

How playing helps talking...

A guide
for parents

Developed by Peterborough
Speech and Language Therapy
Children's Centres Team

PETERBOROUGH
CITY COUNCIL



What does play do?

Helps your child's:

- brain develop
- attention and listening skills
- imagination

Helps your child to:

- explore and learn about the world
- make friends
- learn to talk

Strengthens the bond between you and your child.

...All in a fun way

...Become your child's playmate

When should I get help?

If you are concerned about your child's play skills, consider talking to your Health Visitor, local Children's Centre or your child's pre-school (if they go to one).



Ideas for play with toddlers

Let toddlers choose what to play with. This way they will learn more and play with it for longer. Children learn by watching others play as well as playing by themselves.

Having too many toys out at once may overwhelm your child. Having just one or two toys to play with at a time helps develop their attention skills.

Children at this stage often play next to other children but not with them.

Ideas for play with pre-schoolers

Pre-schoolers love to pretend when they play. Give your child lots of opportunities for them to do this e.g. having a tea party with dolly and teddy or dressing up with friends as dragons and princesses.

Sometimes the best pretend play is with boxes when children can really use their imagination. One object can lead to a whole new world of fun.

A yoghurt pot could be a cup or a telephone, or can be used as a bath toy, in the sandpit or to make music.



Pre-schoolers are starting to make up stories with their toys. Copying things they see happening every day is part of this. Your child may drive the toy car around, wash it, fill it with petrol, and then drive it to the shops.

Playing together helps pre-schoolers to learn to take turns, share, negotiate and make up after arguments. It is important to give your child opportunities to do this by letting them play with other children.

Children at this stage benefit from playing together with other children.



Ideas for play with babies

Give babies lots of time to explore the world through their senses, e.g. mouthing a ball, being tickled, watching your face. Playing peek-a-boo or blowing raspberries on tummies is also a fun way to do this.

Pull faces with your baby... copy their sounds and noises.

Top tips

Try to make time to play every day. Play can happen anywhere, in the bath, in the park, in the shops and with anything, cardboard boxes, tins of food, saucepans and spoons.

Get down on the floor with your child and join in their play. Show them new ways to play with toys.

If children enjoy a game, they will want to play it again and again. Doing this helps them to learn.

When you play with your child, make sure the TV/radio/ computer is off.

Talk about what they are doing. Don't forget to name what they are looking at. This helps your child learn new words.



You are your baby's favourite toy.