



Help your child get started playing

Young children often find it hard to come up with and develop games on their own. An adult therefore has to help the child get started. As the adult, you can plan a set “playtime” every day. You can invite yourself to join in a game your child is already playing and help him/her to develop it.

Choose a good game

- For young children, choose a simple game that you can repeat over and over again.
- Choose a game where there are clear roles for both you and the child. This will make it much easier for you to play the game together rather than each of you playing separately. If you are playing a picture puzzle game, for example, you can put your child in charge of the board while you are in charge of the pieces.
- Choose a game or an activity your child should enjoy. For example, if your child likes cars, try to come up with a game involving toy cars. If your child likes moving about, try to come up with a game that involves running around.

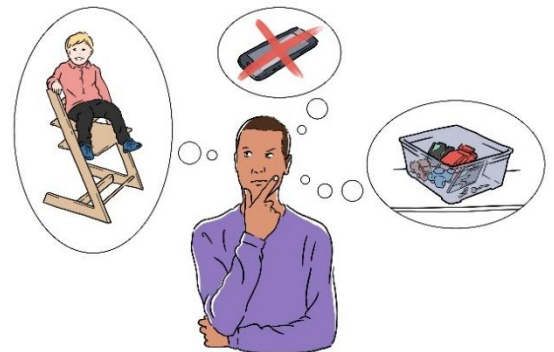


Get ready before playing

To organize a good playtime, you may need to prepare in advance.

- Choose a good place.
- Remove any items that might distract you. Put your smartphone away and turn off the TV.
- Lay out what you need to play the game.

Make it clear to the child what you are thinking of playing. One good way to do this is to show your child a game card. A game card is a picture of the game with instructions on the reverse. Later on, your child can use game cards to choose a game or ask to play a specific game.



Teach your child the game

For the child to learn the game, the adult must clearly show him/her how to play it. Some actions are difficult for children to master, and they will need help from an adult the first few times. It is important for the child to experience success if he/she is to think the game is fun and want to keep on playing it.



Capture and retain your child's attention

Young children are easily distracted and can quickly lose focus. In order to be able to play together, it is therefore important for you to capture and retain your child's attention.

- Use a lot of gestures, facial expressions and noises that capture your child's attention.
- Adapt the pace of the game. You sometimes have to take your time to help your child get going. Other times, you may have to be quick to make sure your child does not lose focus.
- Create anticipation in the game. Count to three before something fun happens – before letting your child slide down a slide, for example. You can also pause a game to create a sense of excitement.



Have fun when you play

The most important thing when playing games with your child is to have fun together. You can also film yourselves playing and then watch together afterwards. That way, your child can enjoy your fun game over and over again!

What can I play with my child?

Early games: The first games young children learn are often social games such as “peekaboo”, tickling, tag games or simply being lifted up. When children are a little older, they often enjoy games like putting things in jars and taking them out again, or picking things up.

Games with rules: Games with rules are clear, simple games that are played the same way every time. Games with rules are fun to play with one child or a group of children.

Songs: When you sing with your child, choose songs that involve clear movements. Your child can then take part by copying the movements, even if he/she cannot sing along.

Creative games: When your child is a little older you can have fun painting, drawing, or playing with beads or Play-Doh together.

Everyday routines: Many everyday chores include actions that children enjoy, such as “put in and take out”, “give and take”, and sorting things. Let your child take part in activities such as laying the table, emptying the dishwasher, clearing away toys, wiping down the table, taking out the trash and getting things for you.

Role play and fantasy games: When children are around two years old, they often start to play simple fantasy games such as feeding toy animals or playing with toy cars. As an adult, you can help your child to develop his/her games by adding in a new toy or coming up with a new action to include in the game.

Material prepared by the Health and Rehabilitation Division, Region Uppsala

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