

Play and Have Fun!

Play is important for children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. When children have opportunities to practice new skills, the development of these skills advances. Below are some simple ways you can encourage your child's development through play.

All Ages

- READ together!
- Read stories that incorporate languages other than your own native language.
- Make-believe play strengthens memory, language, logical reasoning, imagination, and creativity. (Throw a teaparty, act out a story, etc.)
- When asking questions, wait 3–5 seconds to give child time to process the question.
- It's okay to get messy. Children are learning all the time.
- Listen to all kinds of music.
- Play dress-up. Encourage older children to role-play.
- Visit the library. You may wish to schedule weekly trips.
- Get creative! Painting, drawing, and sculpting allow children to use their imaginations and expand their creativity.
- Large appliance boxes make wonderful toys and allow children to use their imaginations and creativity.
- Play with bubbles! Children (and adults) love bubbles. Blow bubbles with different tools – a kitchen spatula, chenille stems twisted into shapes, anything with holes – and have fun!
- Let your child see you reading for pleasure.
- Tell stories together. Talk about your family history. Look at photos from past vacations and share memories. Share photos from your childhood.
- Provide plenty of writing materials for your child (chalk, markers, crayons, pencils, etc.).
- When washing your car, provide your child with a bucket of soapy water and encourage him or her to wash some toys.
- Model good manners for your child. Say “please,” “thank you,” and “you're welcome.” Write thank-you notes. Your child watches you more than anyone else, especially in the younger years.
- Visit local museums or places where children can see, touch and hear creative works.