

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.

TWOS

- Play Ring Around the Rosie.
- Find pictures of faces in magazines and books and ask your child about the expression on each face. Look only for happy faces one day, while another day you may look for silly, sad, excited, or mad faces.
- Build simple structures together. Add toy animals/people to the structure.
- Using your child's favorite doll or stuffed animal, ask him to point to different body parts on the toy. ("Where is teddy's head?" "Show me his feet," etc.) Encourage him to point to the same body parts on himself.
- Turn dinnertime into a song. Singing helps your child focus on the words and what they mean. Instead of speaking your words, sing or chant them. ("Would you like some milk?")
- Your child may have a favorite book she wants to hear again and again. Read the story aloud and let your child fill in some of the words.
- Sort toys by different characteristics (color, size, toys with wheels, animal toys, etc.). Count the number of toys that you have sorted.
- Experiment with throwing objects using a laundry basket. Encourage your child to throw various objects into the basket (soft/sponge balls, wadded paper, scarves, beanbags).
- Look at the moon together. Ask your child to draw a picture of the moon. You may wish to do this for several nights in a row to compare the changes in the moon.
- Using plastic containers and lids, encourage your child to match the lid to the container.
- Encourage your child to move like an animal– slither like a snake, waddle like a penguin, hop like a bunny, etc.
- Draw pictures together using sidewalk chalk. Express creativity on the sidewalk, driveway, or walkway. It will only last until the next rain.
- Create a "feely" bag using a cloth bag or pillowcase. Place objects that are familiar to your child (spoon, stuffed animal, hairbrush, crayon, etc.) in the bag. Have your child reach in the bag without looking and guess what object he is touching.
- Encourage your child to string large beads onto a piece of yarn or string.
- Using different shaped blocks, make a simple pattern and ask your child to make the same pattern. For example, you could make circle, square, circle, square or triangle, rectangle, triangle, rectangle, etc.
- Let your child help you in the kitchen when baking/cooking. She can dump measured ingredients into a bowl, use cookie cutters, decorate cookies, and more.