when our play time starts. During our special play time:

- Follow my lead - ask what I want to play, join my game or pretend play story.
- Listen and answer as a playmate.
- Make comments about what I'm doing. (Don't ask me educational questions!)
- Praise my efforts, especially when I am practicing (playing) something new.
- Give me a one minute warning when our play time will be over so you can take care of grown-up things.

Love,

Your Child

Remember.....TV and videos don't count as play time.

JUGAR – 10 MINUTOS DE BUEN COMPORTAMIENTO

Queridos Padres,

Cuando ustedes juegan conmigo, yo aprendo más y usted puede ver el mundo a través de mis ojos. Yo me comportare mejor cuando usted me pone atención. Si nosotros podemos jugar juntos por 10 o 15 minutos, yo estaré menos apegado y quejón. Para hacernos los dos felices, permitámonos cada día tener un tiempo juntos para jugar. Ustedes me dicen cuando empieza nuestro tiempo de jugar. Durante nuestro tiempo especial de juego:

- Síganme , pregúntenme que quiero jugar, únanse a mi juego o finjan jugar una historia.
- Escuchen y contesten como compañeros.
- Hagan comentarios de lo que estoy haciendo. (No me hagan preguntas de la educación!)
- Elogien mis esfuerzos, especialmente cuando yo este practicando (jugando) algo nuevo.
- Recuérdeme con un minuto de anticipación cuando el tiempo de juego se esta terminando, entonces usted puede encargarse de las cosas de adultos.

Los Amo,

Su Hijo

Recuerde.....TV y videos no cuentan como tiempo de juego.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – BOOKS ON PARENT & CHILD PLAY TIME
02-A1e**

Parent Messages

- Sharing books with your child has multiple benefits, including enhanced social-emotional and cognitive skills.
- Keeping books in the home makes it more likely that parents will share books with their child. The public library is an excellent place to borrow books at no cost.
- Children who are read to in the home are more likely to become successful readers in elementary school.

Parent Skills:

1. Makes reading a part of the daily routine.
2. Has a collection of children’s books in the home.
3. Has access to their local public library (library card).
4. Makes reading a pleasant time of interaction, allowing child to set the pace (eg. skip pages, ask questions, make comments, and end reading session).

Parent tip:

PLAY – BOOKS ON PARENT & CHILD PLAY TIME

02-A1e

Dear Parents,

Reading books about family play time can show us both how important and fun it can be to spend time together just playing. When we play together, I feel special and loved. It’s ok if we read only part of the book, or if we spend our time just talking about the pictures. This is a good time for me to learn and to talk about my feelings. Visit the public library to find these and other books:

1, 2, I Love You (by Schertle)

Daddy, Play With Me (by Watanabe)

In A Minute! (by Miller)

Pete’s a Pizza (by Steig)

Tom Goes to Kindergarten (by Wild)

Tumble Me Tumbily (by Baicker)

We’re Going On a Bear Hunt (by Rosen)

What Do You Love? (by London)

What Mommies/Daddies Do Best (by Numeroff)

You and Me, Little Bear (by Waddell)

Love,

Your Child

LIBROS SOBRE PADRES & TIEMPO DE JUEGO DE LOS NIÑOS

Queridos Padres,

Sabia usted que si usted me lee mucho ahora mientras estoy en el preescolar, será mas fácil para mi aprender a leer en el colegio “grande”? Es bueno que me lean en español también. Esto me ayudara con la lectura en ingles después. Cuando ustedes me leen, yo disfruto el sonido de su vos y el estar cerca de ustedes. Esta bien si solo leemos una parte del libro, o si ocupamos el tiempo solo hablando de las pinturas de este. Compartir un libro con ustedes me enseña que los libros son para disfrutarlos e importantes.

La mayoría de las librerías públicas tienen libros para niños en español. El listado de libros al otro lado de esta tarjeta pueden estar disponibles en español. Pregúntele al bibliotecario por ayuda de como encontrar estos y otros libros para compartir con migo.

Los libros en esta lista me ayudaran a aprender acerca de padres & tiempo de Juego de los niños.

Los amo,
Su hijo

Quick Reference

**PLAY – ROLE OF FATHERS
02-A1f**

Parent Message (see Experts page 14)

- Fathers' play with their children differs from mothers' play and is uniquely important to children's development.

Parent Skills:

1. Plays often with child.
2. Recognizes that father-child bond is strengthened through playing together.
3. Uses play strategies that enhance child development:
 - a. Turn taking.
 - b. Commenting or talking about the play.
 - c. Following child's play lead.
 - d. Match their play to the child's developmental level.

Parent tip:

PLAY – ROLE OF FATHERS

O2-A1f

Parents,

Fathers and mothers spend time with their children differently. Fathers tend to play more. Mothers tend to do more of the care taking. Fathers do more physical play (rough and tumble, active games) and more variety of play than mothers. For these reasons, fathers are often the favorite playmate in the home. When fathers help toddlers play and explore, toddlers feel more secure.

Play develops strong parent-child bonds. Children who have secure bonds with their parents do better in school and in life when they are grown. Father play enhances child growth in language, IQ, and behavior when they:

- Take turns with child.
- Talk while they play (make comments on what child is doing, seeing).
- Follow child's play lead.
- Match the play to their child's level (infant, toddler, or preschool).

Playing with Dad is important for happy, healthy, and successful children. Do it often!

JUGAR – EL PAPEL DE LOS PADRES

Padres,

Papas y mamás gastan tiempo con sus hijos de manera diferente. Los papas tienden a jugar más. Las mamás tienden a hacer más acerca del cuidado. Los papas hacen más juegos físicos (luchar y tumbar, juegos de actividad) y más variedad de juegos que las mamás. Por esta razón, los papas son los compañeros favoritos para jugar en la casa. Cuando los papas le ayudan a los niños a jugar y a explorar, los niños se sienten más seguros.

Jugar desarrolla una fuerte unión de padres e hijos. Niños que tienen una unión segura con sus padres se desempeñan mejor en el colegio y en la vida cuando crecen. El juego de los padres mejora el crecimiento de los niños en lenguaje, coeficiente intelectual y comportamiento, cuando ellos:

- Toman turnos con los niños.
- Hablan mientras juegan (hacer comentarios sobre lo que el niño está haciendo, viendo).
- Siguen al niño cuando este lidera.
- Se igualan al nivel de juego de los niños (infantes, pequeños y preescolares).

Jugar con el papá es importante para la felicidad, la salud y el éxito del niño. Haga esto a menudo!

Quick Reference

**PLAY – DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS
02-A1g**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 15*)

- Research does show differences between play of boys and girls.
- Children develop their gender identity in preschool and this can be observed in play
- Parents and media influence children’s play and toy selection.

Parent Skills:

1. Recognizes differences in play preferences for boys and girls, but is also supportive of their own child’s interests and play choices.
2. Provides a variety of toys and materials that allow child to pretend play many roles including roles typical of the other gender (gender-bending).
3. Recognizes how parents and media influence children’s play and toy choices.

Parent tip:

PLAY - DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS

01-A1g

Parents,

During preschool, children learn to think of themselves as boys or girls and may begin to play in groups of just boys or just girls. As early as age three, children may choose ‘girl’ or ‘boy’ toys and try to behave as they think they ‘should’ according to stereotypes about how adults behave. Girls may feel they are expected to play with dolls and dishes while boys may feel they are expected to play with cars, trucks, and tools.

Kitchen toys and dolls give boys a chance to pretend to cook a meal or nurture a baby. Plastic tools give girls a chance to pretend to mow the yard or fix a broken sink. This early practice may help prepare children for the many roles they will play as adults.

Remember: TV advertising often pushes stereotypes of ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ toys and how boys and girls ‘should’ play and behave.

JUGAR- DIFERENCIAS ENTRE NIÑOS Y NIÑAS

Padres,

Durante el preescolar, los niños aprenden a pensar por ellos mismos como niños o como niñas y pueden empezar a jugar en grupos de solo niños o solo niñas. Tan pronto como al los tres años, los niños pueden elegir juguetes de niña o de niño y tratan de comportarse como ellos piensan que deberían, de acuerdo a los estereotipos de como los adultos se comportan. Las niñas pueden sentir que ellas están esperando jugar con muñecas y platos mientras que los niños pueden sentir que están esperando jugar con carros, camiones o herramientas.

Juegos de cocina y muñecas le dan a los niños la oportunidad de pretender que cocinan una comida o alimentan un bebe. Herramientas plásticas les dan a las niñas la oportunidad de pretender que cortan el prado o que reparan un lavamanos. Estas practicas tempranas pueden ayudar a preparar a los niños para los diferentes roles que ellos jugaran como adultos.

Recuerde: Propaganda en la televisión a menudo presiona estereotipos de juegos de niños o niñas y como los niños y las niñas deberían jugar y comportarse.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – BOYS & PRETEND PLAY
02-A1h**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 15-16*)

- It is typical for children to try out roles of the opposite sex during their play.
- Preschoolers growing ability to use their imagination allows them to pretend play roles of both men and women.
- Children whose parents emphasize separate roles and toys for each gender are less likely to have gender-bending in their play.

Parent Skills:

1. Allows for flexibility when preschooler plays with toys or roles “typical” to the opposite gender.
2. Recognizes their own influence on their child’s understanding of gender and gender related play choices.
3. Recognizes that attributes such as caring and nurturing are valuable for both boys and girls.

Parent tip:

PLAY – BOYS & PRETEND PLAY

02-A1h

Parents,

Here’s what we know about pretend play with dolls or dress-up for boys: Pretend play is important for boys too! Children use language, thinking and social skills during pretend play. It’s not unusual for children to pretend play roles of both men and women. They imitate the grown-ups they see. Imitating is a key way children learn. As preschoolers become better at using imagination, they may be more able to act out roles of both men and women.

In the housekeeping center, boys can practice skills of caring and nurturing; skills that could lead to becoming a doctor, teacher or loving father. When boys play with dolls, they may be imitating the loving care they receive. When adults encourage this, boys feel valued and learn that nurturing is valuable. Being nurtured and showing caring and nurturing toward others is important for both boys and girls.

JUEGO DE NINOS & SIMULANDO JUGAR

Padres,

Aquí esta lo que nosotros sabemos acerca de simular jugar con muñecas o disfrazarse para los niños: Simular juegos es importante para los niños también! Los niños usan lenguajes y habilidades sociales y de pensamiento durante juegos simulados. No es inusual que los niños pretendan jugar papeles de ambos, o de mujeres o de hombres. Ellos imitan lo que observan de los mayores. Imitar es una vía clave de aprendizaje de los niños. Como preescolares se vuelven mejores al usar la imaginación, ellos pueden ser más capaces de interpretar papeles de mujer o de hombre.

En el área de cuidado del hogar, los niños pueden practicar habilidades de cuidado y nutrición, habilidades que podrían conducirlos a convertirse en un doctor, profesor o un padre amoroso. Cuando los niños juegan con muñecas, ellos pueden estar imitando el cuidado amoroso que estos reciben. Cuando los adultos alientan esto, los niños se sienten valorados y sienten que la buena crianza es valorada. Estar bien criado y mostrar cuidado y buena crianza hacia otros es importante para niños y niñas.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – HELPS SOCIAL SKILLS GROW
02-A1i**

Parent Message (see *Experts pages 6, 9*)

- Beginning in infancy, children move through stages of social play. Children gradually learn to coordinate their own thoughts and actions with those of others.
- Play gives children opportunities to learn and practice social-emotional skills.
- Parents can guide children in learning in each stage.

Parent Skills:

1. Identifies their child's stage of social play.
2. Supports child in learning to play with others.

Parent tip:

PLAY – HELPS SOCIAL SKILLS GROW

02-A1i

Parents,

Learning to get along with others takes time. It is best learned during play. Children move through **stages of social play**. Children learn social skills such as playing with others just like they learn colors or letters. Just like you can't expect a 6-month old to walk, you can't expect a child to share too early. You can help your child be ready for the next stage.

- **Solitary play** (0 - 2 years): Plays *alone* with toys.
- **Parallel play** (2 - 3 years): Plays near other children with similar toys, but *not with* them.
- **Associative play** (2 - 6 years): Plays *with other children* in similar activity, but does own thing.
- **Cooperative play** (4 years and up): *Coordinates* play with friends around a common purpose.

Skills learned at each stage do not disappear, but prepare the child for the next stage and for life. Ask for tips specific to your child's developmental level.

JUGAR – AYUDA A EL CRECIMIENTO DE LAS HABILIDADES SOCIALES

Padres,

Aprender a estar solo con otros toma tiempo. Esto es bien aprendido durante el juego. Los niños se mueven a través de **estados sociales de juego**. Los niños aprenden habilidades sociales tales como jugar con otros exactamente como ellos aprenden los colores o las letras. Así como usted no puede esperar que un bebé de seis meses camine, usted no puede esperar que un niño comparta muy temprano. Usted puede ayudar a su niño a estar listo para la siguiente etapa.

- **Juego en solitario** (0 - 2 años): **Juega solo** con juguetes.
- **Juego en paralelo** (2 - 3 años): Juega cerca de otros niños con juguetes similares, pero *no con* ellos.
- **Juego de asociación** (2 - 6 años): Juega *con otros niños* en actividades similares, pero hace sus propias cosas.
- **Juego de cooperación** (4 años y más): **Coordina** juegos con amigos al rededor de un propósito común.

Las habilidades aprendidas en cada etapa no desaparecen, pero preparan al niño para la etapa siguiente y para la vida. Pregunte por ayudas específicas para la etapa de desarrollo de su hijo.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – SOCIAL SKILLS - SOLITARY PLAY INFANT/ TODDLER
02-A1j**

Parent Message (see Experts page 9)

- Children play mostly alone during the first two years.
- Infants/Toddlers are focused on self and explore with their senses.
- Parents support social-emotional skill development by being involved in child's play.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides a variety of safe toys and objects of interest to the child.
2. Is sensitive to infant cues of boredom or frustration and distracts or provides alternative.
3. Uses smiles, body language, and words that share in child's delight during play.
4. Redirects if child's actions are unsafe or hurtful.
5. Describes child's actions during play.

Parent tip:

PLAY – SOCIAL SKILLS - SOLITARY PLAY INFANT/ TODDLER

02-A1j

During their first two years infants *play alone* with toys or anything they can reach. They focus on their own activity. They have little or no interest in playing with other children. They explore their body and objects with hands and mouth. When they can move, they may crawl over to another baby to touch or get a toy. They begin to notice others. They do not understand others have feelings or needs.

At this stage, parents help children learn when they:

- Provide many kinds of objects and toys.
- Learn the sounds, sights, and textures the child likes and finds similar things.
- Look for signs of boredom and give a different toy or object.
- Share in child's delight or interest with smiles, body language, words.
- Describe what the child is doing.
- Be aware, children are not expected to share at this age.
- Distract or redirect rather than punish aggression.

JUGAR – HABILIDADES SOCIALES –JUEGO EN SOLITARIO BEBES/PEQUEÑOS

Durante los primeros dos años los bebés *juegan solos* con juguetes o algo que puedan alcanzar. Ellos se concentran en su propia actividad. Ellos tienen muy poco o no interés de jugar con otros niños. Ellos exploran su cuerpo y objetos con sus manos y boca. Cuando ellos se pueden mover, ellos pueden gatear hacia otro bebé para tocarlo o obtener un juguete. Ellos empiezan a notar a otros. Ellos no entienden que los otros tienen sentimientos o necesidades.

En esta etapa, los padres le ayudan a los niños a aprender cuando:

- Le proveen mucha clase de objetos y de juguetes.
- Aprenden los sonidos, las visiones y las texturas que al niño le gustan y encuentran cosas similares.
- Buscan los signos de aburrimiento y le dan un objeto o juguetes diferentes.
- Comparten sonrisas, lenguaje corporal y palabras con el placer y el interés del niño.
- Describen lo que el niño está haciendo.
- Están concientes de que los niños no están dispuestos a compartir a esta edad.
- Distraen o redireccionan en vez de agredir a castigar.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – SOCIAL SKILLS - PARALLEL PLAY TODDLER
02-A1k**

Parent Message (see *Experts page 9*)

- Toddlers play next to but not with another child.
- Toddlers are not yet able to understand others needs or feelings so are not developmentally ready to share and take turns.
- Parents support social-emotional skill development by having appropriate expectations and modeling social skills while playing with child.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides multiple copies of same toys in group situation.
2. Plays along with child, exchanging toy at child's request (models sharing and turn taking).
3. Describes child's actions during play. Describes actions of self or others nearby.
4. Redirects if child's actions are unsafe or hurtful. Calmly points out when others are hurt by child's action.

Parent tip:

PLAY – SOCIAL SKILLS - PARALLEL PLAY TODDLER

02-A1k

Two to three-year old children play beside others but *not with* them. They tend to be selfish and don't know how to cooperate. Aggression is normal if in a group. Toddlers mostly think about what they want. Parents help toddlers learn when they:

- Do not expect toddlers to share or play together.
- Provide similar toys when there is more than one child. The first step in learning to share is "I have mine and you have yours."
- Play with the child with a different toy and trade at child's request. This shows the child that a toy she has let go of can come back again.
- Describe what the child is doing and what others around him are doing.
- Immediately stop aggression by stopping the child ("No hitting."). Point out the feelings of the other child ("That hurt."). Redirect (give something different to do) rather than punish.

JUGAR – HABILIDADES SOCIALES – JUEGO PARALELO DE LOS PEQUEÑOS

Ninos de dos y tres años de edad juegan al lado de otros pero *no con* ellos. Ellos tienden a ser egoístas y no saben como cooperar. La agresión es normal en ambientes de grupo. Los pequeños comúnmente piensan acerca de lo que ellos quieren. Los padres les enseñan a aprender cuando:

- No esperan que los niños a esta edad compartan o jueguen juntos.
- Le entregan juguetes similares cuando hay más de un niño. La primera etapa de aprendizaje es "yo tengo el mío y usted tiene el suyo."
- Juegue con el niño con un juguete diferente y cámbielo de acuerdo a los requerimientos del niño. Esto le ayuda al niño a comenzar a ver que el juguete que ella tiene puede irse y volver de nuevo.
- Describa lo que el niño esta haciendo. Describa lo que otros al rededor de el están haciendo.
- Inmediatamente pare la agresión frenando al niño ("No pegues."). Señale los sentimientos del otro niño ("eso duele."). Redireccione (Déle algo diferente para hacer) en vez de castigar.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – SOCIAL SKILLS - ASSOCIATIVE PLAY
02-A11**

Parent Message (see *Experts pages 6, 9-10*)

- Preschoolers like to play with others and begin sharing and taking turns, but do not yet plan and cooperate.
- Parents can support social-emotional skill development by playing along and modeling social skills for child to practice.

Parent Skills:

1. Is aware that children need adult facilitation (but not domination) during play in order to progress appropriately in learning social skills.
2. Plays along with child sometimes, modeling and talking about making friends, getting along, sharing, and turn taking.
3. Helps child solve problems without stopping the play.
4. Comments on or praises child's or peer's demonstration of positive social skills.
5. Redirects if child's actions are aggressive. Helps child use words to get needs met.

Parent tip:

PLAY – SOCIAL SKILLS - ASSOCIATIVE PLAY

02-A11

Preschool-age children begin to enjoy playing with other children. They begin to share toys and talk about what they are playing. They play together, but each plays in their own way. They are not making plans yet. Adults help when they:

- Play with them to model and describe social skills such as making friends, sharing, and taking turns (“I’m sharing my blocks with you.”)
- Help them solve problems when they arise. Encourage each child to tell their side and think of a solution (take turns, wait, play together).
- Describe children’s actions. Help them notice each other’s play.
- Set firm limits on behavior. Stop hurtful or destructive behavior immediately.
- Avoid blaming and punishment for mistakes. Instead, teach the right way to behave.
- Encourage children to talk about their own and others feelings.

JUGAR – HABILIDADES SOCIALES – JUEGO DE ASOCIACIÓN

Ninos en edad preescolar comienzan a disfrutar jugar con otros ninos. Ellos comienzan a compartir juguetes y a hablar de lo que están jugando. Ellos juegan juntos, pero cada uno juega en su propia dirección. Ellos no están haciendo planes aun. Los adultos les ayudan cuando:

- Juegan con ellos para imitar y describir habilidades sociales tales como hacer amigos, compartir y tomar turnos (“Yo estoy compartiendo mis bloques con usted.”)
- Ayúdenlos a resolver los problemas cuando ellos aparezcan. Anime a cada niño a que decir su parte y pensar en una solución (tomar turnos, esperar, jugar juntos).
- Describa las acciones de los ninos. Ayúdelos a que noten el juego de uno y otro.
- Establezca límites firmes de comportamiento. Pare comportamientos dañinos o destructivos inmediatamente.
- Evite culpar o castigar por errores. En cambio, enseñe la vía correcta de comportamiento.
- Anime a los ninos a que hablen de sus propios sentimientos y el de los demás.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – SOCIAL SKILLS - COOPERATIVE PLAY
02-A1m**

Parent Message (see *Experts pages 6,10*)

- Due to increased self-control and ability to see others perspective, older preschoolers are able to begin to plan, organize, and cooperate with peers during play.
- Preschoolers make up their own games and rules and want to follow them in order to keep the play going.
- Preschoolers who cooperate during play are more likely to be engaged in learning activities.

Parent Skills:

1. Monitors child's play and helps with problem solving. Encourages children to think of solutions rather than dictating or stopping the play.
2. Has patience with child's making up rules during play. Encourages child to explain game and rules and think about how it affects others.
3. If child has difficulty with cooperation or joining peers, gives child words and actions to use.
4. Redirects if child's actions are aggressive. Helps child use words to get needs met.

Parent tip:

PLAY – SOCIAL SKILLS - COOPERATIVE PLAY

02-A1m

Four-year old children *begin* to work together to *plan their play*. They decide on a topic, game, project, or pretend theme. They decide who will play what role. They practice being leaders and followers. To do this, children must first have many play skills and good self-control. They must respect other children's feelings and points of view. Parents help children learn to cooperate when they:

- Teach social skills by naming and modeling them. (waiting, taking turns, pretending).
- Help children solve problems; praise cooperation.
- Let children make up their own rules for games and explain them to you.
- Teach less mature children use words like "May I play too?" or "Let's play" to join others.
- Stay nearby to step in if needed, but don't take over.
- Ask questions that help them plan ("What can you do with these blankets and sticks?")

JUGAR – HABILIDADES SOCIALES – JUEGOS DE COOPERACIÓN

Ninos de cuatro años de edad comienzan a trabajar juntos para *planear sus juegos*. Ellos deciden sobre un tópico, un juego, un proyecto o pretenden estos. Ellos deciden quien jugara cada papel. Ellos practican a ser líderes y seguidores. Para hacer esto, los ninos primero tienen que tener muchas habilidades de juego y buen auto control. Ellos tienen que respetar los sentimientos y puntos de vista de otros niños. Los padres ayudan a los niños a aprender a cooperar cuando:

- Les enseñan habilidades sociales nombrando e imitando estas. (esperar, tomar turnos, fingir).
- Ayúdenle a los ninos a resolver los problemas; elogie la cooperación.
- Deje a los ninos inventar sus propias reglas para los juegos y que se las expliquen a usted.
- Enséñenle a los ninos menos maduros a usar palabras como "Puedo jugar también?" o "Vamos a jugar" para juntarse con otros.
- Este cerca por si es necesario, pero no asuma el mando.
- Haga preguntas para ayudar a ellos con el plan ("Que pueden ustedes hacer con estas cobijas y estacas?")

Quick Reference

**PLAY – HELPS THINKING SKILLS GROW
02-A1n**

Parent Message (*see Experts pages 2-3, 10-12*)

- Beginning in infancy, cognitive skills are both demonstrated and developed during play.
- These skills proceed from one level to the next and are referred to as stages of cognitive development.
- Parents can enhance child's cognitive development by providing appropriate toys.

Parent Skills:

1. Identifies child's current stage of cognitive development.
2. Acknowledges play is important to developing thinking skills.
3. Seeks information on how to enhance child's stage of cognitive development.

Parent tip:

PLAY – HELPS THINKING SKILLS GROW

02-A1n

Parents,

A child's thinking (cognitive) skills grow over time. Children practice these skills when they play. Parents help when they understand the stages of growth and provide toys or materials best for their child's level of development. Each new stage builds on earlier stages. Children continue to use early skills, but in a more mature way. Playing at one stage helps the child get ready for the next stage.

- Exploratory Play (0-24 months): Grabs, bangs, or puts toy in mouth.
- Functional Play (9-24 months): Uses toy as it is meant to be used (pushes a car).
- Constructive Play (24 months +): Builds things with a goal in mind (stacks blocks as a building).
- Symbolic Play (21-72 months): Uses toys to pretend (drive car or feed baby)
- Rough & Tumble Play (36 months +): Makes rules and reads others expressions during physical play.
- Games with Rules (60 months +): Follows rules and practices strategic thinking skills.

JUGAR – AYUDA A LA HABILIDAD DE PENSAR

Padres,

La habilidad de pensar de los niños (lo cognitivo) crece sobre el tiempo. Los niños practican esta habilidad cuando ellos juegan. Los padres ayudan cuando ellos entienden las etapas de crecimiento y les dan Buenos juguetes y material para el nivel de desarrollo del niño. Cada nueva etapa se cimienta en etapas tempranas. Los niños continúan usando las habilidades anteriores, pero de una manera más madura. Jugando en una etapa le ayuda al niño a estar listo para la próxima.

- Juego exploratorio (0-24 meses): Agarrar, golpear o ponerse juguetes en la boca.
- Juego Funcional (9-24 meses): Usa juguetes con el significado para el cual es usado (empujar un carro).
- Juego Constructivo (24 meses +): Construye cosas con una meta en mente (amontona bloques como un edificio).
- Juego Simbólico (21-72 mese): Usas juegos para simular (maneja un carro o alimenta un bebe)
- Juego de luchar y tumbar (36 meses +): hacer reglas y lee la expresión de otros durante el juego físico.
 - Juegos con Reglas (60 meses +): Seguir reglas y practicar habilidades prácticas de pensamiento.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND EXPLORATORY PLAY
02-A1o**

Parent Message (see *Experts page 10*)

- From birth – 2 years, children are in the exploratory stage of cognitive development.
- Babies explore (experiment) and learn by grabbing, banging, mouthing, dropping, etc.
- Parents can enhance child’s cognitive development by using toys and materials that provide a variety of sights, sounds, textures.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides variety of safe toys baby can explore and manipulate.
2. Plays along sometimes by imitating child’s actions and introducing a new action.
3. Introduces new objects as needed to prevent or reduce child’s boredom or frustration.
4. Talks to child about the look, sound, or feel of object child is focusing on.

Parent tip:

PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND EXPLORATORY PLAY

02-A1o

Parents,

From birth to age two, your child is learning to think and plan by *exploratory play*. Babies experiment with sights, sounds, shapes, and textures when they grab, bang, rattle, mouth, and drop objects. This is a busy time for parents. It is important to make sure everything in a baby’s reach is safe. It is also a time when parents need to use a lot of patience and laughter. As children grow, they explore objects more maturely (not just with their mouth), and may even use these skills as adult scientists, doctors, and more.

Help your child explore and learn:

- Provide toys and objects that look, sound, or feel different (smooth, squishy, hard, soft).
- Encourage your child to touch, wave, and push or pull objects.
- Talk to your child about the color, size, shape, and feel of objects.
- Imitate your child’s action (bang on book), then show what else to do with it (turn page, point to picture).

JUGAR – HABILIDADES DE PENSAMIENTO Y JUEGOS EXPLORATORIOS

Padres,

Desde el nacimiento hasta la edad de dos años, su hijo esta aprendiendo a pensar y a planear por *juegos exploratorios*. Los bebes experimentan con signos, sonidos, formas y texturas cuando ellos agarran, golpean, sacuden y dejan caer objetos. Este es un tiempo ocupado para los padres. Es importante estar seguro de que todo lo que el bebe alcance es seguro. Es también el tiempo en que los padres necesitan usar mucha paciencia y risa. Cuando el niño crece ellos exploran los objetos de una manera más madura (no solo con su boca), y pueden hasta usar estas habilidades cuando adultos como científicos, doctores y aun más.

Ayude a su niño a explorar y a aprender:

- Denle juguetes y objetos que parezcan, suenen y se sientan diferentes (liso, blandito, duro y suave)
- Anime a su niño a que toque, agite y presione o jale objetos.
- Hable con su hijo acerca del color, el tamaño, la forma y el sentir de los objetos.
- Imite las acciones de su hijo (cerrar un libro), luego muéstrelle que puede hacer con el (pasar la pagina, señalar una figura).

Quick Reference

**PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND FUNCTIONAL PLAY
02-A1p**

Parent Message (see *Experts page 10*)

- Most children 9-24 months are in the functional stage of cognitive development.
- An early skill of functional play is holding two objects at once.
- Next, children put two related objects together and use toys as they were meant to be used.
- Parents can help children learn to use toys functionally at this stage of cognitive development.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides toys and objects that can be used together or have simple functions.
2. Plays along showing child how things go together.
3. Plays along showing child how a toy works.

Parent tip:

PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND FUNCTIONAL PLAY

02-A1p

Parents,

From nine months until age two, your child is learning to use toys as they were intended. This is the **functional stage of cognitive play**. Babies will first hold two objects at once. After age one (15-21 months), toddlers start to use more than one object at a time. At first they stack, bump together, and put one object inside another. Then, they will play with an object as it is meant to be used (roll a ball, feed a doll, and push a car).

Help your child enjoy this stage of play:

- Provide toys and objects that can be used together (stacking blocks or nesting cups).
- Show your child how objects go together (brush doll's hair, stir spoon in a cup).
- Provide toys and objects with a simple function (balls, drums, cars,).
- Show your child the way an object is meant to be used (talk on a play phone, wind a jack-in-the-box).

JUGAR – HABILIDADES DE PENSAMIENTO Y JUEGO FUNCIONAL

Padres,

De los nueve meses hasta la edad de dos años, su hijo está aprendiendo a usar juguetes de acuerdo para lo que fueron inventados. Esta es **la etapa funcional de el juego cognitivo**. Los bebés primero sujetan dos objetos al tiempo. Después del año (15-21 meses), los niños pequeños comienzan a usar más de un objeto al tiempo. Al principio ellos amontonan, ponen en contra e introducen un objeto dentro de otro. Luego ellos jugarán con un objeto según el significado que este tenga para ser usado (rodar la pelota, alimentar la muñeca y empujar el carro).

Ayúdele a su niño a disfrutar esta etapa del juego:

- Dándole juguetes y objetos que puedan ser usados juntos (amontonando bloques o anidar copas).
- Muéstrela a su niño como los objetos van juntos (cepillar el pelo de la muñeca, revolver con la cuchara en la copa).
- Déle juegos y objetos con funciones simples (bolas, tambores, carros).
- Muéstrela a su hijo la vía de uso de acuerdo al diseño de el objeto (hable en un teléfono de juguete, darle cuerda a una caja).

Quick Reference

**PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND CONSTRUCTIVE PLAY
02-A1q**

Parent Messages (see *Experts* pages 4, 5, 11)

- The constructive stage of cognitive play generally begins after two years of age. It is characterized by the child putting things together to make or build something.
- Preschoolers' ability to plan and construct increases as eye-hand coordination, persistence, and abstract thinking develops.
- Complex block play during preschool is associated with better math skills in high school.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides a variety of blocks and other materials child can use to construct with.
2. Encourages constructive play through use of positive comments.
3. Plays along sometimes using child's theme and models slightly more complex construction.

Parent tip:

PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND CONSTRUCTIVE PLAY

02-A1q

Parents,

After age two, children start putting things together to make something. This is called **constructive play**. They get better at it as their hand use and eye-hand coordination improves. Later, they begin to plan what they want to build. Kids who build in preschool do better in math later. Help your child enjoy this stage of play:

- Provide toys and objects that can be used to build (blocks, clay, sand, empty cereal boxes, shoe boxes, Popsicle sticks, and more).
- Show how to build something that goes along with the child's play interest. For example, if the child is playing with cars, you can say, "My car will drive to the store." Use blocks or other items to build a simple building.

Children learn important skills during constructive play, skills needed to become carpenters, architects, and engineers.

JUGAR – HABILIDADES DE APENSAMIENTO Y JUEGO CONSTRUCTIVO

Padres,

Después de los dos años, los niños comienzan a poner cosas juntas para hacer algo. Este es el **juego constructivo**. Ellos mejoran esto, así como el uso de sus manos y la coordinación de manos y ojos se incrementa. Mas tarde, ellos comienzan a planear que quieren construir. Los niños que construyen en el preescolar se desempeñan mejor en matemáticas mas tarde. Ayude su niño a disfrutar esta etapa de juego:

- Déle juegos y objetos que puedan ser usados para construir (bloques, arcilla, arena, cajas de cereal vacío, cajas de zapatos, palos de paletas y mas).
- Muéstrelle como construir algo que va con el juego que el niño este interesado. Por ejemplo, si el niño esta jugando con carros, usted puede decir, "Mi carro ira al almacén." Use bloques y otros materiales para construir un edificio simple.

Los niños aprenden habilidades importantes durante el juego constructivo, habilidades que se necesitan para ser carpinteros, arquitectos e ingenieros.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND SYMBOLIC PLAY
02-A1r**

Parent Message (see *Experts pages 3, 11*)

- Children are in the symbolic stage of cognitive play from 2 – 6 years of age.
- Symbolic play involves using the imagination or abstract thinking and is a precursor to being able to understand symbols such as numbers and letters.
- Toddler pretend play is quite simple. Preschoolers have more complex schemes.
- Adults can help by providing props and by joining in sometimes.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides props for pretend play.
2. Plays along sometimes to extend sequences, but allows child to take the lead.
3. Encourages child's pretend play by asking open-ended questions or commenting.

Parent tip:

PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND SYMBOLIC PLAY

02-A1r

Parents,

From 2 to 6 years, your child is learning to think and plan using *symbolic play* (pretending). At first, your child will pretend with everyday objects and actions (cover self with blanket and pretend to sleep). Next, he will imitate others (drive car, feed baby). As your child grows, pretend play will have longer stories, more roles, and may include imaginary objects or characters. The back yard could be an ocean where pretend pirates are put in an invisible jail! Help your child enjoy symbolic (pretend) play:

- Provide toys and objects needed to imitate adults (dolls, tools) or to build a story (costumes, blankets).
- Encourage your child to let their pretend play grow longer than just 2 or 3 steps (pretend to go to store, bake cookies, set the table, call friends to come over, dress up, share cookies, clean).
- Join in, but follow your child's lead. Ask your child to tell you what happens next.

JUGAR – HABILIDADES DE PENSAMIENTO Y JUEGO SIMBÓLICO

Padres,

De los dos a los seis años, su niño esta aprendiendo a pensar y planear usando el *juego simbólico* (pretendiendo). Como primero, su hijo pretenderá con los objetos y las acciones diarias (cubrirse con una cobija y pretender estar dormido). Luego, el imitara a otros (manejar un carro, alimentar un niño). Cuando su niño crezca, pretenderá jugar y tendrá historias mas largas con más papeles y podrá incluir objetos y caracteres imaginarios. El patio de atrás podrá ser el océano donde estará pretendiendo meter piratas en una cárcel invisible! Ayude a su niño a disfrutar el juego simbólico (pretender):

- Dándole juguetes y objetos que se necesiten para imitar adultos (muñecos y herramientas) o a construir una historia (disfraces, cobertores).
- Anime a su hijo a no dejar que el juego pretendido, crezca mas de solo dos o tres etapas (pretender ir a la tienda, hornear galletas, poner la mesa, invitar amigos a que vengan, disfrazarse, compartir galletas, limpiar).
- Únasele, pero dejen que su hijo lidere, Pregúntele a su niño que va a pasar después.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND ROUGH & TUMBLE PLAY
02-A1s**

Parent Message (see *Experts pages 11*)

- Rough and tumble is a stage of cognitive play. It is a favorite form of play for preschool children.
- Rough and tumble play provides practice with thinking, self-control, reading others cues, and calming down.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides time for active play.
2. Monitors the play and coaches child to be mindful of others feelings.
3. Encourages child to come up with rules that will help self and peers stay safe.

Parent tip:

PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND ROUGH & TUMBLE PLAY

02-A1s

Parents,

Children love ***rough and tumble play*** from about 3 to 6 years. They practice thinking skills during this play. They think about and make up their own rules. This helps prepare them to play games with real rules, the next level skill. They learn to figure out what others are thinking and feeling. They learn to play with a group – how to join, keep the play going, and help less able players.

Rough and tumble play is not aggression (fighting). It is active play in which children practice self-control. They get excited and then must calm down. They must control big muscle movements to avoid harming another child. Adults help by supervising closely to make sure no one is hurt. Adults can coach children to look at others faces to read expressions (like it, don't like it) and intent (Was it an accident?) and respond in the right way to keep the play going.

JUGAR- HABILIDADES DE PENSAMIENTO Y EL JUEGO DE LUCHA

Padres,

Los niños aman los juegos de lucha desde los 3 a los 6 años. Ellos practican habilidades de pensamiento durante este juego. Ellos piensan acerca de como inventar sus propias reglas. Esto los prepara a ellos para jugar juegos con reglas reales, que es el siguiente nivel de habilidad. Ellos aprenden a resolver que están pensando y sintiendo los otros. Ellos aprenden a jugar en grupo, como reunirse, mantener el juego en desarrollo, y ayudarles a los jugadores menos capaces.

El juego de lucha no es una agresión (pelea). Es un juego activo en el que los niños practican auto control. Ellos se emocionan y luego se tienen que calmar. Ellos tienen el control de los movimientos musculares mayores para evitar hacer daño a otros niños. Los adultos ayudan supervisándolos de cerca para estar seguros de que ninguno se haga daño. Los adultos pueden servir de entrenadores de los niños para ver en la cara de los otros y leer las expresiones (le gusta, no le gusta) y prever (Fue esto un accidente?) y responder en la forma correcta para que el juego se mantenga.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND GAMES WITH RULES
02-A1t**

Parent Message (see *Experts pages 12*)

- Most children are not ready for games with rules until 5 years old.
- Making up their own game rules in preschool prepares children to follow pre-set rules in kindergarten and beyond.

Parent Skills:

1. Avoids expecting preschoolers to be able to follow games with rules.
2. Provides easy games when child is ready and is patient with rule bending.
3. Encourages cooperation rather than competition.

Parent tip:

PLAY – THINKING SKILLS AND GAMES WITH RULES

02-A1t

Parents,

Children begin to play *games with rules* about five years of age. They must first have practice with making and following their own rules before they can follow pre-set rules. By five years, they have bigger memories and are better able to practice strategic thinking skills. Some games may involve both physical and cognitive skills such as hopscotch and soccer. Some games require memory and strategic thinking.

Adults can help by providing easy games such as “Go Fish”, “Chutes and Ladders”, or organizing a game like freeze tag. Be tolerant of rule bending and help children talk about why a particular rule is useful. Avoid emphasizing competitiveness (winners and losers). Instead, guide children to cooperate and problem solve. Emphasize how to “do your best”, play fair, and understand others thoughts, feelings, and actions.

JUGAR – HABILIDADES DE PENSAMIENTO Y JUEGOS CON REGLAS

Padres,

Los niños comienzan a jugar *juegos con reglas* al rededor de los 5 años de edad. Ellos tienen primero que practicar a hacer y seguir sus propias reglas antes de poder seguir reglas preestablecidas. Al rededor de los 5 años, ellos tienen más memoria y están más disponibles a practicar habilidades de pensamiento estratégicas. Algunos juegos pueden envolver ambas habilidades, físicas y del conocimiento tales como el tejo y el balompié. Algunos juegos requieren de memoria y pensamiento estratégico.

Los adulto pueden ayudar proporcionando juegos simples tales como ir a pescar, serpientes y escaleras, o organizar un juego como el de “quedo congelado”. Sea tolerante y flexible con las reglas y ayude a los niños a hablar acerca de cual regla en particular es útil. Evite enfatizar en lo competitivo (ganadores y perdedores). En cambio, conduzca los niños a la cooperación y a la resolución de problemas. Enfaticé como hacer lo mejor, el juego limpio y a entender el pensamiento, los sentimientos y las acciones de los otros.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS – INFANTS AND TODDLERS
02-A1u**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 4*)

- During play, babies and toddlers are curious and have a strong desire to figure out how things work (solve problems).
- Early problem solving skills range from reaching to get something (6-9 months), gesturing for help (9-12 months), experimenting with cause and effect (12-18 months), and having more precise actions or taking directions from adults (18-24 months).

Parent Skills:

1. Responds quickly to baby's or toddler's cues for help in solving a problem.
2. Provides play materials to encourage experimenting with cause and effect (i.e pop-ups, nesting boxes, cars, shape sorters).
3. Has patience with repeated "experiments".
4. Keeps unsafe items out of reach.

Parent tip: **PLAY – PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS – INFANTS AND TODDLERS** 02-A1u
Parents,

Babies and toddlers are curious. They have a strong desire to figure out how things work (solve problems) when they play. Parents help teach problem-solving skills when they respond quickly, have patience with "experiments," and keep unsafe items out of reach. Early problem-solving skills are:

- 6-9 months: Reach and grab to **get something**; shake and throw to **make something happen again**.
- 9-12 months: Point, make a sound, or cry to **get help from an adult** (knock the cup off the tray and babble or point to get parent to pick it up). Later, **asking an adult for help** will be a critical skill for school success.
- 12-18 months: Toddlers like to experiment with **cause and effect** (push a car, roll a ball, put things in, dump them out, or push a button to make something happen).
- 18-24 months: Toddlers begin to make more **precise actions** (stack a few blocks) and take **directions from adults** (go get the ball).

JUGAR – HABILIDADES PARA RESOLVER PROBLEMAS – BEBES Y NIÑOS

Queridos Padres,

Los bebés y los niños son curiosos. Ellos tienen un deseo fuerte para darse cuenta de como las cosas trabajan (resolver problema) cuando ellos juegan. Los padres ayudan a enseñar la habilidad de solución de problemas cuando ellos responden rápido, tienen paciencia con los experimentos y mantienen cosas inseguras lejos de su alcance. Habilidades para resolver problemas temprano son:

- 6-9 meses: Extender y agarrar para **obtener algo**; agitar y tirar para **hacer que algo pase de nuevo**
- 9-12 meses: Señalar, hacer un sonido o llorar para **obtener ayuda de un adulto** (golpear la copa en la bandeja y balbucear o señalar para que uno de los padres lo cargue). Mas tarde, **pedir ayuda a un adulto** será una habilidad critica para el éxito en el la escuela.
- 12-18 meses: Niños pequeños les gusta experimentar con **la causa y el efecto** (empujar un carro, poner a rodar la bola, poner cosas en un lugar, tirar afuera, o presionar un botón para hacer que algo pase).
- 18-24 meses: Niños pequeños comienzan a hacer **acciones mas precisas** (juntar algunos bloques) y a tomar **órdenes de los adultos** (ve y toma la pelota).

Quick Reference

**PLAY – PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS – PRESCHOOLERS
02-A1v**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 4*)

- Children develop and practice problem solving skills during play.
- Children will work hard to solve a problem, so they can continue the play activity.
- Problem solving skills range from simple use of movement and senses to being able to understand rules and relationships, observe, listen, and begin to use diplomacy.

Parent Skills:

1. Lets child try to figure out how to solve the problem on their own.
2. Encourages child to talk about the problem.
3. Steps in when the child becomes frustrated or overwhelmed.

Parent tip: PLAY – PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS – PRESCHOOLERS

02-A1v

Parents,

To keep playing, children will work hard to solve a problem. Parents can help children become good problem solvers. Encourage them to talk about the problem. Allow them to figure out ways to solve it. Step in if they become frustrated or overwhelmed. Children practice solving problems during play:

2 - 4 years

- **Trial and error** – Child uses a stick to get a ball that rolled under the fence –one’s too fat, one’s too short, one’s just right.
- **Reason from the past** – Child remembers how he solved a similar problem in the past to solve the problem now (“My friend wouldn’t play with me when I pushed, so I will ask this time”).
- **Helping one another** – Seeks help or helps friend with a hard puzzle (“Watch me. Try this piece.”).

4 years and older

- **Advance planning** – Child decides which blocks would best make a fence. Children decide who will play each role in pretend play.

JUGAR – HABILIDADES PARA RESOLVER PROBLEMAS – PREESCOLARES

Padres,

Para mantenerse jugando, los niños deberán trabajar duro para resolver un problema. Los padres pueden ayudar a los niños a volverse buenos para solucionar problemas. Anímelos a hablar acerca del problema. Permítales encontrar vías para resolver el problema Vincúlese si ellos se ven frustrados o ofuscados. Los niños practican la resolución de problemas durante el juego:

2 - 4 años

- **Ensayo y error** – El niño usa una estaca para recuperar una bola que se fue debajo de la cerca –una es muy gorda, una es muy corta, una es la correcta.
- **Razones del pasado** – El niño recuerda como el resolvió un problema similar en el pasado para resolver un problema ahora (“Mi amigo no jugara con migo cuando empujo entonces yo le preguntare esta vez”).
- **Ayudándose unos y otros** – Solicitar ayuda o ayudar a los amigos con un rompecabezas difícil (“Míreme a mi, Trate con esta ficha.”).

4 años o más

- **Planeación avanzada** – El niño decide que bloque es mejor para construir una cerca. Los niños deciden quien jugara cada papel en un juego fingido.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – AND IMITATION
02-A1w**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 4*)

- Imitation is a primary way children learn.
- Imitating begins at about 9 months with repeating simple and familiar sounds or actions. As the child’s experience grows, so does their imitation.
- Preschoolers imitate more complex words and actions and pretend play becomes a main mode of imitating. The ability to imitate writing gradually increases.
- As a child imitates adults and more mature peers, they move from simple play to more complex play.

Parent Skills:

1. Notices the child’s interests in imitation and provides materials or toys.
2. Plays along to extend and enrich the child’s pretend play.
3. Understands that children imitate what they see, and limits movies or TV to G rating.

Parent tip:

PLAY – AND IMITATION

02-A1w

Parents,

Children learn by imitating. Infants imitate sounds (“ba”) or actions (clapping). Toddlers imitate and can repeat it later when asked (“Show me your nose”; sing a simple song). Preschoolers pretend play what they see and hear (how mothers or heroes act). Your delight and praise inspires your child to say/do it again. (Caution: Laugh at a toddler imitating a “bad” word and you’ll hear again.) Encourage your child’s pretending and imitation:

- See what your child likes to imitate and provide those materials or toys (empty paper towel roll for fire hose; containers for play cooking).
- Play along with your child to extend and enrich the pretending. As the child pretends to drive, say “It’s getting dark. Turn on your headlights.” As the child pretends to be a firefighter say, “The dog you saved in that fire is hurt. Where should we take him?”
- Children imitate what they see. Limit movies or TV to G rating.

JUGAR – E IMITAR

Padres,

Los niños aprenden por imitación. Los bebés imitan sonidos (“bu”) o acciones (aplaudir). Niños pequeños imitan y pueden repetir esto más tarde cuando se le pregunta (“Muéstrame tu nariz”; Canta una canción simple). Preescolares imitan juegos que ellos ven y escuchan (como la madre y los héroes actúan). Su encanto y elogio inspiran a su niño a decir hazlo de nuevo. (Precaución: Ríase de un niño cuando imita una mala palabra y usted la escuchara de nuevo.) Anime la simulación y la imitación de sus niños:

- Mire que quiere su niño imitar y denle los materiales y juguetes (papel en blanco, toalla enrollada como manguera de incendio; recipientes para jugar a la cocina).
- Juegue junto con su niño para extender y enriquecer la simulación. Cuando el niño pretenda manejar, diga “Se esta poniendo oscuro. Enciendan los faros”. Cuando el niño pretenda ser un bombero diga, “El perro que salvaste en el incendio esta herido. Donde deberíamos llevarlo?”
- Los niños imitan lo que ellos ven. Limite las películas y la televisión a la clasificación G.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – BUILDS MASTERY MOTIVATION
02-A1x**

Parent Messages (see *Experts page 6-7*)

- Mastery motivation means persistence or the ability to "stick-to-it."
- Persistence develops during play because children are motivated to try a new play skill over and over until they master it (run, climb, swing, do puzzle).
- Children who have not learned persistence at play in preschool will have a harder time sticking to homework later.

Parent Skills:

1. Responds to child's efforts and questions with smiles, praise, and answers.
2. Helps only as much as needed when child is frustrated or fearful.
3. Helps child talk through problems ("What have you tried? What else can you try?").
4. Lets child know in advance before ending play. Allows time to "finish" the play before clean up when possible.

Parent tip:

PLAY – BUILDS MASTERY MOTIVATION

02-A1x

Parents,

Mastery motivation means **persistence**. That is the ability to "stick-to-it." Persistence develops during preschool in play. Children are motivated to try a new play skill over and over until they master it. They work hard to run, climb, swing, or do a puzzle. They beam with joy when they can do it! Children who have not learned persistence at play in preschool will have a harder time sticking to homework later.

Research shows preschoolers who learn mastery motivation do better in 3rd grade and have more self-esteem, higher grades, and less depression in high school. Parents help children develop persistence when they:

- Respond to child's efforts and questions with smiles, praise, and answers.
- Help only as much as needed when child is frustrated or fearful.
- Help child talk through problems ("What have you tried? What else can you try?").
- Let child know in advance before ending play. Allow time to "finish" the play before clean up when possible.

JUGAR – CONSTRUIR MOTIVACIÓN SUPERIOR

Padres,

Motivación superior significa **persistencia**. Esto es habilidad para "dedicarse." La persistencia se desarrolla durante el juego en el preescolar. Los niños están motivados a tratar nuevas habilidades de juegos una y otra vez, hasta que se superan en esto. Ellos trabajan duro para correr, escalar, nadar o hacen un rompecabezas. Ellos brillan de emoción cuando lo pueden hacer! Los niños que no han aprendido persistencia en el juego durante el preescolar, tendrán un tiempo difícil al dedicarse a tareas más tarde.

Investigaciones muestran que los preescolares que aprenden una motivación superior se desempeñan mejor en 3er grado y tienen mejor auto estima, resultados superiores y menos depresión en la preparatoria. Los padres le ayudan a los niños a desarrollar persistencia cuando:

- Responde a los esfuerzos y preguntas de los niños con sonrisas, frases y respuestas.
- Ayuden tanto como puedan solo cuando el niño este frustrado o temeroso.
- Ayúdenle a el niño a hablar durante los problemas ("Que has probado? Que mas puedes tratar?").
- Deje saber al niño con anticipación antes que el juego termine. Permítale tiempo para terminar el juego antes de limpiar si es posible.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – AND SCAFFOLDING
02-A1y**

Parent Messages (see *Experts pages 3, 14*)

- Scaffolding is one way adults can help a child move to the next skill level.
- Scaffolding is done when adults encourage and support the child to do something a little too hard to be done alone.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides opportunities for child to play just beyond their comfort level (not too hard, not too easy) and encourages child to develop new play skills.
2. Talks with child to provide new information and to encourage discussion about thoughts, feelings and new ideas.
3. Responds to child's cues of frustration and provides help so the child can be successful.

Parent tip:

PLAY – AND SCAFFOLDING

01-A1y

Scaffolding is a way adults help children move to the next skill level – just as a painter uses a scaffold to reach higher floors. A parent *scaffolds* (encourages and supports) their child in doing something too hard to do alone (runs holding up a two-wheeled bike until the child can do it alone). Scaffolding provides help when the child is frustrated and helps him be successful.

Parents *scaffold* beginning in infancy:

- When baby is playing, put a toy just out of reach. Help baby roll over to get it.
- Sit on the floor with arms out as baby takes a few steps.

For toddlers – preschoolers:

- Point out the straight side of a puzzle piece.
- Stand near the climber until the child feels safe.
- Suggest using blocks in a new way (build a bridge, a zoo).

And, your smiles and encouraging voice supports (scaffolds) your child in gaining new skills.

JUGAR – Y DAR APOYO

Apoyando es una vía en la que los adultos le ayudan a los niños a moverse al siguiente nivel de habilidad – Exactamente como un pintor usa el andamio para alcanzar pisos más altos. Un padre que da *apoyo* (anima y da soporte). Su hijo está haciendo algo muy duro para hacerlo solo (correr asegurando la bicicleta hasta que el niño pueda hacerlo solo). Dar Apoyo provee ayuda cuando el niño está frustrado y le ayuda a él a ser exitoso. Padres, *dar apoyo* comienza en la infancia:

- Cuando el niño está jugando, ponga un juguete fuera de su alcance. Ayude al niño a rodar para cogerlo.
- Siéntese en el piso con los brazos abiertos cuando el niño de algunos pasos.

Para niños pequeños y preescolares:

- Señale el lado derecho de una pieza del rompecabezas.
- Párese cerca del escalador hasta que el niño se sienta seguro.
- Sugierale usar bloques en una nueva vía (construir un puente, un zoológico).

Y, sus sonrisas y voces de ánimo, dan apoyo a su hijo para ganar nuevas habilidades.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – AND ADULT SUPPORT
02-A1z**

Parent Messages (*see Experts pages 9-14, 17*)

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents be provided information about the importance of play.
- Play is how young children learn, and play helps all areas of development - cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical.
- It is important for parents to play and talk with children in meaningful ways.
- While true play is child directed, parents can help kids make the most of their play.

Parent Skills:

1. Offers ideas, choices, and materials for play.
2. Plays with child when there is time. Lets child take the lead (be the boss of the play).
3. Helps child solve problems but does not take over.
4. Asks questions and makes comments to engage child's imagination.
5. Gives hugs and smiles and is sensitive to child's feelings.

Parent tip:

PLAY – AND ADULT SUPPORT

01-A1z

True play is child directed; however, parents can help kids make the most of their play. Doctors consider it important that parents are given information about the importance of play. Play helps all areas of development – cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical. Play is how young children learn. It is important for parents to play and talk with children in meaningful ways.

- Play when you have time. Let the child take the lead (be the boss of the play).
- Help child solve problems with friends, brothers or sisters without taking over or ending the play.
- Offer ideas, choices, and materials for play.
- Ask questions to engage child's imagination (What else can their pretend character do?).
- Comment on what the child is doing (“That is a really *tall* building like we saw yesterday!”).
- Give hugs and smiles and be sensitive to child's feelings.

JUGAR – Y EL SOPORTE ADULTO

El verdadero juego es dirigido por niños; Sin embargo los padres pueden ayudar a los niños a hacer la mayoría de sus juegos. Los doctores consideran esto importante, que los padres estén dando información acerca de la importancia del juego. Jugar ayuda todas las áreas del desarrollo- cognitivo, lenguaje, social, emocional y físico. El juego es como los niños pequeños aprenden. Es importante para los padres que jueguen y hablen con los niños en vías significativas.

- Juegue cuando usted tenga tiempo y siempre deje al niño tomar la iniciativa (ser el jefe de el juego).
- Ayude al niño a resolver problemas con amigos, hermanos o hermanas sin tener que encargarse o terminar el juego.
- Ofrezca ideas, elecciones y materiales para el juego.
- Haga preguntas que comprometan la imaginación del niño (Que mas puede su personaje imaginario hacer?).
- Comentarios de lo que el niño esta haciendo (“este es un edificio realmente alto como el que vimos ayer).
- Denle sonrisas y abrazos y sea sensitivo con los sentimientos del niño.

Quick Reference

**PLAY – AND QUALITY CHILD CARE
02-A1aa**

Parent Message (see *Experts pages 1-2, 13, 16*)

- Research shows that quality childcare for infants to preschoolers should include large blocks of time for play.
- In quality childcare, teachers guide learning by setting up an appropriate environment and facilitating play.
- Children gain cognitive, social, emotional, and language skills that form the foundation for later academic learning through their play.

Parent Skills:

1. At drop off or pick up time, talks to teacher about skills and concepts child has practiced that day through play.
2. Observes children’s play in the classroom. Asks teacher questions regarding and specific play activities.
3. Reports children’s skills evidenced in play at home (i.e. identified colors, counted)

Parent tip:

PLAY – AND QUALITY CHILD CARE

02-A1aa

Parents,

In a quality preschool classroom, children spend most of their day playing. Play is critical to healthy brain growth and development. When children play, they practice creative skills (imagination) and concrete skills (counting). Play with others teaches them to solve problems, communicate, cooperate, and follow rules. As play skills improve, so do children’s cognitive, social, emotional, and language skills.

Research says young children learn best when they play, explore, and discover. Teachers provide materials, space, and a proper schedule. They support children’s play to aid learning. Classroom materials help children learn (sand or scales teach children to compare; blocks or toy animals teach counting and classification). Children who spend more time playing in preschool do better in school later. Learning play skills can prevent problem behaviors.

When you ask your child what he did today, and the answer is “played”, be reassured that learning went on in a quality childcare classroom.

JUGAR –Y UN PREESCOLAR DE CALIDAD

Padres,

En preescolar con salones de clases de calidad, los niños gastan la mayor parte del día jugando. Jugar es fundamental para un crecimiento y desarrollo saludable del cerebro. Cuando los niños juegan ellos practican habilidades creativas (imaginación) y habilidades concretas (contar). Jugar con otros les enseña a ellos a resolver problemas, a comunicarse, a cooperar y a seguir las reglas. Al la vez que las habilidades de juego mejoran, así también las del conocimiento, las sociales, las emocionales y las del lenguaje.

Investigaciones dicen que los niños aprenden mejor cuando ellos juegan, exploran y descubren. Los profesores proveen los materiales, el espacio y los horarios adecuados. Ellos se apoyan con juegos de niños como ayudas del aprendizaje. Materiales de clase ayudan a los niños a aprender (arena o balanzas le enseñan a los niños a comparar; Cubos o juguetes de animales les enseñan a clasificar y contar). Niños que gastan mas tiempo jugando en el preescolar lo hacen mejor en el colegio después. Aprender habilidades de juego puede prevenir problemas del comportamiento.

Cuando usted le pregunte a su niño que hicieron hoy, y la respuesta es jugar, este tranquilo por que el aprendizaje vino de un salan de clase de calidad.