



TOYS AND PLAY

A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR SUPPORTING EARLY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLAY

Think outside of the box: seek out and encourage play experiences that involve more than just play with toys.

PLAY IS ABOUT SO MUCH MORE THAN TOYS!

Play is about joy and connection. There are so many ways to experience play that don't involve playing with toys. Before children are able to play with toys in a conventional way, they may prefer body movement activities, people games (ex: peek-a-boo and tickles), singing and dancing, or exploring their environment with their sense of touch, sound, and sight. Play helps us connect with children and enter their world. This engagement and connection is integral in forming a foundation for communication skills to develop (Su 2020).

WAYS TO PLAY



BODY
MOVEMENT



PEOPLE
GAMES



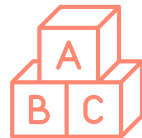
EXPLORATORY
PLAY



SINGING &
DANCING



CREATIVE
PLAY



PLAY WITH
TOYS

TIPS FOR PLAYING

- GET ON THE FLOOR & SIT FACE-TO-FACE.
- HAVE JUST A FEW TOYS OUT.
- WAIT AND WATCH; FOLLOW THEIR LEAD.
- RESPOND TO WHAT THEY DO AND WAIT. GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO RESPOND IN TURN AND TRY TO KEEP IT GOING BACK AND FORTH.

THE RESEARCH ON PLAY

Having fewer toys available increases attention and engagement and improves the quality of interactions between the child and caregiver. Select 3-5 toys and keep the rest put away (Koskulu 2021).

Playing with simple toys is more beneficial than playing with smart toys. Consider traditional choices like balls, blocks, dolls, trucks, and books. Parents talk more and model more specific vocabulary when playing with simple toys (O'Neill, 2019).

Kids learn language through playful, socially-contingent interactions. These are those back and forth interactions with a partner who is responding in real time. This is one of the primary reasons that young children are not able to learn from videos and TV (Roseberry 2014).

Open-ended toys (ex: blocks, art supplies, figures) promote increased creativity, problem-solving, and independent play when compared to close-ended toys like electronic toys and puzzles (MSU.edu).