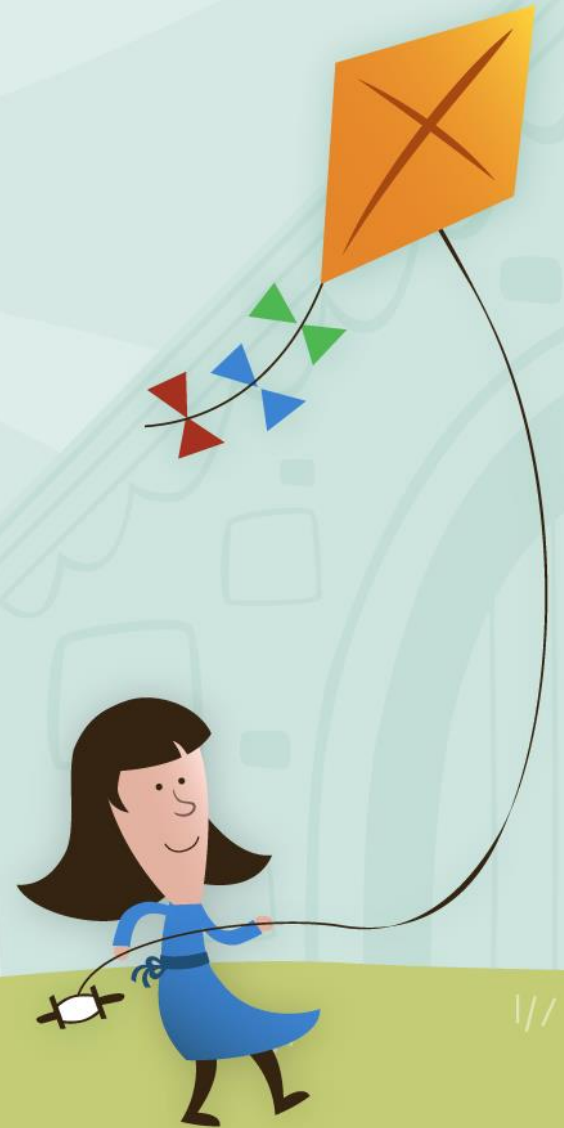


All about Play

April 2024



Albert Einstein states:

“Play is the highest form of research and this is true when we consider that when children play they are processing learning, developing deeper awareness of educational concepts and refining their understanding of the world.”



The Importance of Play

- Play underpins the Early Years Foundation Stage. It also underpins learning and all aspects of children's development.
- Through play children develop language skills, emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills.
- Learning through play is fun, engaging and motivating for children. It enables them to follow their own interests, make choices and learn at their own pace and level.
- Play is often misunderstood and underrated as it is often not seen as 'learning' however that could not be further from the truth.



Why play matters

Play is the most natural way for children to learn, grow, develop, and make sense of the world and their place in it.

Play benefits:

- Healthy brain development
- Fit and active bodies
- Cognitive agility and learning
- Emotional regulations and strength
- Inquisitive minds
- Social skills and making friends
- Conflict resolution
- Negotiating skills
- Managing and assessing risk and challenging situations



Stages of play

**Unoccupied
Play**

**Cooperative
play**

**Onlooker
Play**

**Solitary
Play**

**Associative
Play**

**Parallel
Play**



6 Types of play

- ✓ **Unoccupied Play - Birth-3 months** - Watching and moving without communication, usually for short periods of time. Learning and discovering how their body moves
- ✓ **Solitary Play- Birth-2 years** Playing alone, absorbed in the activity.
- ✓ **Onlooker Play- 2 years** Watching other children without taking part.
- ✓ **Parallel Play- 2+ years** Playing independently beside each other, often using similar materials or in the same area. Players may observe and mimic each other but have their own ideas and goals.
- ✓ **Associative Play- 3-4years** when the children start to interact with others during play, but there is not a large amount of interaction.
- ✓ **Cooperative Play- 4+years** Participants work together to achieve a shared goal, compromising and taking turns along the way



Types of play

Children learn and develop through different types of play. In Nursery we try and encourage the children to take part in:

Imaginative Play

Helps children develop their imagination and communication skills

Social Play

Children learn how to take turns, cooperate, develop friendships and share and develop language skills.

Physical Play

This helps build their muscles, bones and physical skills. **Build their Gross motor skills**

Constructive play

Helps to develop their movement skills

Malleable Play

Help develop fine motor skills. Hands on learning

Creative Play

This lets children create



Playing Outdoors

- Outdoor play is one of the most natural ways that children of any age can engage in physical activity.
- Playing outdoors, children encounter many opportunities for development, growth and learning

Benefits such as:

- Improving physical fitness
- Developing coordination, strength, agility and stamina
- Building self-confidence, independence and self-esteem
- Engaging with others, fostering social connections
- Solving problems and increasing resilience
- Engage their curiosity
- Develop a sense of independence
- Learn skills
- Benefit mental health and well-being
- Improve attention spans
- Improve mood and brain activity
- Learn skills



Examples of play in class:



Activities / Ideas

It has been shown that Children at the age of 3-4 love to play with a wide variety of resources and toys and often love pretend play and being creative.

Playful activities could include:-

- ✓ **Dress up** - hats, bags, hats, beads, sunglasses, shoes
- ✓ **Using household resources**-*pots and pans, old mobile phones, pegs, bowls, kitchen utensils*
- ✓ **Creative material**-*paints, crayons, chinks, junk modelling, make your own playdough, magazines and scissors*
- ✓ **Baking and cooking, gardening and planting seeds**
- ✓ **Helping and having fun with everyday jobs**- **make snacks, hanging out washing, putting the shopping away**
- ✓ **Books, games and puzzles**-*reading stories, snap, singing games, clapping games, matching games, board games, Kim's game*



Can you remember?
Observation game for
kids - BBC Tiny Happy
People



Activities / Ideas

Playful activities could include:-

- ✓ **Loose parts** – *that is free and found items, children can play with in a flexible way, to move, manipulate, build and create*
- ✓ **Music and dance** – *All genre*
- ✓ **Ball games, hopscotch, hide and seek, swing ball**
- ✓ **Sensory** – *explore senses- take shoes off walk on grass, shave foam -all different textures etc, lie on floor close eyes and see what sounds you can hear around you*
- ✓ **Make tents** – *old sheets and chairs etc*
- ✓ **Obstacle courses** - *challenge for young children will also increase confidence and develop a sense of pride in their abilities*

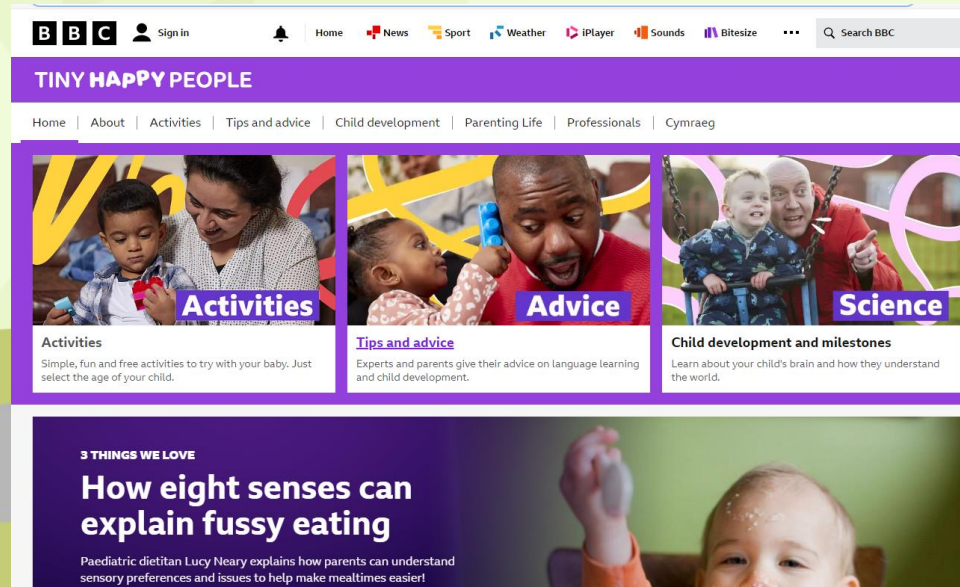


Video:

Some useful ideas and activities to try from this website: BBC Tiny Happy People

[Activity ideas for building blocks with kids - BBC Tiny Happy People](https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zhjht39)

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TEN THINGS EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PLAY!

1. Playing is the FUNdamental way for children to learn, grow and develop.

- cognitive skills – like maths and problem solving in a pretend grocery store
- physical abilities – like balancing, running and catching
- new vocabulary – like the words they need to play with toys e.g. dinosaurs
- social skills – like playing pretend with friends
- literacy skills – like making up stories or acting out a fairy tale

2. Play is healthy

Play helps children grow strong and healthy. It also counteracts obesity issues facing many children today.

3. Play reduces stress

Play helps your children grow emotionally. It is fun and provides an outlet for anxiety and stress.

4. Play is more than meets the eye

Play is so simple and also very complex. Children play because they need to find stuff out.

5. Make time for play every day

As parents, you are the biggest supporters of your children's learning. You can make sure they have as much time to play as possible during the day to build attachment and promote cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional development.

6. Play and learning go hand-in-hand

They are not separate activities. They are intertwined. Think about them as a science lecture with a lab. Play is the child's lab.

7. Play outside

Remember your own outdoor experiences of building forts, playing on the beach, or in the snow, playing with friends in the street. Make sure your children create outdoor memories too.

8. Play is for all children even the teenagers

They might not call it play, but teenagers need time and space for creative thinking, problem solving, independence, and perseverance. Play addresses teenagers' developmental needs for greater independence and ownership in their learning, opportunities for physical activity and creative expression, and the ability to demonstrate competence.

9. Trust your own playful instincts

Remember as a child how play just came naturally? Don't fill children's time with toys and structured activities. Let them be bored and see all that they are capable of when given the opportunity.

10. There's a lot to learn about play

There's a lot written on children and play. We've included some useful links and signposting on the next page.



**Thank
You for
listening**

