



## PRESCHOOL

### Learning Through Play

“Play is the work of childhood.” - Mr. Rogers



#### Why Does Play Matter?

It is more than just fun and games!  
Play matters because it:

- Helps children learn about themselves and the world around them
- Allows children to explore different interests and passions
- Encourages interactions, sharing, and socialization to help develop social-emotional skills
- Develops important life skills

#### What Is Play?

Play is “any spontaneous or organized activity that provides enjoyment, entertainment, amusement or diversion.” In simpler terms, it is a time when we are:

- Having fun.
- Being creative and spontaneous.

- Creating original ideas and acting on them.
- Engaged and concentrated.

Does your child play independently? Playing alone can have a positive impact on your child's creativity, confidence, and overall development.

#### Playing, Helping, and Learning

Fall cleaning helps your child to:

**Practice gross motor skills:** The physical act of cleaning will get your child moving and working larger muscle groups. Actions like wiping, sweeping, and dusting can provide opportunities to move in new ways. Additionally, picking up toys works core, arm, and leg muscles.

**Tip:** Cleaning does not have to be boring! Use kid-friendly supplies like shaving cream to clean surfaces or put on music to make it a cleaning dance party!

*(continued)*

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



**Practice fine motor skills:** Smaller muscles in your child's hands will also get a workout. Actions like folding clothes or sorting small items, like toys or hair accessories, will strengthen fine motor skills. Make sure your child does not handle any small items that could be a choking hazard.

**Learn responsibility:** Like any chore, cleaning can be a great way to set responsibilities for your child. Work with him to pick the tasks he will do, so the responsibilities are clearly set. Then select a time by which he will complete the cleaning tasks. You may need to remind him of when that time is, and check in on him, but this bit of independence will help your child to understand what he is responsible for and feel accomplished when he sees it through!

**Exercise giving back:** Consider donating items that your child has outgrown and will not use if you are able. Show your child that those items will be used by someone who needs them and will love them just as much as she once did.

**Feel appreciated.** While your child is cleaning and once the job is complete, be sure to congratulate him on a job well done and thank him for their much-needed help. This simple act can show your child the benefits of working hard and following through!

## Help in the Kitchen

At this age, your child is able to start helping in the kitchen, with a little prep from you. Here are some ways preschoolers can help.

- Wash fruits and veggies.
- Tear lettuce for salads.
- Stir ingredients together in a mixing bowl.
- Pour water or milk into measuring cups with assistance.

- Help you read the recipe by turning the pages.
- With your help, beat eggs or mash potatoes with an electric mixer.
- Sprinkle cheese or salt and pepper onto a dish.
- Fill measuring spoons or cups and pour contents into mixing bowl with assistance.

## Benefits of Cooking Together

- Practicing counting skills by counting out eggs or other ingredients.
- Scooping and pouring ingredients are both practice for fine motor skills.
- Talking through the recipe together and talking about ingredients can help build vocabulary.
- There are many sensory experiences in the kitchen. Have your child listen to sounds of the electric mixer or food being added to a hot pan. Let her feel bread or dough by helping knead it.
- Participating in cooking can help with picky eaters. Encourage your little one to try some of the ingredients, but do not force it. Being around and becoming more familiar with new ingredients will eventually help your child want to try new things. Learn about the differences between a picky eater and a problem feeder.
- Following simple directions with one or two steps is essential while cooking and is great practice for future school activities.

Don't forget: You should always supervise your child in the kitchen!

