

# Tips to Make the Most of Play Time

- ▶ Limit screen time
- ▶ Promote outdoor play
- ▶ Allow for child to make mistakes
- ▶ Give child free time to play outside of school and organized activities
- ▶ Let child make choices about games, activities, and toys
- ▶ Encourage use of imagination
- ▶ Offer new challenges if child is bored or help if child is frustrated
- ▶ Provide encouragement and support

Please visit [www.Pathways.org](http://www.Pathways.org) to find more FREE resources on child development.

## Play is Important

Giving a child the opportunity, time, and space to play helps to foster many important life skills.

Engaging in play allows a child to explore different interests, passions, and talents. Play is a wonderful educational tool that helps prepare them for life experiences.



# Play

## It's More Than You Think...



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**FREE tools developed by Pathways.org to maximize child development**

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Pathways.org empowers parents and health professionals with FREE tools and resources to maximize a child's motor, sensory, and communication development.



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# Play Builds Skills for a Lifetime

- Knowing what to do when no one is directing you
- Problem solving
- Creativity and imagination
- Interacting with others and negotiating
- Resilience
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Willingness to take risks and try different scenarios
- Processing emotions
- Understanding social situations
- Discovering interests



## Use Play to Help Meet Milestones

From birth, a baby will use play to explore the world around them and develop important life skills.

### 0-6 Months

- Show baby interesting objects such as a brightly colored mobile or toy
- Talk to baby often to familiarize baby with your voice, respond when they coo and babble
- Place baby in different positions so they can see the world from different angles
- Let baby bring objects to mouth to explore and experience new textures
- Vary facial expressions and gestures so baby has the opportunity to imitate them
- Use a mirror or favorite toy to help your baby engage in and enjoy Tummy Time



### 7-12 Months

- Play peek-a-boo
- Use a mirror to show faces to baby
- Provide baby with a safe environment to crawl and explore
- Place baby in a variety of positions such as on tummy, side, etc.
- Give baby opportunities to learn actions have effects, e.g. when they drop a toy and it falls to the ground
- Expose baby to a variety of age appropriate toys, e.g. balls, shape sorters, music toys, or common household items like pots and spoons



### 1-3 Years

- Allow child to spend time with objects and toys they enjoy
- Give child crayons or markers so they can practice scribbling
- Encourage child to interact with peers
- Help child explore their body through different movements, e.g. walking, jumping, and standing on one leg
- Provide opportunities to create make-believe situations with objects, e.g. pretending to drink out of empty cup
- Respond when child speaks, answer questions, and provide verbal encouragement



### 4-6 Years

- Provide opportunities for child to sing, dance, and try a variety of movements, e.g. hopping, swinging, climbing, and doing somersaults
- Tell stories to child and ask them questions about what they remember
- Give child time and space to act out imaginary scenes, roles, and activities
- Allow child to move between make-believe games and reality e.g. playing house and helping you with chores
- Schedule time for child to interact with friends to practice socializing and building friendships

