

PLAYING IS LEARNING

Occupational Therapy : Skills for the Job of Living

A child's "job" or "occupation" is to play.

Play allows children to explore the world around them and process sensory information. Play develops motor skills, visual perception skills, social, and self-regulation skills.

Play also fosters self-confidence to try new things and gain independence.

Ideas to Support Development & Play at Home



GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

- Animal walks around the house or backyard
- Dancing
- Playing "Red light, Green light" or "Simon Says"
- Playing kick ball or catch
- Swimming
- Building a fort or obstacle course at home
- Riding a bike



FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

- Painting, drawing, colouring
- Using mini pencils or broken crayons - these are great for small hands to work on pencil grasp
- Making playdough pizza, cookies, people, etc.
- Building with Lego, Magnet tiles, and Jenga
- Board games: Connect 4, LiteBrite, Trouble, Sorry, Operation, etc.
- Card games: Go Fish, Crazy 8's, Matching, War
- Pencil & Paper games: Mazes, Connect-the-Dot, Crosswords, Tic-Tac-Toe



VISUAL PERCEPTION DEVELOPMENT

- Memory matching with cards
- Puzzles
- iSpy, Where's Waldo, and/or find the hidden picture books
- Construction activities copied from a model (Lego, wooden blocks, magnet tiles etc.)



EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- Have a balance between structured time and free play
- Go for a walk and talk about what you see and how you feel
- Go on a treasure hunt, or play iSpy
- Allow time for creativity (doodle, scribble, play music, build etc.)
- Designate a calm space in your home where your child can go to take a break or relax and recharge

What You Should Know About Play

1. Allow your child to lead the play.
2. Creativity evolves from play.
3. Play is about the process - not the finished product.
4. Play reduces kids' stress.