

# Play and Delight

Play is the work of childhood. Playing together with your child can be one of the most powerful ways to connect with and find joy and delight in your child. As a busy family it can be hard to find time to play. Letting your child be the leader in play will help you learn more about your child's natural interests. Having fun together helps your child feel known, capable and delighted in. This will deepen your relationship, which is the foundation for their healthy development.



1. Follow my lead, wherever my imagination takes us!

2. Use words to describe my play. Enjoy my stories and join me in my ideas, even if they're different than what you might do.



3. Help me add to or expand my play.

4. Delight in my ideas and keep following my lead.



## Playtime with Your Child

You are your child's favorite playmate. Playing with your child provides the positive attention and connection needed to grow and thrive. Playing with your child also helps with brain development in ways that only happen when you play together face-to-face.

Play supports the emotional, language, and problem solving parts of the brain. Through playing with you, your child can learn about colors, shapes, textures, numbers, and all sorts of other information. Your child will also learn about how to concentrate and be patient with a challenging activity or game, how to think through and solve a problem, and how to use social skills like taking turns and sharing. We live in a world full of electronic devices (e.g. TVs, phones, tablets, etc.) but face-to-face play time with you engages the thinking, social, emotional and verbal parts of your child's brain—time spent on a device (like an app on a phone or a show on TV) just can't do this in the same way.

It is important to follow your child's lead in play for a number of reasons. It is a safe time for your child to make choices which supports the need for competence and age-appropriate control. Letting your child be the leader will help you learn about your child's natural interests and curiosity. Your child will also be more likely to stay engaged in the play for longer periods. Lastly, following your child's lead will add to your fun together and help you and your child look forward to more fun times ahead.

