

Learning and Cognitive Development: Play

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- 1) Present research-based, expert findings that support the importance of play for children birth to five
- 2) Describe six different types of play that encourage learning
- 3) Explain the benefits and function of play in the developing child
- 4) Provide guidance for parents and caregivers for age appropriate play
- 5) Use simple yet effective communication tools for parents to understand the need for play
- 6) Include useful resources, activities and tools to help encourage play at various different age levels

Key Messages

Note to Educator: As you prepare to present this topic to your audience, it is important to consider the time you have for your presentation as well as the dynamics of your group. Some audiences do best to hear the highlights of the topic and then have a discussion about the impact of play on parenting. Others need a more didactic presentation followed by a personal reflection / exploration of the material presented. In either case, the key messages are important as they provide guidance for teaching as well as a focus for parent learning. Key messages can also be used as a wonderful summary of the content during your closing.

- 1) Play has many benefits for children. It encourages brain development, helps children learn important social skills, increases communication skills, enhances language skills, and promotes self-confidence and self-esteem.
- 2) Early child-initiated play lays the foundation for future learning and academic success.
- 3) Play helps children experience, explore, and learn about the world around them.
- 4) Play promotes healthy child development and can provide the opportunity to develop strong parent-child bonds.
- 5) Parents and professionals have an instrumental role in helping to encourage the social and emotional development of a child through play.
- 6) Research shows there is a direct correlation between the amount and quality of early childhood play and children's overall healthy development and well-being in later years.

