

EARLY PLAY

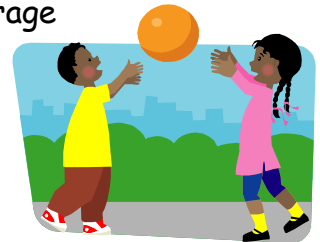
What are early play skills?

Play is important for language development and imaginative thinking. As children play they explore the world, and begin to understand more about how things around them work.

Activities to try:

Exploratory Play

- collect a bag full of scrap materials e.g. empty pots, shiny paper, bricks, spoons etc. Take time to explore the contents of the bag. Make it fun by banging things together, hiding items in pots etc.
- Hiding games - cover toys with a scarf or sheet. Encourage your child to find the toy.



Physical Play

- Play games of throw and catch with a ball.
- Bounce your child up and down on your lap or play swinging and rocking games in the air or on the floor.
- Collect boxes for your child to climb in and out of. Pretend the box is a house or a car.

Self-pretend Play

- You will need cups, brushes, toothbrushes, sponges or flannels, spoons, items of clothing such as hats, gloves, socks. Pretend to have a drink, brush your hair etc and encourage your child to copy you.



Symbolic Play

- First you and your child can act out everyday situations e.g. talking on the telephone, brushing the floor. Then introduce toys represent the real object.
- Try acting out everyday activities with dolls/teddies/action figures e.g. getting up, getting dressed, washing, eating, drinking.
- Using these toys demonstrate the order of everyday activities e.g. brushing teeth before going to bed. Talk about what you are doing and encourage your child to copy.

Try not to force your child to play with you. They are more likely to join in when there is a relaxed, fun environment.