

Q&A: Cool tips on having a perfect playtime with your little one

TODDLER

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Playtime enables children to practice different skills, such as linguistic, social, and motor skills. Creativity and imagination exercised during playtime helps to stimulate mental development.

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Mums, your child's playtime is actually his or her learning as it is through play that kids understand the world around them. Apart from that, play allows children to take control of their lives through making choices, taking direct actions and making their own rules. Playtime also helps children to practice different skills, such as linguistic, social and motor. Creativity and imagination involved in play stimulates mental development. But above all, play time is crucial because it is the bonding time between you and your child.

Q. I took my 1-year-old to a playgroup the other day and my child didn't seem to play with anyone. What could be wrong?

A. For young toddlers, it's quite normal to engage in parallel play where although they might sit next to each other, they will not interact with one another, but stay involved in their own tasks. Children usually get ready for cooperative play once they gain some linguistic skills. So don't worry if he or she is not interacting with peers at this stage.

Q. My 1-year-old seems to have trouble sharing toys. What can I do?

A. At the age of 1, children do not understand the concept of sharing. So mums, there are going to be squabbles with friends and peers visiting your house. Best would be to have ample toys at such times. Also allow your child to choose a few of his favourite toys that he or she would not like to share and put them away. This way, he or she might share more willingly.

Q. What toys are suitable for child (1-2 years old)?

A. Some toys that are appropriate for a 1 year old are push and pull toys, blocks and shape sorters. You can also give musical toys, such as keyboards and drums. Board books, large crayons and play clay or dough are some other interesting options to keep your child engaged. Dolls, stuffed animals, cars, trucks, trains and balls are common favourites with children. They may also enjoy riding toys that offer movement. Last but not the least; you can also use household items that are safe and child friendly to keep your child busy.

Q. Is it okay for my child (1-2 years old) to watch television?

A. In your child's first year, significant growth and development of the brain takes place. In order to support this further, children need to interact with others through talk and play. Experts believe that watching television may affect this and hence institutions like American Academy of Paediatrics does not recommend children to watch television before the age of 2 years.

Q. Is it okay for my child (1-2 year old) to watch videos on iPad or play games?

A. According to Dr. Daniel Fung, Chairman of the Medical Board at the Institute of Mental Health, there are no local guidelines, but the American Academy of Paediatrics has issued a policy statement that advises zero screen time for pre-schoolers of less than 2 years of age, except perhaps video conference with family members and those from 2 to 5 years of age, no more than an hour a day. The basic rule is that too much screen time affects physical and mental health. And it cannot be compensated even with physical activity.

Q. My 1-year-old doesn't sit still long enough to play. What can I do?

A. Mums, if your child does not seem to play long enough, there's no need to worry as the child might be working more on the large motor skills at the moment. Toddlers are a powerhouse of energy and are exploring running, jumping, climbing and so on. Make sure to give lots of space for your child to carry out all these activities.

Q. How can I choose toys that my child will remain interested in for a long time?

A. Mums, first and foremost choose such toys for which your child is developmentally ready. Otherwise he or she may get easily bored and disinterested. Apart from that make sure that your child can play with a toy in various ways. Such toys where the child can pretend become interesting. You could also restrict your child to fewer toys as bouncing from one toy to another may leave your kid without really enjoying anything.

Q. My 2-year-old seems to play and do the same things over and over again. Shouldn't a child be playing with a lot of different toys to have a range of experience?

A. The brain of a young toddler is in the middle of enhancing synapses or pathways that are often used and these are solidified by repetition. Thus, although repetition may sound dull to you, for your child's development it is an essential.

Q. Why does my 2-year-old seem to engage in "pretend play" so often?

A. Pretend play is the beginning of abstract thought that is a crucial part of your child's development. Skills like math, logic and creativity include abstract thought. This is where your child separates thoughts from actions. Encourage your child in this by offering as many props and toys as possible. You can even use regular, household things.

Q. It seems that my 2-year-old son wants to play with trucks, while my 2-year-old niece seems to prefer dolls. Why is this so?

A. An important reason for this is a combination of nature and nurture according to experts. The mental skills and emotional styles of boys and girls are naturally different. Boys show an orientation towards activity and spatial things, while in girls this is more social. Nurturing environment affects when they try to copy the same gender. For example, when a girl sees her mother engaging in nurturing activities like cooking, she also tends to do the same. However, you can also encourage both boys and girls to play with both trucks and dolls as it will reinforce different aspects of development.

If you follow the tips that have been shared here, you will make the best of playtime with your child.

References:

1. Tips for Special Playtime. Retrieved on 25 Sep 2017 from <https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/communication/specialplaytime-tips.html>
2. Kids & Tech: Tips for Parents in the Digital Age. Retrieved on 25 Sep 2017 from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Tips-for-Parents-Digital-Age.aspx>



