

## Toddlers don't need many toys

A few basic toys like dolls, cars, balls, boxes, dress-up clothes and other household bits and pieces will give lots of play possibilities. Mud, sand and water make great toys – but remember water safety!



## School aged children

School aged children are mostly good at playing alone, or with other children, but playing with you can still be very special. Family board games and card games can be fun for everyone. Most children enjoy active outdoor games and also craft or creative games indoors.

## Here are a few ideas:

- ★ Play a game in the back yard or go for a walk in a park.
- ★ Build a cubby house under a table or outside.
- ★ Dress up in old clothes, shoes and hats and put on a concert.



So, now that you have seen the importance of play, make play a priority in your family.



## For more parenting information and support:

Parentline ACT (02) 6287 3833  
Parentline NSW 1300 1300 52  
Parentline NT 1300 30 1300  
Parentline QLD 1300 30 1300  
Parent Helpline SA 1300 364 100  
Parenting Line TAS 1300 808 179  
Parentline VIC 13 22 89  
Parenting Line WA (08) 9368 9368 (metro)  
1800 111 546 (regional)

Parenting lines provide a telephone service providing information and good ideas about caring for babies and children.

## Playgroups:

To join a Playgroup or to start a new Playgroup, phone 1800 171 882. Playgroups are an informal session where mums, dads, grandparents, caregivers, babies and children meet together in a relaxed environment. See the website for more information: [www.playgroupaustralia.com.au](http://www.playgroupaustralia.com.au)



## Toy libraries:

To borrow toys, ask at your local library or council for toy lending services in your area

## Supported by

The Australian Government Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

# The Importance of PLAY



# Healthy happy children need love, laughter, care, nutrition, safety and play every day...

Let's take a look at play – an essential part of every child's life.



## Why is play so good for our children?

Some adults see play as trivial, but for babies and children play is important work. It is the natural way little people 'wire up their brains' and learn how to:

- ★ use their bodies
- ★ use their imagination
- ★ solve problems
- ★ express their feelings
- ★ communicate
- ★ get along with others
- ★ make sense of their surroundings
- ★ try out adult behaviour.

Three things our kids need for play are time, playmate(s), and a safe place.



## Play with your baby

Feeding, talking to, watching, singing to, cuddling, and bathing your new baby are the start of play. Soon enough you will start getting positive feedback from your baby joining in activities such as chatting, playing 'peek-a-boo', blowing 'raspberries', and splashing and kicking with delight in the bath.

Try out little surprises and new games, but check that your baby enjoys it too.



Babies don't need many toys. Simple things like spoons and plastic containers, leaves or an old envelope will interest your baby as much as a toy.

Your baby might show a preference for certain styles of play. When playing with your baby please remember your own strength.

## Play with your toddler and preschooler

Your child is now learning coordination and communication skills. They may be able to run, climb, and open things; sing, chat, and imitate how 'big people' do housework, use the phone, or fix things. They love using these skills when you or other playmates play with them.



## Some Do's and Don'ts of PLAY



- ★ Do notice what they concentrate on – this is a clue to their interests.
- ★ Do variety and repetition. Both are important in child's play and learning.
- ★ Do let them control their own play and play alone some of the time.
- ★ Do allow young boys to play girl's roles and young girls to play boy's roles. It's normal.
- ★ Don't compete with your children.

Young children are experts at noticing little differences in things. You can use this skill in your play together – exploring pictures, or having fun trying different words in rhymes, books and songs.

Try to show your toddler appropriate ways to behave when playing and remember that they still have a lot to learn. Sometimes they may bite, push, hit or scream. This is frustration, not being 'bad'. Develop a gentle, consistent approach to behaviour. This will help your children learn what is OK and not OK.

