

Playtime with Your Child

Oh, you see the baby!



1. Get down on my level, watch what I want to do and join me.

You're feeding the baby. The baby likes that.



2. Notice, imitate, or use words to describe my play. Show me that you enjoy me.

*Is the baby tired now?
Does the baby need a blanket?*



3. Make our play interesting by adding new ideas.

*Oh, you're all done with the baby.
You want to draw something with the markers now.*



4. Watch my cues and let me move on to do something else when I want.

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You are your child's favorite playmate. Playing with your child provides the positive attention that your child needs in order to feel connected to you. 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 several 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. Following your child's lead will add to your fun together and help you and your child look forward to more fun times ahead. Finally, your child will learn from you about how relationships work, give and take, and sharing. As your child grows, your child will use these needed skills to work cooperatively with peers and to make friends.

