

Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine, where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in thinking. Play expands children's thinking and enhances their desire to know and to learn. They need positive connection and joyful, caring interactions with their family and carers to thrive.

Things to do with your children everyday

Prioritise speaking and listening. Read and enjoy books together. Move inside and outside. Sing songs and nursery rhymes.

Language and communication development

- Name games: play games with your child using their name in different ways – use your child's name, such as 'I see Bobby Jones'; make up simple songs using your child's name and include their name in songs; ask their name and greet them.
- Eye-spy/I see something that is: use a collection of things from around the house. Describe the objects using colour, shape, size, use, texture, sound.
- Cook together: Use a lot of language as you are cooking – label items, describe actions, talk about tastes, how food grows. Use maths and science concepts: counting and measuring; discussing what happens when ingredients are mixed together or heated.
- Two-step instructions: Ask your child to pick up two different objects and give them to you. Or, tell your child, "get your shoes and put them by the door."

Physical development

- Drawing around things: Use household items and/or toys to trace around. Allow children to trace their fingers around the rim/edges of items. Discuss shapes and sizes.
- Walk, run, climb, jump, catch, balance and dance
- Threading: use string/wool/ribbon and things around the house to thread, such as plastic cups with handles, curtain rings and key rings, create rings with pipe cleaners. Use a large needle to thread ribbon or wool to thread through fabric.
- Scissors: provide opportunities for your child to practise cutting. Cutting playdough helps to strengthen hand muscles.

Social and emotional development

- Family photos/pictures of faces: look at a variety of faces with different facial expressions and discuss how the people are feeling. Discuss what things make your child feel happy, sad etc.
- Make believe play: join or instigate make believe games with your child.
- Caring for others: put a Band-Aid on a doll/teddy's arm/leg and encourage your child to take care of the toy.
- Sing songs about feelings: such as 'when you're happy and you know it...'. Lay down and listen to relaxing music

Cognitive development

- Sorting shapes, sizes, colours, textures: sort different household items and/or toys. This could include: finding all of the socks in the washing; grouping toys, plates, clothes, pegs into colour groups; ordering plastic containers according to size.
- Building blocks: play with blocks together. Talk about what your child is doing and describe the blocks. Build a tower together. Take turns. Count the blocks. Say the colours.
- Puzzles: spend time doing puzzles with your child. If you don't have puzzles, cut up pages in magazines or cereal boxes.
- Memory games: play memory games using items from around the house. Start with a few of your child's favourite toys. Play with and name the toys. Ask your child to close their eyes. Take one item away. Ask your child 'what's gone?'

