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## FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT • ISSUE 4

# The Importance of Play



Children feel safe to express emotions, fears and anxieties during role play and learn ways to cope with and control their emotions. They also learn to work well with others and develop critical **social and emotional skills**.

Play facilitates the stimulation of the brain of the young child, which develops **intellectual and academic skills**. They are able to communicate well with others and solve problems. As the child creates rules for the games, they are able to make connections to previous skills learnt and make sense of their environment. Play therefore helps develop a child's ability to grasp simple to complex concepts.

Children may play by themselves, alongside others, or work together. You can **support your child's play** by providing a lot of materials for them.

Play can occur both indoors as well as outdoors. Some of the materials can be found in the natural environment, made or purchased, but you must ensure that they are safe.

Although outdoor play is often a challenge in some communities and homes, it is essential, as it provides opportunities for children to use excess energy and strengthen large muscles.

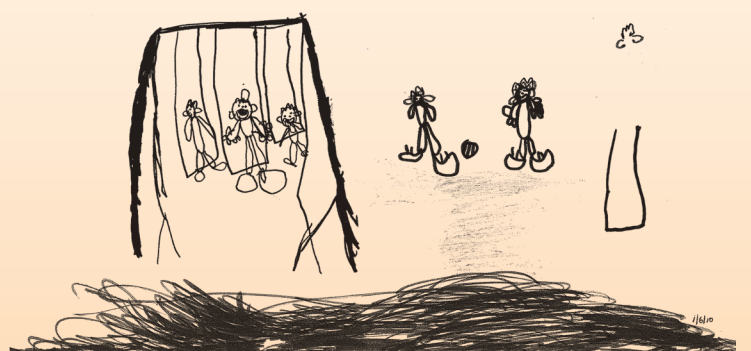
Many of the traditional games of the past and those of the present assist in the development of skills, but whatever the game, parents must follow certain guidelines to facilitate play:

- Don't rush play – it is to be enjoyed. Children learn naturally through play.
- Listen to and observe your child to learn about his or her interests and abilities.
- Choose materials that are stimulating and attractive to your child.
- Always provide a safe environment for your child to explore.
- And remember you, too, must play with your child.

Play is the most effective way children learn and develop. Play provides opportunities for children to explore, investigate and experiment with new ideas. Children are motivated to learn in a healthy way when they have ownership of their learning.

They develop skills at their own pace during play and this is critical to their growth and development.

**Physical skills** are those that develop the large and small muscles through activities such as running, crawling and climbing, as well as scribbling and molding with clay.



IGNITING IMAGINATION THROUGH INNOVATION

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