Communication and play - 3

Encouraging Communication through Play

Play is one of the most important ways your child learns about the world. It helps them interact with others, solve problems and learn new words. Play develops a child’s imagination and most importantly their language skills. At this age a child starts to enjoy playing with other children.

How you can help:

- Have regular times when you and your child can play together. A few minutes everyday is better than a longer session once a week
- Encourage your child to play with others (grandparents, brothers, sisters and other children)
- Have play materials / toys that your child finds interesting (these do not have to be expensive and can include real objects e.g. a pan and wooden spoon. You can also borrow from a toy library if there is a one in your area)
- Talk with your child as you play together
- Take your child to different places e.g. shops, doctors, park, farm or library, to give them experiences that they can act out in their play
- Nursery provides a good environment for your child to learn to play and socialise

Activities you can do to help your child:

Exploring through play – your child may enjoy:

- Playdough – rollers and cutters
- Model making – from empty boxes, yoghurt pots, cardboard tubes
- Jigsaws
- Everyday activities such as baking and simple gardening activities
- Scooters and bikes
- Running, jumping, kicking and throwing balls
- Construction play – e.g. bricks and lego

Pretend play / social play – your child may enjoy:

- Pretending to do familiar things e.g. shopping, going to the doctors, pretending to cook
- Dressing up
- Playing games with others including - Snap, Pairs, Skittles and Pass the Parcel
**Important factors to remember at this stage**

At this stage children like to act out things they have seen on the television, heard in a story or experienced in their own life.

They continue to enjoy adults joining in their play and often ask for the same game or story again and again.

**Suggestions for the toy box at this stage**

**Exploratory play:**
- Playdough
- Craft materials - e.g. felt pens, crayons, tissue paper, paints – sponges, finger paints
- Puzzles

**Pretend and social play:**
- Dolls (suitable for both boys and girls)
- Model houses and play houses
- Dressing up clothes
- Small play people
- Snakes and ladders
- Card games – snap, happy families
- Till and money

**For further information please contact:** Department of Speech and Language Therapy
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