



INFANT

The Importance of Play

Things Every Parent Should Know About Play and Its Importance (NAEYC)

1. Children learn through their play. Do not underestimate the value of play. Children learn and develop:
 - cognitive skills – like math and problem solving in a pretend grocery store
 - physical abilities – like balancing blocks and running on the playground
 - new vocabulary – like the words they need to play with toy dinosaurs
 - social skills – like playing together in a pretend car wash
 - literacy skills – like creating a menu for a pretend restaurant
2. Play is healthy. Play helps children grow strong and healthy. It also counteracts obesity issues facing many children today.
3. Play reduces stress. Play helps your children grow emotionally. It is joyful and provides an outlet for anxiety and stress.
4. Play and learning go hand-in-hand. They are not separate activities. They are intertwined. Think about them as a science lecture with a lab. Play is the child's lab.
5. Play outside. Remember your own outdoor experiences of building forts, playing on the beach, sledding in the winter, or playing with other children in the neighborhood. Make sure your children create outdoor memories too.
6. Play is a child's context for learning. Children practice and reinforce their learning in multiple areas during play. It gives them a place and a time for learning that cannot be achieved through completing a worksheet. For example, in playing restaurant, children write and draw menus, set prices, take orders, and make out checks. Play provides rich learning opportunities and leads to children's success and self-esteem.

Play Ideas for Infants

- Sharing is caring. Parents can play along with their kids or encourage siblings or family friends to play together. Not only will shared playtime keep babies busy, but it will also teach them to socialize and communicate with others.

*Activities should be done under the supervision of an adult or older sibling.

Please see below for some additional activities that you could try with your child.



- Cheer them on! There is no right way to play with an infant toy. Little ones do not always understand instructions, but parents can show them the way of offering a helping hand, a smile, or a hug when kids are doing a good job.
- Play games where infants drop objects and you pick them up.
- Play nursery games like Peek-a-Boo and Patty-Cake.
- Play Hide-and-Seek with objects.
- Walk around the house looking at and naming things.
- Roll a ball to infant.
- Take a stroller ride if weather is nice.
- Use everyday kitchen utensils to help your child learn hand-eye coordination by playing with the different size of bowls and cups. Stack them up!
- Babies can practice hand-eye coordination with a tumble tower. Stack plastic cups on top of each other to build a tall tower and let the giggles pour out of your little ones as they watch their tower tumble down.
- A simple activity like crawling helps infants strengthened their muscles. Help them learn to communicate by naming all the objects they see as they crawl around.

Support Your Child's Amazing Journey by Providing:

- Plenty of time for your child to play as he or she chooses.
- Use household objects to stand in for others – paper for money, pans for drums, etc.
- Recycle materials – change a box into a boat.
- Use open-ended play material (blocks).
- Allow your house to be transformed into a creative site – fort, zoo, or a store.

Infant Play in the Kitchen

- Do not be afraid to get messy. Let your baby play with food to learn about textures and increase creativity.
- Make some music. Pots and pans will help your child express their emotions through the power of music.
- A spoon and a plastic tub will make beautiful music also. Dance as your child plays a beat.

Sticky Notes Tube

Take an empty roll of paper towels and add colorful sticky notes on it. Put the tube in front of your infant and give her time to explore. Name the colors as she touches each of the notes. If your child does not attempt to take the notes off, show her how. Watch when the sticky part of the note becomes stuck on your infant's fingers and hands. What is their reaction? If she takes the notes off quickly, put them back on and watch her do it again!

Inside Surprise

Put a toy or book inside an empty cardboard box. Wrap it with colorful paper or newspaper comics. Clap your hands when baby yanks it open, then announce what is inside.

Sponge Fun

Add sponges to baby's bath time. Sponges come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Let baby squeeze and soak the sponges.

