

Supporting your child to develop their play skills

Play is not just for fun – it is the way children learn and develop!



You can support your child to learn through play by:

Following their lead! Copying or joining in with your child's play ideas will help your child show you what they are interested in playing at that moment.

Noticing what types of play your child loves.

For example, if your child likes noise, try making sound effects during play. "Crash!" "Bang!" "Beep Beep!"



Talking about what you are playing together.

This helps to develop your child's imagination and language skills at the same time!

"Shall we build a farm for the animals?"



Slowly building upon your child's play idea. Try adding unexpected actions and watch to see if your child looks or copies! If they are watching, try repeating the action but changing it slightly each time to keep them interested. Next time they might even have a go at what you showed them!

Encouraging to share and take turns. These skills help your child to build resilience and learn social etiquette for positive social interactions.



Enjoying messy play together. Your child might like to start with 'less messy' options (sandpit, using a rolling pin to roll playdough, or painting with a paintbrush). As they become more comfortable, you can try 'messier' play (finger painting, making playdoh, using water in the sandpit). It may help to have a towel nearby or let your child know they can wash their hands straight after they try something new.



Most importantly, have fun playing together!

Remember, this handout gives you general information only. To get personalised tips for you and your child, speak to an occupational therapist. They will make it just right for you both!