

Tips to Make the Most of Play Time

- Limit screen time
- Promote outdoor play
- Allow for child to make mistakes
- Give child free time to play outside of school and organized activities
- Let child make choices about games, activities, and toys
- Encourage use of imagination
- Provide encouragement and support
 - For example: offer new challenges if child is bored or help if child is frustrated

Play is Important

Giving a child the opportunity, time, and space to play helps to foster many important life skills.

Engaging in play develops a child's interests and passions which could help direct them toward their future career path. You never know, you may have the next great scientist or artist on your hands.



PLAY

It's More Than You Think...



Pathways.org empowers parents and health professionals with FREE tools and resources to maximize a child's motor, sensory, and communication development.

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FREE tools to maximize child development

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Play Builds Skills for a Lifetime

- Knowing what to do when no one is directing you
- Problem solving
- Creativity and imagination
- Interacting with others and negotiating
- Resilience
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Willingness to take risks and try different scenarios
- Processing emotions
- Understanding social situations
- Discovering interests



Use Play to Help Meet Milestones

From birth, baby uses play to explore the world around them; as well as, learn and develop important life skills.

0-6 Months

- Show baby interesting objects such as a brightly colored mobile or toy
- Talk to baby often to familiarize baby with your voice, respond when they coo & babble
- Place baby in different positions so they can see the world from different angles
- Let baby bring objects to mouth to explore and experience new textures
- Play peek-a-boo
- Vary facial expressions and gestures so baby has the opportunity to imitate them



7-12 Months

- Use a mirror to show faces to baby
- Provide baby with a safe environment to crawl and explore
- Place baby in a variety of positions such as on tummy, side, etc.
- Give baby opportunities to learn actions have effects e.g. when they drop a toy and it falls to the ground



1-3 Years

- Allow child to spend time with objects and toys they enjoy
- Give child pens, markers, or crayons so they can practice scribbling
- Encourage your child to interact with peers
- Help child explore their body through different movements e.g. walking, jumping, and standing on one leg
- Provide opportunities to create make-believe situations with objects e.g. pretending to drink out of empty cup
- Respond when child speaks, answer questions, and provide verbal encouragement



4-6 Years

- Provide opportunities for child to sing and dance
- Tell stories to child and ask them questions about what they remember
- Give child time and space to act out imaginary scenes, roles and activities
- Allow child to move between make-believe games and reality e.g. playing house and helping you with chores
- Schedule time for child to interact with friends to practice socializing and building friendships
- Encourage child to try a variety of movements, e.g. hopping, swinging, climbing and doing summersaults

