

PLAYING



Facts about Playing

Playing is a child's work. It is through play and exploration that a child learns most about the world around them. It is important for children to have the opportunity to play with peers and adults, as well as to play independently. Play should offer a child the opportunity to engage their senses through imaginative play: to interact with people, places, and things in their everyday world; and should incorporate print as much as possible.



Social-Emotional Development

Playing with peers is important for a child's social development—one of the most important areas of readiness identified by kindergarten teachers. Play enables a child to try out new ideas and apply knowledge through using their imagination. Play also promotes getting to know others in a way that feels safe and familiar. Play helps build self esteem and confidence.



Cognition/General Knowledge

Play helps children learn about the world around them. Play can be connected to the people and places that are a part of a child's daily living. Play that involves imagination, also called dramatic play, allows a child to learn through being actively engaged in familiar situations, such as playing house, setting up a pretend restaurant, or playing grocery store. It is important to introduce print into a child's play as much as possible, as well as to provide realistic materials—such as receipts, menus, pretend money, etc. This helps children connect play to the real world.



Books That Encourage Playing

- ***Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*** –Eileen Christlelow
- ***Let's Do Nothing!*** –Tony Fucile
- ***A Mouse Told His Mother*** –Bethany Roberts; Maryjane Begin-Callanan
- ***My Friend Rabbit*** –Eric Rohmann
- ***Is Everyone Ready for Fun?*** –Jan Thomas





Activities That Encourage Playing

- Provide realistic materials for children to play with, such as empty cardboard food containers for playing grocery store, or an old cell phone for playing office. Using realistic items will help children learn to interact with their world.
- Set up a pretend grocery store. Take turns playing the part of the customer and the cashier. Use stickers or pieces of paper taped to the items as price tags. Encourage your child to write the prices on the stickers. When paying for the items you purchase, use pretend money and help your child count it out. Write out pretend receipts and encourage your child to sign their name to receipts for pretend credit cards.
- Set up a post office station. Provide envelopes and paper for your child to write letters and mail them in a pretend mailbox. Use junk mail for post office play.
- Play school. Encourage your child to play the role of the teacher. This will help erase fears about starting school, while also providing an opportunity for learning.



Session 5: Playing

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						Allow your child to experiment with water, measuring cups, and bowls.
	Create a sensory tub with sand, beans, water, or rice. Encourage your child to scoop and pour.		Visit the library! Play educational games with your child on a computer.		Build a town together using blocks. Add trucks and cars and build a road.	
Act out your child's favorite book together.		Make puppets together with paper bags. Encourage your child to put on a puppet show for you.		Play a simple board game. This helps children learn to follow directions and take turns.		Set up a play date with another child. This helps your child develop social and turn-taking skills.
	Play "school" with your child. Take turns being the teacher.		Visit the library! Look for CDs with interactive songs and games.		Play grocery store. Encourage your child to write price tags and count money as you "buy" groceries.	
Pretend to cook with your child using pots, pans, and utensils. Talk about each step as you "cook."		Play hide and seek. Encourage your child to count while you hide.				

Early Literacy Practice: Playing

The activities this month will focus on play to help your child prepare for school. Play is a child's work. Play provides the opportunity for children to work on language, math skills, social skills, scientific thinking, writing, pre-reading skills, and connecting to the world around them. Play helps children understand that learning is fun.

Readiness Domain Focus: Approaches to Learning; Cognitive/General Knowledge; Language and Communication; Social-Emotional Development