

Supporting your child's play development

When playing with your child...

- **No distractions** - turn off the TV, music, mobile phones.
- **Get down to your child's level** - sit on the floor with your child.
- **Keep activities short** - so your child won't lose interest.
- **Follow your child's lead** - play with the toys that they choose.
- **Copy and expand on your child's play** – copy exactly what your child does and then add a new step (e.g if your child hits two cars together, you hit two cars together and then roll the cars along the floor). This shows your child how to play.

Building blocks of communication development

Play is when a child shows enjoyment of an activity. Children play in lots of different ways.

Play is very important because there is a strong link between play and both language and literacy development. Play is fun for adults and children!

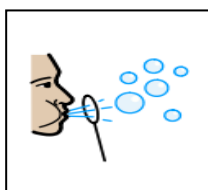


Ideas to try at home

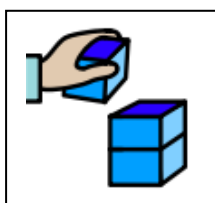
Early Play

Early play helps to develop **early communication skills** like eye contact, turn taking, joint attention and anticipation. You can try:

Bubbles – sit in front of your child and wait for them to look at you or the bubbles before blowing.



Peek a boo – hide your face, then show your face and say “boo”



Build a tower together and knock it over

Physical play – rocking your child, bouncing, climbing, rolling

Make early play more exciting by saying “ready... steady... go!”

Sensory Play

Children begin to explore their senses through **looking, touching and listening**. This helps them to become aware of the world around them. You can try:

Musical toys – make these at home by putting rice or pasta into an empty pot.

Water play – fill a bucket/sink/bath with water and place items in it for the child to explore.



Sand play – fill and empty buckets with sand or make a sandcastle.

Feely bags – put different items into a bag (spoons, paper, soft fabric). Allow your child to take these out one by one. They can explore the items by looking at, listening to and touching them.

Hiding games – cover items with a scarf, lift it up and explore the items.

Cause and Effect

Cause and Effect toys teach the child that they have control of the world around them and that they can use their actions to communicate with others. You can try:

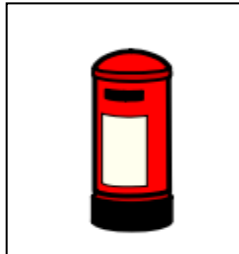
Spinning toys

Pop-up toys

Shape sorters

Car ramps

Musical toys – the child learns when you press a button or shake the toy it makes a noise



Posting - you can make a post box using an empty shoe box - just cut out a hole.

The child may enjoy filling and emptying the post box.

Name each item as you post it!

Self-related pretend play

You can model this on yourself or on your child (e.g. eating a toy apple, using a hairbrush to brush their hair). Talk about what you are doing (e.g. "brushing hair").



Relating to others

Get your child to involve others in their play (e.g. giving you a drink from their cup or giving you a hat to put on your head). You might need to show them how.

Children might enjoy relating play to their favourite toy (e.g. feeding a teddy or doll).



Sequences of pretend play

Act out every day routines (e.g feed the doll, bath the doll and then put the doll to bed).

The sequences can become longer as your child gets older.

Small world toys encourage imagination (e.g farm animals, dinosaurs, dolls house).



Imaginative play

Role-playing as different jobs or fictional characters helps your child to develop their understanding of the world and their conversational skills.

Use puppets to tell stories, pretend to be their favourite character or act out a familiar scenario (e.g. cooking dinner or food shopping).

