

Things Parents Should Know About Play

- ◆ **Children learn through their play.** Children learn and develop:
 - cognitive skills** – like math and problem solving in a pretend grocery store
 - physical abilities** – like balancing blocks and running on the playground
 - new vocabulary** – like the words they need to play with toy dinosaurs
 - social skills** – like playing together in a pretend car wash
 - literacy skills** – like creating a menu for a pretend restaurant

- ◆ **Play is healthy.** Play helps children grow strong and healthy. It also counteracts obesity issues facing many children today.

- ◆ **Play reduces stress.** Play helps your children grow emotionally. It is joyful and provides an outlet for anxiety and stress.

- ◆ **Make time for play.** As parents, you are the biggest supporters of your children's learning. You can make sure they have as much time to play as possible during the day to promote cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional development.

- ◆ **Play and learning go hand-in-hand.** They are not separate activities. They are intertwined. Think about them as a science lecture with a lab. Play is the child's lab.

- ◆ **Play is a child's context for learning.** Children practice and reinforce their learning in multiple areas during play. It gives them a place and a time for learning that cannot be achieved through completing a worksheet. For example, in playing restaurant, children write and draw menus, set prices, take orders, and make out checks. Play provides rich learning opportunities and leads to children's success and self-esteem.

Laurel Bongiorno, PhD © National Association for the Education of Young Children — Promoting excellence in early childhood education Find more information at <http://families.naeyc.org/> *10 Things Parents Should Know About Play*

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