

big PLANS *in print*

Connecting Big Plans' Parents to their Communities

Issue 25 May · June 2017



DISCOVERING THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGINATIVE PLAY

"But what will she DO with it?" the customer asked. We were discussing a play pizza set. I could have gone on and on, but instead just said "Endless possibilities...that's what makes it a great toy."

I wanted to talk about the extent to which imaginative play forms a child's mind. About how it allows them to create a world in which they can comfortably explore boundaries and act out scenes they've seen in their lives... but with alternative endings. But my answer seemed to suffice and off she went with a beautifully wrapped pizza set for a little girl who is currently taking orders and delivering pizza to every room in her home.

My favorite memories as a child are the ones where we played store, or school, or house. We dressed up, took orders for dinner, graded chef papers, rang up sales...all the things we saw in real life we transformed into our little bedroom where we had control of the situation, could create the stories we had in our heads, and test various outcomes. A child wants to investigate the world around them and role playing can provide a safe and controlled environment to do just that. They are able to take on different personas and explore what it's like to do or be something different...all while fostering confidence and a strong sense of self and maybe even a flair for drama!

A child's initial role play is often pretending to be mom or dad. This allows them to experience life as an adult and imitate the things they see grown-ups do...make dinner, grocery shop, pay the bills...all with a child-like twist. They're learning to problem solve and starting to experience real life skills. Recreating situations gives them an opportunity to act out how they might react differently and to see the world through others eyes... allowing them to explore and develop empathy.

Imaginative play also sets children up to discover some basic social skills. Often times there are multiple children playing, so team work and cooperative play become important. They start to learn how to negotiate and take turns ... "you can be the princess this time and I'll be the dragon...next time we'll switch." Leadership and cognitive thinking skills can be discovered through role playing as well. Are all the children being included? Will your child bring them in and give them a "part" in the activity?



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At the heart of imaginative play is IMAGINATION. Who wouldn't want to be an astronaut one day, a chef the next, and a firefighter the next? Wouldn't it be so fun to build a pirate ship out of a cardboard box, put on a tiara and a cape and sail off to rescue some monsters stranded on a desert island? Studies have shown the long term importance of fostering a child's creativity. They become better problem solvers, they're more prepared to handle real life conflict situations and, in general, become more well-rounded adults. Child-guided play gives them so much...self-confidence, problem solving skills, empathy, language development, leadership, creativity, and a million fun memories!

So go out and get a sword, a boa, a cape, and some play food and let your imagination soar! Now...what would you like on your pizza?

Editor's Note: Article found on <http://www.scholarschoice.ca/blog> and was originally published by YourNeighborhoodToyStore.org with the title "Why is Imaginative Play Important?"; written by Anne Kienzie.



SUMMER SAFETY

for preschoolers

Water safety

Your child should be within arms length of an adult anytime they are in or around water. This includes pools, bathtubs, and beaches, and other water sources. Approved life jackets should be worn by preschoolers when they are playing in or around water and on a boat.

Mosquito safety

For children (2-12 years) of age, use a repellent (with 10% DEET or less) no more than three times day. Have your child wear long pants and sleeves, at dawn and at dusk when mosquitoes are at their worst. Avoid putting repellent on faces and hands. Put repellent on after sunscreen for the best effectiveness.

Sun safety

Always have your child wear a hat when going outside. Try to encourage them to wear sunglasses also. Apply children's SPF 30(or higher) sunscreen on all skin that is exposed to the sun, every time you go out and especially when playing near or on water.

For more great parenting tips and activities, visit the preschool activity calendar at www.albertahealthservices.ca

Tips to Make Sure Your Child Is Thriving By Five



first 2000 days
Early Childhood Development Network

It's a big job, but I think you're ready!

Okay, so here are some important things we need to get busy on:

- Book yearly health checkups with our doctor.
- Get me to the dentist by age one with periodic checkups based on my dentist's recommendations.
- Keep all my vaccinations up to date.
- Get my EYES checked:
 - 6-12 mos. (before my first birthday)
 - Another check when I'm 3
 - At age 5 before school begins
- Get my EARS checked when I'm a baby.
- Read to your child **every day** of the 2000 days of life (and beyond!).
- Go to healthyparentshealthychildren.ca for literally EVERYTHING you need to know from pregnancy onward. *(It might seem overwhelming but just focus on the stage you are currently at.)*

Helpful links:

Stay engaged and active by using these links:

- calgary.ca (click recreation) For swim and fitness classes.
- calgarylibrary.ca Free books and online resources to explore.
- littlefreelibrary.org/ourmap Where to get free books near you.
- calgaryreads.com Learn all about childhood literacy
- calgaryschild.com Great resource for activities and information.
- abcee.org/get-outside-and-play Community-based initiative.
- albertafamilywellness.org See the latest on brain science.
- parentsmatter.ca Resources in different languages for parents.
- reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parents-positiverolemodels.htm Promotes resiliency in adults and children.
- humanservices.alberta.ca/family-community/talk-box.html A parent's guide to language-rich environments.
- activeforlife.com Resources for parents and community to support physical literacy.

What to watch for:

Talk to your doctor right away if you see any of these signs:

- 1) no big smiles, eye contact or warm engagement by six months
- 2) no back-and-forth babble
- 3) a regression of speech and/or skills.

Reprinted with permission: <http://www.2000days.ca/parents>

Make Storytelling a Part of Your Day

Start conversations about what children have done in the past and encourage them to join in with further details.

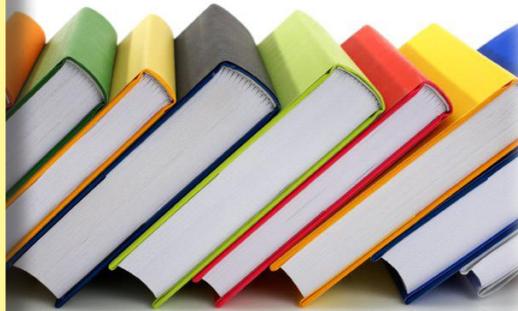
After an outing, involve the child in a conversation about where you went and what you did. For example, "We had fun at the zoo. We went on a train ride and saw monkeys and lions. Which animal did you like the best?"

After reading a book with a simple storyline, talk about the sequence of events that happened in the story. Use words like "then", "after" and "that", so your child can think about the sequence of events.

Excerpt from 2017 Hanen Calendar "Building Language and Literacy Through Powerful Conversations"

15 MINUTES of reading with your children each day can expose them to one million written words in a year.

From a 1988 research study on independent reading by Anderson, Wilson & Fielding



Catch a bug and place it in a container. Count how many legs, and wings it has. Ask your child "What color is it?" "Where does it live?" "What does it eat?" etc.

Share Rhymes & Songs With Your Child Every Day!

This is Me

Two little eyes that open and close (blink eyes)

Two little ears, but just one nose
(point to ears and nose)

Two little shoulders one on each side
(point to shoulders)

Two little arms to open wide
(open arms to hug)

Two little hands busy all day
(shake hands)

Two elbows that bend, they're made that way (bend elbows)

Two little feet so sturdy and strong
(stomp feet)

And two little legs that run all day long
(run)



calgary
reads

CBC Calgary Reads Annual Big Book Sale

May 12 to May 14, 2017
at The Calgary Curling Club
720 - 3rd St. NW, Calgary:

The Big Book Sale is one of Calgary's most anticipated and attended events! Hundreds of thousands of previously-loved books will be ready to be purchased and find new homes. This is a signature fundraising event for Calgary Reads. Last year, through the generosity of Calgarians and amazing volunteers, they received, sorted and sold over 100,000 gently used books and raised over \$300,000 for Calgary Reads.

Friday May 12th: 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Saturday May 13th: 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

On Saturday evening from 6:00 to 8:30 local band, Midnight Blue, entertains our shoppers with great jazz music. Join us and take a turn on the dance floor, sip a glass of wine and shop for books!

Sunday May 14th: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.



Tell Me What To Do Instead!

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

1. Tell your child what to do instead of what not to do.
2. Show your child by demonstrating, modeling, or using a picture of the action.
3. Clearly and simply state what you expect your child to do.
4. Remember young children use inappropriate behavior because they may not understand the social rules and/or because they are unable to consistently apply what they are in the process of learning.
5. Talk to young children using language they understand. Young children may not understand a word like “don’t” because it is a short word for “do not” and he/she may not know what the “negation” of a word means.
6. Encourage your child in a way that lets him/her know that he/she is exhibiting the desired behavior. Use positive, descriptive acknowledgement while the child is making an effort or is doing the desired behavior.
7. Some children will respond better to more subdued expressions, and acknowledging them in a “matter of fact” way might be more effective.
8. For the most part, be enthusiastic and generous with encouragement. Most children can never get enough!



Avoid	Say/Model	Positive Descriptive Acknowledgement
No! You can't play on my phone/iPad/computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can play play-doh or make this craft Let's color together or read a book together You can make an experiment with these 5 ingredients You can make this puzzle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wow! You are very creative with the play-doh. You are focused on that puzzle and finding pieces that go together. You really like reading, I'm glad we read this book together.
Don't run!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk / Use walking feet Stay with me Hold my hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You're holding my hand. That is so respectful. You walked carefully when carrying your drink. You made a safe choice. You are so friendly to walk beside me and keep me company.
Stop climbing!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your feet on the floor Do you need something up high? Let's find a safe way to reach it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wow! You have both feet on the floor! You are being safe. You asked for help to get something, you are being careful. You really like climbing! I'm glad we went to the park.
Don't touch!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look with your eyes Keep your hands down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You were really listening; you are looking with your eyes! You kept your hands down. That is respectful.
No yelling!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a calm voice / Use an inside voice Turn the volume down Talk so that I can understand you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are using a calm voice! You look happy. You are using a soft voice inside the house. That will help Daddy to finish his nap.
Stop whining!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a calm voice Talk so that I can understand you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are talking so clearly! That is so easy to listen to. You told me with your words what was wrong. That is helpful. / You used your words. How respectful!
Don't stand on the chair!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit on a chair / Chairs are for sitting Do you need something up high? Let's find a safe way to reach it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are sitting on the chair. What a careful girl. You were responsible when you sat in the chair. You stood on the ladder. You chose to be safe.
Don't hit!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle hands Hands are for playing, eating, and hugging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you used gentle hands you were being respectful. You used your hands for clapping! You like being safe. You are hugging her. What a friendly girl.
No coloring on the wall!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Color on the paper Put the paper on the easel if you want to color standing up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wow. You are coloring so carefully. You are focused. You put the paper on the easel. That is being responsible. You are an artist standing at the easel.
Don't throw your toys!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play with the toys on the floor Please keep the toys on the table If you are finished, please put the toys away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are playing with the toys on the floor. So safe. You decided to keep the toys on the table. That will keep them out of the vacuum cleaner. You put the toys away all by yourself! It looks like you are finished with those. What will you do now?
Stop playing with your food!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food goes on the spoon and then in your mouth Say "all done" when you are finished eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You're using your spoon. You're being careful. You said "all done." That is helpful. You are practicing manners by eating your food with a spoon and fork.
Don't play in the water/sink!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash your hands If you are finished washing your hands, please dry them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You washed your hands. What a healthy guy! You followed the hand washing steps! You try hard.