



PARENTING POSTS

A newsletter for parents of second-grade students

Play is the Work of Childhood

Play does far more than keep children amused, out of mischief or out of the way. Through play, children grow in all areas of development.

- ❑ **Physical** – A child develops coordination through play. Large muscles – those in the arms, legs and trunk – develop first and allow a youngster to walk, run, jump, hop and skip. With age, smaller muscles develop and allow eye, hand and finger coordination to develop. Examples of small muscle skills include working with tools, writing and working puzzles. A child uses energy and can release tension while playing.
- ❑ **Mental** – A child learns by doing and experimenting. Play provides opportunities to learn about the physical environment of size, shape, color, weight, space and texture, as well as about one's own impact on the environment. Play also allows for children to exercise creativity and problem solving.
- ❑ **Social** – A child learns acceptable ways of behaving through social contact with peers and adults. Some developing social skills include sharing, cooperating, owning, giving, accepting, winning, losing and disagreeing, as well as dependability, orderliness and initiative.
- ❑ **Emotional** – Through play, a child learns to understand emotions and express them acceptably. Play should provide plenty of success, which can build the child's esteem.



Encourage play and creativity so your child can experience the positive benefits and growth associated with these activities.

Stress Less Activity

Stress is part of everyone's life. Even young children! Try this activity with your child to help reduce stress and enjoy time together.

Try a simple game of charades. Write action words, movie or book titles, lines from songs, etc. that participants can read and would be familiar with, on slips of paper. Put the papers face down in a pile. Act out the word or phrase on the slip of paper without speaking. All other players guess what the person is acting out. Don't keep score, this one is just for fun.





Toys: The Tools of Play

Every child needs toys to stimulate curiosity, encourage creativity, and challenge physical development and skills. This list might help you select play equipment for your child:

- Construction sets (plastic building block sets)
- Hobbies, collections (sewing kit, stamps, bugs, coins)
- Games (for two or three players such as dominoes and board games)
- Bicycle
- Swing set
- Jump rope
- Work bench and tools
- Doll house, dolls
- Paper dolls, other simple cutouts
- Dress-up clothes, costumes
- Books (easy to read)
- Art materials
- Blackboard and chalk
- Balls or sports equipment

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Creativity and Children

We all have the power to be creative and most of us are involved in creative activities every day. **You can be a creative person without being an artist.** There are creative bricklayers, salespeople, lawyers, teachers and, certainly, parents.

Anyone who lives with children must be looking continually for new ideas and ways of helping and teaching children, and this involves creativity. Creativity is a special way of seeing, learning and thinking about things.

Every child has the potential to be creative.

Experiences at home and school help shape a child's expression of creativity – for better or worse. Remember, rarely do you have only one right way to do things. Encourage your child to find alternatives by thinking creatively.

Helping your child express creativity and develop into a creative adult will enable greater access to all that life has to offer.

Activities to Encourage Creative Exploration

Much of the play equipment listed earlier will aid in developing your child's creativity. Some other ideas include:

- Play dough or modeling clay can be made at home or purchased. It is both creative and relaxing to play with.
- Mix water with dish soap for bubble play. Experiment with pipe cleaners or household objects to make bubble blowers. Cool moist days make the best bubbles.
- Set up an "arts and crafts corner" where your child can draw, glue, cut and color. Provide paper, crayons, watercolors, pens or pencils, scissors, and other art supplies. Hang up examples of your child's creative expression.

Creativity is a child's pathway to learning, fun and emotional expression. Encourage play and creativity so your child can experience the positive benefits and growth associated with these activities.



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