

Playful Parenting



WHAT IS IT?

Playful parenting is engaging & connecting with your child through different forms of play. Play is an enjoyable activity that is freely entered into, with a goal of shared joy.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Play is important for a child's brain development, helping them learn about themselves, the people, & the world around them.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Helps the parent connect with their child & makes it easier to engage with them
- Boosts the child's social skills, helping their communication & experience at home, childcare, & playdates
- Helps the child feel attended to & loved, increasing wellbeing & reducing behavioural issues
- Helps the child feel more secure & supported in the parent's love, increasing their self-esteem & confidence to take on life's challenges
- Makes learning fun for the child, such as with educational toys, puzzles, building blocks, & musical instruments

What are Examples of Playful Parenting?

NEWBORNS & BABIES (0-12 MONTHS)

- Spending time face to face with your baby
- Helping your baby experience the world through touch, taste, sight, smell, movement, & hearing
- This can be done by talking together, peek-a-boo, feeding, bathing, making sounds or singing, rocking & cuddling the baby
- These activities develop sensory processing, thinking & emotional skills; learning about balance, movement, & spatial awareness



TODDLERS (1-3 YEARS)

- As the child grows, their creative & physical skills grow too, changing the way they play
- Reading books together, playing with balls & boxes, playdough, sand & water, dolls & teddies
- This helps them to learn new words, growing their imagination, & adding to their sensory experience



What are Examples of Playful Parenting?



CHILDREN (3-6 YEARS)

- Going outside together, reading books, playing with puppets, dress-ups, puzzles, drawing, & writing
- Making a game out of cleaning up toys & putting on clothes
- Having the child help with activities like cooking meals, baking cupcakes, gardening or walking the dog
- Through these forms of play the child improves their social skills, listening skills, independence, understanding of words & concepts, fine-motor skills (like holding a pencil & drawing), gross motor skills (like throwing & catching), & following more detailed instructions.



Tips for Playful Parenting

Start the day with play



Be silly



Follow your child's lead in play

Use play to change the direction of you or your child's mood



Prioritise play: for your child & for you



Give your child some freedom with unstructured time to play & explore

Resources

- <https://www.ngala.com.au/article/brains-under-construction-play-and-brain-development/>
- <https://www.ngala.com.au/article/learning-through-the-senses-when-everything-is-stimulating/>
- <https://www.ngala.com.au/article/play-its-what-babies-do/>
- <https://www.ngala.com.au/article/ways-your-child-plays/>
- <https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/play-learning/play-ideas/why-play-is-important>
- <https://www.relationshipswa.org.au/tip-sheets/tips-on-being-a-playful-parent>