



The Importance of Playing Together

Play builds children's brains, bodies and skills: key ingredients to health and wellbeing now and in the future.

Supporting early childhood development builds physical and mental health. However, some Australian children aren't getting the support they need and this could endanger their healthy development. It's only fair that each child, in each community, gets the support they need to **thrive**.

Playing with **you**, is especially important. Responding to your child's cues, through the serve and return of play, helps them develop and learn. When your child plays with you, it gives them many different ways and times to develop.

Play **begins from the earliest days** and continues into adolescence. Examples like peek a boo, singing with actions, responding to baby "coos" and returning with your own, are for anytime and anywhere. You can follow your baby's lead in play by watching the direction of their eyes and saying what you see, or when they point, you can say what they are looking at, turning this into a guessing game.



Visiting the library and reading to your baby is free and gets you into the rhythm of reading from the very earliest months. Libraries are great places to find out about playgroups and other supports in your area.

As children get older, playing together includes games with rules such as taking turns, working on a puzzle together, role playing by pretending to be different characters in a story. Using everyday items like cups and boxes builds young imaginations and opportunities to develop.

Trips into natural open spaces, from parks to beaches and playing outside, is a great way to explore new things together through play.

Older children can choose activities to do together like kicking a ball; imaginative play like making up a story; drawing together; treasure hunts; playing board games; watching something online together; making music; or exploring new places.



As you play together, children's brains and bodies grow so they can: cope with big feelings like being anxious, angry or overwhelmed; develop healthy relationships; build coordination and balance; practise new skills safely; build skills to organise, plan ahead, learn, explore and experiment; and get ready to feel confident both now and for the next of life's adventures.

Let's Play Together

This Story for parents, carer givers and educators, has been created using the How to tell the Core Story of the Early Years Guide, to elevate the role of adults as active participants in play. Without this, adults tend to think of play as something children should always do alone, yet we know that so many of the benefits for children's growing brains, bodies and life skills come from playing together.

Created for Children's Week 2023 theme "Children have the right to relax, play and to take part in activities they enjoy" based on Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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www.telethonkids.org.au/projects/HPER/core-story



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