

## Strengthening Families Through Play - Part 3

Play is fun for the whole family! In this section, we introduce you to some ideas and examples of the different types of play to get you started. Let your imagination guide you!

### Messy (Sensory) Play

Messy (sensory) play refers to play that allows children to work with their hands or other parts of their body to create a controlled mess. It provides children with a sensory experience and helps build connection between their body and mind as they enhance their learning and creativity.

One easy way to get started is to engage your child in making playdough at home! Here is one easy playdough recipe that we enjoy:

### PLAY DOUGH

1.5 cups flour  
½ cup salt  
2 teaspoons cream of tartar  
2 tablespoons oil  
1 cup of boiling water

First, mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl. Next add in the boiling water and stir. For colour, you can add food colouring directly to the water or after its all mixed.

Children are great helpers for measuring and mixing the dry ingredients, and to help finish mixing the playdough with their hands at the end (only once the playdough has cooled).

**Other ideas for Messy Play include:** hand paints, sand or water in a large container, slime, clay or mud, water or water beads, or spaghetti/pasta play.



### Constructive Play

Constructive play is a goal-oriented, stimulating form of play. Children are encouraged to use materials to create something. Young children may create something simple, which could increase in complexity as they develop their skills. Constructive play helps to build creativity, planning skills, and fine motor skills.

Things children might like to build are towers, a city, rocketship, a 3-D diagram of family, puppets, doll house, etc.

There are many different types of materials that can be used to build, including legos, blocks, modeling clay, or any craft or recycled materials (egg cartons, cardboard boxes, fabric, tape). Be creative!



## Physical Play

Physical play includes activities that use physical movements to allow children to use their energy. It helps to develop gross and fine motor skills, to learn new things and develop more control over their body. It also has many health benefits.



Some ideas for physical play at home include

- Hallway hopscotch
- an obstacle course with household furniture and items
- Animal races (hop like a bunny, leap like a frog)
- Jump rope, head stands
- Playing with balloons (play 'keep it off the floor')
- Simon says (with physical movements)
- Dance party or online videos for kids (GoNoodle, Cosmic Kids Yoga, Jack Hartmann)



## Pretend (Fantasy) Play

Pretend play is a loosely structured form of play that allows children to role play and use pretend objects or object substitutions. This form of play allowed children to experiment with language, emotions, decision-making, social skills and behaviour in various situations. Children will often engage in this type of play when given the opportunity to do so!



Create a prop box or corner filled with objects to spark your child's fantasy world:

- Old clothes, hats, shoes, etc.
- Pieces of fabric, blankets or old sheets for making costumes or forts
- Old or play cooking utensils, dishes, plastic food containers, silk flowers
- Old telephones, magazines
- Cardboard boxes of various sizes for creating homes/forts, imaginary items, etc.

## Creative Play

Creative play refers to children's play that allows for self-expression. Children build skills in planning, motor skills, and practice translating ideas and their imagination into something real. The possibilities are endless in this category and can bring together many of the other forms of play!

To get started, give your child access to a variety of items, including household items, natural material, craft supplies, and recycled objects.

Some examples of creative play include:

- Build a house out of cardboard boxes, then dress up and pretend play in it
- Create a city out of blocks, craft items or boxes and then play with cars or people in it

