



5 Play Tips for Preschool-Age Children

1. Exercise imagination like a muscle



As with any skill, practice pays off. And having the right equipment helps. Make sure your kids have easy access to open-ended toys and everyday objects that they can play with in a variety of ways. Screens (</English/fmp/Pages/MediaPlan.aspx>) and devices can be distracting while playing with your children, so keep them out of reach.

2. Make space for creativity

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Have an area where kids can be creative, feel comfortable experiment and even get messy. Provide a variety of different supplies. Crayons, markers, paints, paper, fabrics, glue, stickers, yarn, pipe cleaners and old catalogs or magazines for collages are all good. For extra fun, place some random art supplies and crafting materials in a box. Have kids close their eyes and pick out 3 to 5 items to assemble them into a work of art.

3. Praise the creative effort

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Children learn their self-worth and self-esteem (</English/ages-stages/gradeschool/Pages/Helping-Your-Child-Develop-A-Healthy-Sense-of-Self-Esteem.aspx>) through interactions with parents and caregivers, among others. Be generous and positive in talking about your child's creative ideas. Focus on praising their efforts rather than how well the work lives up to a certain standard.

4. Think exploration & observation





Activities like hide-and-seek or a scavenger hunt build observation and attention skills. Draw or take photos of places where you'll hide some treats, toys or other items to find: behind a chair, under a blanket, next to a tree. For older preschoolers, you may use sight words for clues. Try themed hunts, like a Halloween scavenger "haunt." Make it spooky by turning out the lights and using flashlights.

5. Involve the senses



Fine-tuning gross motor skills involves the senses. Try activities that get kids using several senses at once. Examples: balancing on one foot while tossing and catching a soft ball to the beat of a song they sing! These kinds of activities can also help your child get the exercise they need to thrive. Preschool-age children need at least 3 hours of physical activity (</English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Making-Fitness-a-Way-of-Life.aspx>) every day, or about 15 minutes every hour they are awake.

More information

- [10 No-Cost, Screen-Free Activities to Play with Your Preschooler \(/English/family-life/power-of-play/Pages/10-no-cost-screen-free-activities-to-play-with-your-preschooler.aspx\)](/English/family-life/power-of-play/Pages/10-no-cost-screen-free-activities-to-play-with-your-preschooler.aspx)
- [3 Ways Your Child Learns Life Skills Through Play \(/English/family-life/power-of-play/Pages/3-ways-your-child-builds-important-life-skills-through-play.aspx\)](/English/family-life/power-of-play/Pages/3-ways-your-child-builds-important-life-skills-through-play.aspx)
- [The Power of Play: How Fun and Games Help Children Thrive \(/English/family-life/power-of-play/Pages/the-power-of-play-how-fun-and-games-help-children-thrive.aspx\)](/English/family-life/power-of-play/Pages/the-power-of-play-how-fun-and-games-help-children-thrive.aspx)

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