



Play = Learning



Play helps children think symbolically: a ruler becomes a magic wand, today becomes a time when dinosaurs were alive, a playmate becomes an astronaut exploring space.

Through play, children realize that one thing can stand for another. This also helps children understand that written words stand for real objects and experiences.

Play helps children feel a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. This motivates them to try new experiences and to not give up when something seems difficult.

Outside Fun

Sheet Painting

Materials: Spray bottles, water, liquid tempera paint (variety of colors) and an old sheet.

Fill a spray bottle with half water and half tempera paint. For creative outdoor fun, hang an old sheet on a fence or create a clothesline and have the children spray paint it.



Outdoor Water Art

Materials: A spray bottle for each child, watercolors, water, large wall or fence.

Fill each water bottle with a different color watercolor, mixed with water. Outdoor, on a large wall or fence, let children spray and watch what happens as colors mix. Dries quickly and washes off easily.

Outside Animals

Talk about different animals and how they move. Go outside and have your child stand facing the way you will run. Then explain that they will go down and come back as an animal. Tell youngsters an animal and see if they know how it gets from one place to another. If they don't know help them.

Ex: bunny - hops, tiger - on all fours, and snakes - slithers.

Nature Walk & Collage

Materials:

A place to walk that is rich in nature, Paper Bags, Paper, glue and crayons

Go on a nature walk. Allow your child to pick up objects from nature such as rocks, bark, grass, leaves, flowers, nuts etc., and put them into their bags

As you walk along encourage your child to talk about what they see and hear in nature. Allow them to observe and ask questions. When you go home set out the art tools and let them create a collage of their nature walk.





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Pretend play helps children think symbolically and develop oral language skills. As children play store or pretend to be an animal, they talk about what they're doing. They practice putting thoughts into words.

Make-believe also gives children a chance to act out real-life situations, work through worries and fears, and use their imagination to solve problems.

Dramatic play helps develop narrative skills as children make up a story about what they're doing. This helps them understand that stories happen in an order: first, next, last.

Toy Free Play

Spend time with them.

Be present when you play with your kids. Put the phone away. Talk to them. Ask them questions. Play toy-free games like hide and seek, chasings, What's The Time, Mr Wolf? or building cushion forts.

Play games with them, including games with rules.

Don't assume kids are 'too young' for simple games or sports with rules. Start with the basics, and be flexible.

Build their play vocabulary by doing new things with them.

What toy-free games did you play as a child? Do that with your kids. Go climb a tree, or go fishing, or dig holes in the garden.

Stop entertaining your children.

Right from birth, you can stop worrying about keeping your child entertained. The correct answer to "I'm bored" is "Are you?" PERIOD. Don't make suggestions!

Provide opportunities, not answers.

If you listen and allow them to do what they want in their play if humanly possible, you are halfway there. Ask questions till you find out what they need to help them play; provide that opportunity if you can.

Encourage imagination.

Be playful. Read books together, and refer to ideas out of those books. Pretend to be characters with them. Act out scenarios with them. Let them dress up in your old clothes.

Offer household resources instead of toys.

Pots and pans and lids and wooden spoons are toys. (No, you don't need to buy a toddler a drum kit.) Writing equipment is a toy. A chair can be a toy. Think creatively, and don't be so precious about your household stuff. Let them make forts out of the cushions and play hide-and-seek under the table.

Offer your support to play, rather than directing or ignoring it.

If you see your kids' play going round and round in circles- if frustration is setting in- that's the time to step in and quietly offer a step up to the next level (like showing them how to make or throw a paper plane). Then quietly step back again while they master the skill.

