

Play is an important part of your child's development.



Where can I find more information on playing with my child?

For resources and to see the latest research on play and learning, please visit:

gov.nl.ca/edu



Supporting Your Child Through Play: Everyday Games for Parents and Caregivers

What is Play?

Play is an activity that is fun, spontaneous and open-ended. Play is one way in which children learn about the world in which they live; they can explore, create and figure things out!

Why is Play Important?

Play helps children:

- Learn about their world
- Learn how to do things
- Solve problems
- Deal with feelings
- Become confident
- Get stronger
- Learn to get along with other people



How Does Play Benefit Parents?

Having fun while playing with your child is priceless. Playing together is one way of showing your child that you care for and love them. You are giving them attention and making them feel special.

Where Can Children Play?

Children can play anywhere. They can play at home, in the back yard or at a friend's house. You can even play singing games or I Spy in the car on the way to the grocery store!



How much does "PLAY" cost?

One of the benefits of unstructured play is that it is completely FREE! Playing together doesn't have to be costly. Your time and attention are more important than expensive toys.

Build a den: When you have large items delivered, keep the boxes to build a den – add a blanket and other items to enhance the game.

Musical statues: Play music while the children dance around. When you stop the music, everyone must freeze.

Hunt with a Magnet: Fill a shallow tray with sand and fill it with magnetic objects. Give each child a small magnet and explain to them that you have hidden objects in the sand. Encourage the children to take turns at finding an object using only the magnet. The deeper the sand the more difficult the activity.



Hot Lava: Randomly place sheets of paper (or pillow cases, towels, mats) on the floor. Work your way across the room jumping and leaping from paper to paper, making sure not to touch the "hot lava" (the floor). You will increase your heart rate as you challenge the children to see who can cross the room first. This game helps children develop spatial awareness as they learn to control their body tempo and movement.

Sleeping lions: Everyone lies on the floor except 1 or 2 hunters. Once the sleeping lions settle, they're not allowed to move. The hunters walk around trying to make the lions move by making them laugh – no touching allowed. Once a lion moves, they join the hunters until everyone is a hunter.



I Spy: The phrase “I spy with my little eye, something ____” was coined in the early 20th century, and the game has become widely popular, even generating riddle books. Provide an adjective about what you see and watch as the other players attempt to find it. Try to make the clue as murky as possible to challenge the players.

Play Activities You and Your Child Can Do Together

Building games: Make a den in the woods, build a tree house or set up a tent in the garden – watch as the children's imaginations go wild.

Skipping: Energetic and fun, skipping is always a favourite.

Hop about: Whenever you say a magic word, players have to hop on the spot 3 times. If they miss it 3 times then they're out.



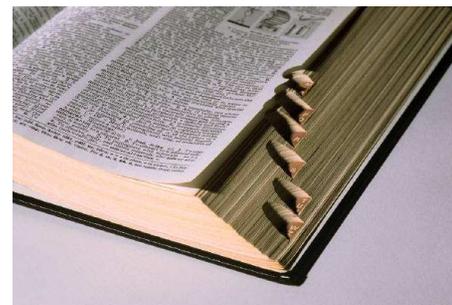
I'm going on a picnic: The beauty of this game is that there are so many ways to play it. The first player says the phrase, "I'm going on a picnic and I am bringing _____." The next player repeats what the first person is bringing and adds an item beginning with the next letter of the alphabet.

20 questions: One player thinks of a person, place, or thing that all the players know. The remaining players ask questions to discover what the first player is thinking. The beginning player must answer all questions with yes or no. For example: "Does she have blonde hair?" or "Is it bigger than a toaster?" Players have 20 questions to guess correctly or the first player successfully stumps them.



Sink or Float: Fill a large container with water and place at a safe level where all children can take part in the activity. Ask the children to go around the house and choose various small objects (nothing of value) e.g. small tubs, beads, pasta, plastic bricks, balls etc. Ask the children to put each item in the water and guess whether it will float or sink. Ask the children questions about why they think the items float and sink and explain the reasons for this.

Fictionary : Using a standard dictionary, each player looks through the dictionary to find a word that the other players are unlikely to know. He or she then says and spells the word and all the players have to write their own definitions. When all the definitions are written, each player reads his or her idea of what the word means. The players then vote on whose definition is most likely to be true. The player who gets the most votes, even if it is not the correct definition, wins that particular round. The dictionary is then handed to the next player and the game is repeated.



Wiggly worms: Children lie on the floor on their tummies with hands by their sides and see how far they can wiggle around the home.