

Activities that Encourage Play

Story Puppets

Materials:

Construction paper, craft sticks, glue, scissors, markers or crayons

Directions:

Cut out shapes of familiar story figures (i.e., 3 bears, 3 pigs, brown bear, etc.) or make your own with construction paper and markers. Color figures and then glue each figure onto its own craft stick. Use as puppets to retell a favorite story or make up a new story!

Towel Tube Binoculars

Materials:

Empty paper towel tube, tape, yarn, scissors, hole punch

Directions:

Cut the empty paper towel tube in half. Tape the tube halves together side by side to form a pair of binoculars. Punch a hole in one end of each side of the binoculars and make a neck strap with the yarn. Go exploring!

Measuring Footprints

Materials:

Construction paper, markers, scissors

Directions:

Have children trace and cut out one footprint for each foot. Use the feet to measure different objects around the house to see how many “feet” they are.

Activities that Encourage Play (continued)

Scavenger Hunt

Materials:

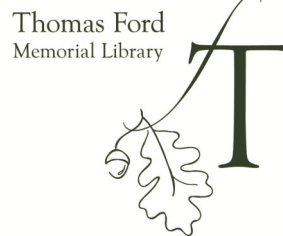
Paper, old magazines, glue or tape

Directions:

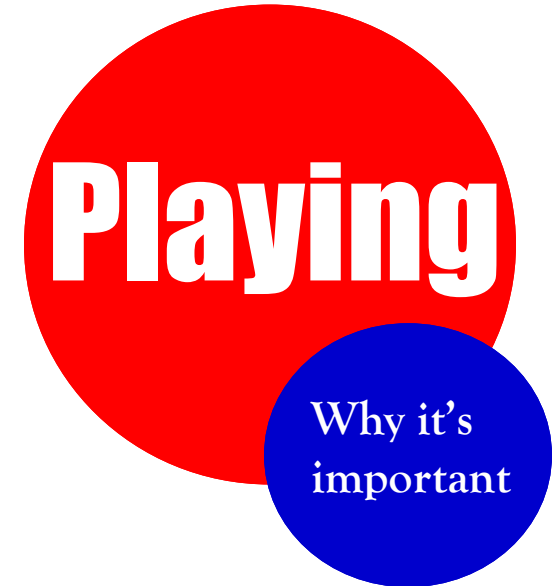
Cut pictures of common house items out of an old magazine. Glue the pictures to a sheet of paper and write the name of the object next to each item. Go on a scavenger hunt around your house to see how many items you can find!

Activities Source: http://www.kdl.org/kids/go/pgr_development_activities#playing

Every Child Ready to Read is a project of the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, divisions of the American Library Association.



Email us: youthservices@fordlibrary.org
DF 1/13



Thomas Ford Memorial Library
800 Chestnut Street 708-246-0520
Western Springs, IL 60558  info@fordlibrary.org
www.fordlibrary.org

Email us: youthservices@fordlibrary.org



Overview

Whether your child is four days old or four years old, it is not too early or too late to help him or her develop important literacy and pre-reading skills. Doing this now will make it easier for your child to learn to read when he or she starts school.

Five of the best ways to help your child get ready to read are

- Talking
- Singing
- Reading
- Writing
- Playing

These practices are easy to do with children of all ages and can be done at home, at the doctor's office, in the car, or anywhere you and your child spend time together.

This handout's focus is on playing.



The Power of Play

Play is one of the best ways for children to learn language and literacy skills. Pretend play helps children think symbolically and develop oral language skills: a ruler becomes a magic wand, today becomes a time when dinosaurs were alive, a playmate becomes an astronaut exploring space. Through play, children realize that one thing can stand for another. This also helps children understand that written words stand for real objects and experiences.

Dramatic play helps develop narrative skills as children make up a story about what they are doing and practice putting thoughts into words. This helps them understand that stories happen in an order: first, next, last. Make-believe also gives children a chance to act out real-life situations, work through worries and fears, and use their imagination to solve problems.

Play helps children feel a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. This motivates them to try new experiences and to not give up when something seems difficult.

Places to Play

You are your child's first teacher, and your home is where your child begins to learn. Play requires a little space, simple props, and some imagination and encouragement. You don't need special toys or expensive electronics. Provide inexpensive props like large boxes, old clothes or costumes for dress up, empty food containers, paper shopping bags, and empty paper towel rolls. Make sock puppets; create a puppet stage using a sheet draped over two chairs and act out a favorite story.

Encourage your child to create stories by imagining he or she is in another place or pretending to be someone else. Play comes naturally to young children and is one of the primary ways they learn. Provide plenty of opportunities for your child to play.

We hope you and your child enjoy your playtime together at the Library!