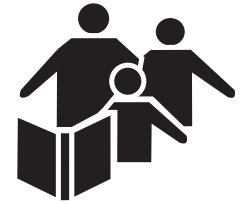


Play Buffet: Birth to 12 Months

Children learn best through play. The Play Buffet is a way to think about offering your child a variety of play experiences — just like choosing from different foods at a buffet. Here are some toy and activity ideas to support development from birth to 12 months. Many activities build skills in more than one developmental area, so try to include a variety each week.



Social/Emotional:

Stuffed animals, simple dolls, pretend feeding, toy keys, caregivers role play

Cognitive/Fine Motor:

Rattles, soft blocks, high-contrast toys, nesting cups, simple shape sorters, grasping rings, cause-and-effect toys

Language/Communication:

Board books, nursery rhymes, peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake, caregiver singing, musical rattles, toy phones

Sensory:

Textured blankets, fabric squares, soft teethers, water play, edible finger paint

Gross Motor:

Tummy time mats, play gyms, soft balls, push/pull toys, crawling tunnels, supported standing



Note for Families: These are general guidelines meant to spark ideas and variety in play. Every child develops at their own pace — adjust based on your child's unique needs, skills, and interests. Always consider safety first: supervise closely, avoid choking hazards, and choose age-appropriate materials.

Adapted with permission from "The Play Buffet" handout, created by Terri Mussatto of Fruitful Play.

 For more information on incorporating play into daily routines, see the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>.

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