

Play Skills

TYPES OF PLAY

WHY THEY MATTER

For children, play is a natural state that ignites learning, builds confidence, develops communication skills, and promotes physical and emotional wellbeing! There are many types of play; each kind nourishes various facets of a child's growth.

1 SOLITARY PLAY

While babies in particular enjoy solitary play, children of all ages can benefit from it. It is self-guided, independent play that doesn't include other playmates.

Examples

Rattling toys, writing and reading, beading a necklace, working on puzzles, having an imaginary tea party.

2 RISKY PLAY

A union of healthy risk, freedom, and play time. It relies on a child's curious and experimental choices, creating an exploratory state of learning that is fueled by fun and creativity.

Examples

Climbing a tree, crawling up the slide backwards, swinging on vines, and play fighting.

THE BENEFITS

- Strengthens self-reliance and decision-making skills.
- Cultivates creativity.
- Helps children find the confidence to interact with others.
- Allows children to explore environments at their own pace.
- Promotes relaxation and emotional reflection.

THE BENEFITS

- Builds independence and develops a sense of self.
- Challenging, self-guided play choices cultivate confidence.
- Provides real-world experience.
- Creates an ability to bounce back from mistakes.
- Provides an outlet for emotions.
- Sparks a sense of wonder and eagerness towards the world.



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SENSORY PLAY

Sensory play is any activity that stimulates a child's five senses. They touch, taste, smell, hear, and see the world around them.

Examples

Digging in sand, sorting shapes in a sensory bin, melting ice cubes, drawing with finger-paint, playing in a bathtub.

THE BENEFITS

- Helps children discover cause and effect.
- Develops cognitive skills through the adventures of the five senses.
- Tunes fine motor skills as kids experiment with texture, movement, and placement.
- Fosters an interest and understanding in science and art.

4

PARALLEL PLAY

Children play alongside each other without interacting or trying to influence each other's activities. They observe each other on occasion, often modifying their own play. It generally begins in children aged 2-3.

Examples

Kids working hard on individual sandcastles in the same sandbox.

THE BENEFITS

- Boosts confidence as children become comfortable playing near others.
- Encourage self-expression as kids explore emotions through individualized play.
- Eases the transition from solo play to group play.
- Builds social skills through observation and imitation.

5

PRETEND PLAY

When children enjoy pretend play, they transform objects and locations into interactive symbols of their imaginative world. They also assume new roles and explore new scenarios.

Examples

Rattling toys, writing and reading, beading a necklace, working on puzzles, having an imaginary tea party.

THE BENEFITS

- Nurtures creativity and imagination.
- Develops problem-solving skills.
- Refines vocabulary and language skills.
- Boosts confidence as kids become comfortable with various roles and discover what excites them.
- Cultivates empathy as kids attempt to see the world through the eyes of others.
- Fosters curiosity about life, encouraging experimentation and open-mindedness.

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6 ROUGH & TUMBLE PLAY

This type of play has a vigorous physical quality. It is energetic, free-form, and quickly evolving. Many animals engage in rough and tumble play to develop survival skills.

Examples

Tickling, wrestling, spinning, chasing, tumbling, play fighting, bouncing, swinging.

THE BENEFITS

- Sharpens decision-making skills.
- Relieves stress.
- Builds cardiovascular health and muscular strength.
- Helps children discover their own boundaries and how to respect the boundaries of others.
- Develops gross motor skills.
- Cultivates social awareness, compassion, and cooperation.

7 CONSTRUCTIVE PLAY

This creative form of play involves building things with materials and tools. Kids partake in this solo or with others.

Examples

Jumping rope together, stacking blocks, building sandcastles, creating sidewalk murals, crafting collages, digging holes.

THE BENEFITS

- Develops imagination
- Builds persistence and adaptability
- Fosters cooperation and teamwork
- Creates a foundation for mathematics
- Helps children learn to brainstorm and plan.
- Encourages responsibility as kids learn to start and complete a task.
- Improves ability to focus on an objective.

8 ACTIVE PLAY

Active play is all about movement and energy. It can include competitive sports, nature exploration, and playground fun.

Examples

Riding bikes, playing soccer, climbing on the playground, swimming, dancing.

THE BENEFITS

- Fights childhood obesity
- Stimulates brain development
- Develops large motor skills and coordination
- Kids learn how to follow the rules of a game or sport
- Relieves stress.
- Nurtures healthy habits that can lead to lifelong health.

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9 COOPERATIVE PLAY

When children unite to achieve a common goal, they are engaging in cooperative play. They combine resources and brainpower to reach their objective.

Examples

Jump roping together, interactive pretend play, building a snow fort, playing a parachute game.

THE BENEFITS

- **Excellent for developing communication and compromise skills.**
- **Encourages self-expression.**
- **Boosts confidence as every child plays a valuable role.**
- **Teaches children why teamwork and fairness are important.**
- **Promotes sharing and empathy.**

SOURCES

RECREATED FROM AAA STATE OF PLAY

(AAASTATEOFPLAY.COM)

WHATTOEXPECT.COM

PLAYGROUNDPROFESSIONALS.COM

PSYCHOLOGYTODAY.COM

PARENTS.COM

CHILDDVELOPMENTINFO.COM