

# The Importance of Play

Play is a child's work. It is through play that children learn about themselves and the world around them. They learn to understand their environment, practice what they have observed, and explore objects and activities safely and thoroughly.

Your children learn many important skills through play. Here are just a few:

1. How to solve problems
2. How to make a plan and follow through
3. How to get along with other children
4. How to express their creative ideas
5. How to take care of their own needs
6. How to share and be kind

To help your child get the most out of his play, be sure to provide a safe, clean environment with a variety of play experiences. Rotate toys according to appropriate times of day. For instance, keep active toys out for daytime and replace them with quiet activities before bedtime or nap times. Provide household items that can be used in a safe way (pots, pans, lids, etc.) to mimic adult behaviors and begin to develop life skills.

Your child loves when you watch him play. Express interest in what your child is doing or playing with and help extend his play by asking open-ended questions (questions that encourage them to talk in their own words). For example, if a child is playing with the dishes, ask "What are you cooking in this pot?"

Most importantly, have fun and play together!

