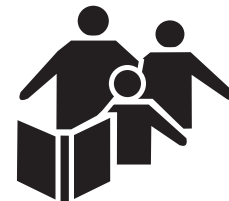


Parenting Can Be Child's Play

Play has been called the work of childhood, but it can be a fun part of parenting. Laughing, dancing, pretending, and talking with your child nourishes her development. Any safe activity you and your child find fun is play. Here are some suggestions you might consider.



You are your child's first and favorite "toy."

Talk, laugh, and sing with your child when you're together. Try imitating his motions and words. Hold him gently and dance with him. Learn and enjoy singing interactive songs such as "Pattycake," "Itsy-Bitsy Spider," and "Where is Thumbkin?" Find suggestions in children's songbooks or CDs at your local library. Your baby won't care if the tune or words are exactly right.

Provide developmentally appropriate toys a child can use in different ways.

Consider what is safe for your child's stage of development. Most children enjoy balls; rolling toys; blocks; puppets; dolls; safe dishes; toy animals; plastic or cardboard containers; play telephones or other devices; pieces of fabric such as wash cloths, baby blankets, and scarves; sound makers such as rattles, play keys, or toy instruments; or other items parents use.

All children can play.

Look for ways to play with your child. Consider the child's abilities and interests. If she loves music, give her a box and wooden spoon, rattles, or a bell on a soft ribbon tied around her wrist that she can shake. Soft balls or scarves may interest a child who likes color. The parent of a child with special needs can find special toys to borrow from agencies such as Lekotek Center and the Illinois Assistive Technology Program. A therapist who works with your child also may have suggestions.

Encourage other children to include a child with special needs.

Show the children how to include a child with special needs in their play or make suggestions. Look for games and toys that encourage interaction as well as use your child's abilities. If Jayden has a visual impairment, other children can touch him gently and describe what they are doing. Perhaps he can hit the drum or shake a bell as part of a band. He could be part of a circle passing a ball that has a bell or chime inside. If Mia doesn't hear well, other children can use pictures and gestures to include her. She can toss balls into a basket or stack blocks with them. Friends and family may find it fun to learn simple sign language to use with her—and each other.


Resource

Illinois Assistive Technology Program
1 W. Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 100
Springfield, IL 62701

(800) 852-5110
<http://www.iltech.org>

Disability Specific Play Ideas and Information

<http://www.lekotek.org/resources/informationontoy/packets.asp#Specific>

 For more information on how parenting can be child's play, see the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eicclearinghouse.org>.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.

Funded by the
Illinois Department of Human Services
Bureau of Early Intervention



Illinois
Early Intervention
Clearinghouse

Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse
Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Telephone: 217-333-1386
Fax: 217-244-7732
Toll-free: 877-275-3227
Email: Illinois-eic@illinois.edu

