



## Play With Me!

A child who is playing is learning to experience a new world . Playing fosters a child's separate identity from their parents. It can be observed in many forms: building with blocks, making believe, exploring the outdoors and developing fine motor skills. When there is play, there's wonderful growth and activity in the brain.

What skills do children learn while playing?

- Problem solving
- Playing with others
- Imagination
- Dealing with emotions
- Creativity
- Task completion

What questions encourage thinking?

- What are you doing?
- Why do you think that happened?
- Can we do it another way?

What positive responses promote "trying?"

- Good thinking!
- Nice try! or Give it another try!
- That's a way to use your brain!
- You must be very proud of yourself!

The following pages are designed to be printed as cards, one half-page each, with suggested activities from four different types of play.

The activities are simply suggestions and are by no means complete! For more ideas, visit [www.ercrefer.org](http://www.ercrefer.org), [www.topekapublicschools.net](http://www.topekapublicschools.net), or watch TPS TV (cable 14).



## Fine Motor Play

Children who have good vision and small-muscle development are capable of exploring their environment. Your child will benefit from experiences that help develop muscles that will be used for creating, reading, and writing. What activities develop fine motor skills?

### Infant

- Follow an object with his/her eyes (center to left and center to right).
- Grasp a toy with both hands-then one.
- Pick up small object with finger and thumb.
- Play "Pat-a-Cake."

### Toddler

- Throw a small ball over-handed.
- Stack blocks.
- Make a mark on paper with crayon.
- Pat, poke, pinch then roll clay.
- Turn pages of a book.
- Get a spoon into mouth right-side up.

### Preschooler

- Lace beads or string cereal.
- Cut play dough with plastic knife.
- Cut paper with scissors.
- Tear paper into strips.
- Hold book correctly and turn pages without assistance.
- Use "puppet fingers" (thumb, pointer and middle) to tell story.



Want more ideas? [www.ercrefer.org](http://www.ercrefer.org),  
[www.topekapublicschools.net](http://www.topekapublicschools.net),  
or watch TPS TV (cable 14)



## Block Play

While children play with blocks, they are learning math skills, problem solving, developing physical and social skills. The child can explore and build in any way they want.

### Infant

- Explore a block with hands/mouth.
- Stack and tumble soft blocks.
- Bang two blocks together.
- Put blocks into a container and dump them out.

### Toddler

- Make a train out of blocks.
- Measure body length with blocks.
- Make a bridge out of blocks.
- Discover shapes with blocks.
- Introduce "directional words" (over, under, next to, inside, etc.).

### Preschooler

- Promote dramatic play by adding figures (people, animals, etc.).
- Introduce concept of opposites (small/tall, wide/narrow towers).
- Act out Mother Goose rhymes using blocks.
- Introduce counting skills (one-to-one concept).



Want more ideas? [www.ercrefer.org](http://www.ercrefer.org),  
[www.topekapublicschools.net](http://www.topekapublicschools.net),  
or watch TPS TV (cable 14)



## Outdoor Play

During outdoor play, your child explores the world using all five senses. Playing outdoors allows children to practice and develop social skills as well as using and developing large muscles. Let your child explore at his/her own speed.

### Infant

- Listen to and watch leaves blow.
- Watch older children playing.
- Sit/lay on a blanket on the grass.
- While walking, talk about what you see and hear (squirrels, flowers, cars).

### Toddler

- Play with any size ball.
- Blow and chase bubbles.
- Explore and talk about what is in the yard.
- Have a "pretend" picnic with dolls or stuffed animals.
- Water trees/flowers or wash the car.

### Preschooler

- "Paint" the sidewalk, house, fence using a bucket of water and a paintbrush.
- Go on a "wiggly creature" search looking for and talking about worms, insects, caterpillars, etc.
- Collect outside treasures (small objects) and talk about how they are alike or different.



Want more ideas? [www.ercrefer.org](http://www.ercrefer.org),  
[www.topekapublicschools.net](http://www.topekapublicschools.net),  
or watch TPS TV (cable 14)



## Dramatic Play

Dramatic play encourages development of a child's social and emotional skills (sharing, taking turns, conversing, understanding and managing feelings), creativity, problem solving and language skills. Let your child be in charge.

### Dramatic-play props for infants:

- Soft dolls, stuffed animals
- Bottles, blankets, cradle, baby blankets
- Carts, baby carriages
- Pots, pans, plastic dishes, telephone
- Plastic, wood, or rubber cars, planes and trains

### Props to add for toddlers:

- Dress-up clothes, hats, bags, pocketbooks
- Child-sized broom and mop
- Plastic containers and empty food boxes

### Props to add for preschoolers:

- Boxes, blankets, sheets to build forts, caves, etc.
- Play money
- Paper, crayons, markers to make signs, etc.



Want more ideas? [www.ercrefer.org](http://www.ercrefer.org),  
[www.topekapublicschools.net](http://www.topekapublicschools.net),  
or watch TPS TV (cable 14)