

## The Power of Play

Tips to Promote Child Well-Being and Resilience



### The Many Benefits of Play:

- **Cognitive:**
  - Creativity
  - Abstract thinking
  - Imagination
  - Problem-solving skills
- **Physical:**
  - Gross & fine-motor skills
  - Coordination
  - Self-help skills
- **Social:**
  - Cooperation with others
  - Sharing
  - Conflict resolution
  - Leadership skills
  - Communication skills
- **Emotional:**
  - Self-confidence
  - Identify and express feelings
  - Self-regulation
  - Attention regulation/concentration



### Why is Play Important?

- Play is a voluntary, intrinsically motivated activity involving flexibility of choice in determining how an item is used.
- Play and activity is a child's predominant medium of communication and expression.
- According to Piaget, a Swiss Psychologist known for his work on child development, play bridges the gap between concrete experience and abstract thought, and it is the symbolic function of play that is so important.



### Play and Learning

Play is fun, practical, authentic and the first way in which children gain knowledge through their senses. It helps children:

- Learn concepts and skills
- Explore and discover the world around them
- Practice skills for mastery
- Experiment and problem-solve
- Engage in collaborative learning with adults and peers

# Dimensions of Play

**Cognitive Dimensions** include ways in which a child's play progresses over time to become more complex and detailed.

- **Functional Play**
  - The first type of play activity in which children engage. Functional play involves repetitive, physical actions, language, and manipulation of objects.
- **Symbolic Play (18 months old)**
  - The ability to use objects, actions or ideas to represent part of play such as role-play or make-believe.
- **Constructive Play (2 years old)**
  - Goal-oriented, creative play where objects are manipulated to create something with a desired outcome in mind.
- **Play with Rules (5 years old)**
  - Games based on a specific structure with routine and rules accepted and followed by all players.

**Social Dimensions** include ways in which a child engages independently/collaboratively and how this expands and progresses over time.

- **Solitary Play**
  - The first attempts at exploring the world around them. The child plays alone and independently even if surrounded by others.
- **Parallel Play (2.5 years old)**
  - Play continues independently but with an awareness of other children nearby and that they are playing beside peers.
- **Associative Play (3.5 years old)**
  - Children begin to play with others where they will engage in sharing, taking turns, lending toys and forming small playgroups.
- **Cooperative Play (4.5 years old)**
  - Final stage of social play in which children play in groups where each member has a role and the group works towards a common goal.

## Structure a Playful Environment

that encourages creative expression with/without verbalization; engages a child's interests, allows for a wide range of emotion expression, allows exploration and noncommittal play and is sturdy and steady for active use.



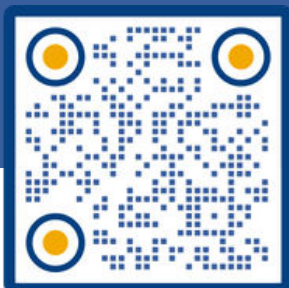
“ Each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely. - Jean Piaget ”

## Activities that Promote Social-Emotional Development

- Sand tray/box
- Nature puzzle
- Nature name
- Nature shapes
- Water play
- Puppet play
- Playdough
- Sensory bins



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