

Learn about the power and purpose of play



BENEFITS OF PLAY



TYPES OF PLAY



GETTING INVOLVED

THE POWER OF PLAY

Why play is essential to child development

Your children need to play. It helps them build all kinds of skills that are necessary for healthy development. And it's **your job as a parent** to support them in developing these skills.



Research shows important benefits of play



Cognitive (Brain) Benefits^{4,5,6,7}

- Boosts academic performance
- Improves focus and attention
- Enhances creativity and imagination
- Improves problem solving skills



Social and Emotional Benefits^{1,2,4,5,6,7}

- Increases empathy
- Reduces stress levels
- Improves mood
- Reduces aggression
- Increases impulse control

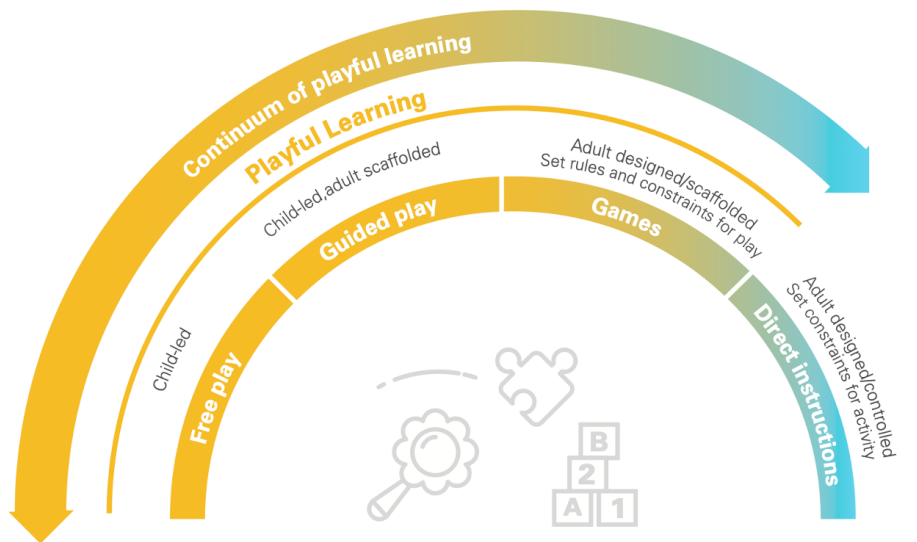


Physical Benefits^{2,3,5,8}

- Increases activity and fitness levels
- Reduces nearsightedness
- Increases vitamin D levels
- Improves sleep

Figure 1. Continuum of Playful Learning

The different types of play



Source: Adapted from Zosh, Jennifer N., et al. Learning through play: a review of the evidence. LEGO Foundation, 2017.

Unstructured or Free Play

Kids lead the way with their **imagination and creativity**. It's crucial for cognitive development, as it encourages independent thinking and problem-solving. *Examples: Building a fort with pillows, playing dress-up, and exploring nature.*

Structured Play

These are games or activities with rules, helping kids learn about **organization, teamwork, and strategy**. It also builds focus and self-discipline. *Examples: Playing board or card games, engaging in team-based strategy games like capture the flag or a scavenger hunt, or playing rule-based sports.*

Solo Play

Time alone in play allows children to develop **independence, focus, and self-confidence**. It's perfect for building self-reliance and fostering creativity. *Examples: Drawing or painting, building puzzles or Lego sets, and reading.*

Social Play

Playing with others helps kids learn how to **communicate, collaborate, and resolve conflicts**. It also builds important social and emotional skills. *Examples: Games like tag or hide-and-seek, group projects, collaborative board games, and team sports.*

Active Play

Physical play is essential for health and motor development, helping children **improve coordination, strength, and stamina**. *Examples: Running races, playing with a ball, jumping on a trampoline, biking, or dancing.*

What you can do to encourage play

- * **Limit Screen Time:** set family rules and use parent control tech to set limits for screen time. Model and encourage non-digital play.
- * **Create Play-Friendly Spaces:** have art supplies and toys where kids can create, build and explore or play board games and card games.
- * **Encourage Outdoor Play:** whether it's a bike ride, a nature walk or a game of tag, spend time outdoors together.
- * **Incorporate Play into Everyday Tasks:** turn daily chores or routines into fun activities.
- * **Join in the fun:** even 15 - 20 minutes of connecting with your child as they play in some way shows them that you value play and spending time together.

