

ASK I-LABS

WHY IS PLAY IMPORTANT?

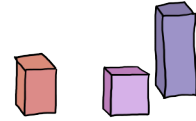
Play is fundamental to child development. Children play to test out ideas, learn new skills, try on new roles, and build relationships.

What are children learning as they play?

Children develop skills across all learning domains through play. For example, they work on motor skills when they jump or grasp a toy. They practice math skills when comparing shapes and sizes of leaves. And they develop social-emotional and language skills through a game of make-believe. Play is not just fun and games: play is learning!



How do babies play?



Babies play by exploring what's new: they might bang, mouth, or shake objects. Babies also love to imitate others' sounds and actions. Try games that involve gentle touch or movement, like bouncing to music. Be sure to respond to their coos or gestures. These back-and-forth exchanges are some of the earliest forms of play!

How do I support children's play?

Children love when you show interest in and join in their play. Smile and encourage their play. Follow their lead! Be patient and give them plenty of time to respond. Provide varied, open-ended materials. Try everyday objects with different textures, colors, and shapes. Then watch and see what they do next!

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