

* THE POWER OF PLAY

Did you know that play is an essential component of a child's development?



Benefits of Play for Children

- Play builds
 - communication skills,
 - problem solving skills and coordination,
 - gross and fine motor skills, &
 - self-regulation skills.
- Play helps children
 - communicate and express their feelings,
 - engage, explore, and interact with the world, &
 - collaborate with others.
- Play decreases both the parent and child's stress levels.

Children Engage in Various Types of Play

- Babies first **entertain themselves** by observing others briefly and moving their own bodies.
- Then, they **observe others playing**, and engage with them but do not play with them.
- Toddlers first **play alone and are fully focused on their own play** instead of interacting and playing with others.
- Then, toddlers **play independently beside others** who are engaged in similar activities.
- **Pre-school aged children play with others and are actively engaging with other children** through the sharing of toys. Yet often there is no goal surrounding the activity.
- **Ultimately, school-aged children play with others for a shared purpose.**

Parents' Role in Play

- Let the child choose the activity.
- Provide short verbal responses that match the child's tone and approach.
- Respect the child's space and let the child direct the action.
- Be present and patient. ♥

