

Speech and Language Therapy Service for Children, Barking and Dagenham

Supporting the Development of Your Child's Play Skills

What is play?

Play is the main way that young children learn about the world. Play helps language to develop because:

- It focuses children's attention
- It encourages turn taking
- It helps children to anticipate what comes next
- Simple language can be used during play
- You can teach new sounds and vocabulary through play
- You can model and teach actions
- It helps children to imitate actions and sounds
- Sequences (steps) and language can be repeated often
- It's naturally social and fun!

Types of play

Exploratory Play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop up toys • Messy play (water, sand, play-dough) • Shape sorters • Cause and effect toys • Musical instruments • Sensory toys (toys with lights, sounds and different textures) 	Physical Play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough and tumble • Puzzles • Bikes and scooters • Hide and Seek • Swings and climbing • Ball games • Sports (football, netball, rounders etc.) 	Constructive Play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lego • Stickle bricks • Craft materials (paint, scissors, glue) • Junk modelling (constructing a model using yoghurt pots, cereal boxes etc.) • Interlinking blocks or shapes
Large Teddy Play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dolls and teddies • Toy food and cooking • Washing and dressing • Pushchair to take teddy around • Teddy bear's picnic • Imitate daily routines with teddy/ dolly 	Outdoor Play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play "I spy" in the car • Pretend to be pirates on the climbing frame in the park • Sing the wheels on the bus when on the bus • Football in the garden • Nature hunt in the garden • Going on a "bear hunt" in the forest 	Pretend Play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make dens • Dressing up clothes and accessories • Use junk boxes to make castles, buses then act out stories they've seen on TV or familiar situations. • Playing shops, office, doctors • Puppets
Games with rules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Card games (snap, pairs) • Board games (snakes and ladders, ludo) • Sports (football, netball, rounders etc.) 	Turn taking games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowling • Pop up pirate • Guess who • Posting • Board games and card games 	Small World Play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dolls house and furniture • Farm animals and buildings • Vehicles: trains, cars and garage

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party games (musical bumps / chairs) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformers/ spider man |
|--|--|--|

What you can do with your child at home?

Special Time:

- Switch the television and radio off before starting an activity.
- Reduce distractions such as mobile phones.
- Spend at least five minutes, five times a week playing with your child.
- Let your child choose the activity and use the strategies below to encourage language development.

Remember:

- Follow your child's lead. Your child may want to play the same game repeatedly.
- During play, talk to your child about what is happening: "You're brushing mum's hair" or "Teddy's drinking juice".
- It is by hearing the same words repeatedly that children learn new words. For example, saying "up, up, up" when you are climbing up the stairs. In this way your child hears language related to real life activities.
- **Keep questions to a minimum.** Comment on what your child is doing – give a running commentary. For example, "You've got a horse. He's jumping"; "The boy's wearing a hat"; "You brushed her hair". A good method to use is the '*Five Fingers Rule*' which is: Comment. Comment. Comment. Comment. Question!
- Keep sentences **short and simple** (see examples above).
- Give examples of things that toys/dolls or animals might say. For example, when playing with animals, you could say, "I'm thirsty" and walk the cow to get a drink.
- To encourage positive play skills, play alongside your child modelling different types of play and encourage them to copy you.
- If your child has difficulty taking turns in the games, use an object to represent whose turn is next. For example: wearing a 'my turn' badge or using a 'my turn' prompt card.
- Try to say something positive about what your child is doing at least once during the session – give a compliment e.g. "You made a really big sandcastle". "You looked at the pictures, well done".
A good method to use is label and description.
For example,
 - "Well done. You are really good at colouring" (labelling what the "well done" is for);
 - "Good. I like it how you use different colours and you coloured neatly within the lines" (a description of what you meant by "good").