



The Power of Play

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Today's Objectives

**Why play is essential
for early learning and
development**

01

**Different types of
play and how each
supports growth**

02

**Discover what
research says about
the power of play**

03

**Explore simple,
practical ways to
support play at home**

04



**What does play
look like in your home?**

Types of Play

Physical

**Builds motor skills,
health, coordination**

Pretend

**Encourages
imagination, empathy,
language**

Constructive

**Fosters problem-
solving and persistence**

Social

**Teaches cooperation
and emotional
regulation**



Exploratory

**Promotes curiosity
and discovery**



Social Emotional Growth Through Play

- Play helps children **understand feelings**, take turns, and build friendships.
- Through pretend play, children learn **empathy** and **conflict resolution**.
- It provides a safe space to **practice coping skills** and build confidence



Cognitive & Language Development

- Play promotes thinking, reasoning, and creativity
- Encourages problem-solving and decision-making
- Expands vocabulary and communication skills
- Supports early literacy and numeracy

Physical Development Through Play

- Strengthens muscles and coordination
- Improves balance and body awareness
- Encourages healthy risk-taking and confidence
- Builds fine motor skills (hands and fingers)

What Research Says about Play

- ✧  **Brain Development:** Play strengthens brain connections and supports executive functions like problem-solving, focus, and creativity.
-  **School Readiness:** Research shows that children who engage in frequent play demonstrate stronger language, math, and social-emotional skills.
-  **Emotional Growth:** Through play, children practice empathy, cooperation, and emotional regulation.
- ✧  **Family Connection:** Shared play strengthens the parent-child bond and promotes security and trust.

Sources:

American Academy of Pediatrics (2018) • Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University • Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2009)

How to Support Play at Home

- Providing time, space, and materials.
- Following the child's lead rather than directing.
- Asking open-ended questions ("What do you think will happen if...?").
- Encouraging imaginative thinking and problem-solving.
- Celebrate effort and curiosity more than results



Simple Play Ideas at Home

- 🏠 Indoor Play: Forts, pretend store, dress-up, cooking, art corner
- 🌳 Outdoor Play: Nature walks, water play, chalk, scavenger hunts
- 📚 Learning Through Play: Counting toys, letter/color hunts, sorting laundry
- 🎵 Music & Movement: Freeze dance, rhythm games, family dance party



Overcoming Barriers

- 🕒 **Busy schedules** – set short daily play windows
- 📺 **Screen time** – balance with hands-on activities
- 🏠 **Limited space** – use hallways, cardboard boxes, reusable bins, imagination based
- 💰 **Budget** – everyday items make great toys (spoons, containers, recycled items, natural materials)



Letter Hunt with Recycled Newspaper



Evaporation Station

littlemama



Painting Letters

Printing Practice with Water



SHAPE SORT

SUPER SIMPLE. SUPER LEARNING.



SUN PRINT PAPER NATURE ART



TRAP, CUT, & RESCUE

Fun cutting practice for kids!



OUTDOOR NAME PAINT



Key Takeaways

- Play is learning in action
 - Supports every area of development
 - Parents are a child's first play partners
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**“Play is the work of
childhood.”**

—Fred Rogers



Thank you!