

Healthy Development Services (HDS)/ Children's Care Connection (C3) Newsletter

Embrace the Joy of Play

Happy Spring! 

We hope you are enjoying the start to this new year and finding it filled with opportunities to support yourself and the families you may serve. Thank you for taking the time to read through our newsletter. Each quarter we work on coming up with interesting topics that are relevant and filled with tips to support your families or your loved ones. In this quarter, you will find the concept of "play". While this sounds silly to discuss, play actually may not come naturally to a lot of caregivers. Do you know play is best when it is non-structured? That means things like coloring in a coloring book, building a puzzle, or even uno might not get as much benefit as drawing on a blank piece of paper, building a fort, or playing tag outside. Building connections where we play and follow the child's lead is helpful to form strong bonds, foster creativity, and nurture confidence. We hope you find something to take away in the following articles. If you want to explore this topic more or suggest a topic for a future newsletter, we'd love to hear from you!

About HDS

At HDS/C3, our mission is to provide no-cost, comprehensive support for the developmental, behavioral, and care coordination needs of prenatal caregivers and children age 0-5. Through our services, which encompass education, prevention, and care coordination support for obtaining diagnoses, we strive to ensure the optimal development of our clients and the well-being of their family during these crucial early years.

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Fostering Healthy Play: Tips for Encouraging Joyful and Inclusive Interactions

Exploring the Playful Journey: Tips for Infancy to Early Childhood

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FOSTERING HEALTHY PLAY: TIPS FOR ENCOURAGING JOYFUL AND INCLUSIVE INTERACTIONS

As we navigate the delightful journey of raising our young ones, one aspect that holds immeasurable importance is their ability to connect and socialize with others. In this article, we will explore the magic of play as a gateway to building meaningful friendships and honing essential social skills in children.



Arrange Playdates

- Set up small playdates for your child. This creates a cozy setting for them to practice social skills and make friends.
- Actively participate to assist them as needed during the playdate.
- Discuss the expectations beforehand, covering aspects like the duration, how to play with a friend, and what to do if they need help.

Encourage Parallel Play

Support the development of social skills through parallel play, where children engage in similar activities side by side. This helps build comfort and familiarity with peers.

Try Different Kinds of Play

Introduce various types of play, from organized games to free play. This way, your child can discover what they enjoy doing with others.

Share and Play as a Team

Support activities where kids work together. This could be playing games that require teamwork, helping them learn to share and solve problems together.

Offer a Variety of Play Options

If you can, provide multiple copies of popular items. For example, if playdough is a hit, having one for each child can turn a good time into a great shared experience!

Solve Problems Together

Teach your child to figure things out with friends. In case issues arise during play, guide the children through problem-solving by identifying the problem, brainstorming solutions together, and collectively choosing a resolution.

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Talk About Feelings

- Support your child's understanding of the perspective of others by helping them empathize with friends. How does your friend feel when we take that car from them? Their tears tell me they are sad.
- Showcase resilience by addressing feelings of losing or not playing the way you want. We can always try again!

Celebrate Success

Celebrate positive moments by praising their efforts to acknowledge and encourage those friendly behaviors!

Examples: You helped build your friend's castle up so nicely! You shared your playdough with your friend so well today!

Address Challenges Early

Keep an eye out for any social difficulties your child may face. Work with teachers or caregivers to catch and tackle issues early on.

Be a Good Example

- Show your child how to be kind and friendly. Model behaviors like taking turns, sharing, and resolving disagreements calmly.
- Lead by example at home by participating in play with your child or others in the household.
- Demonstrate inclusive play by asking to join in with a simple 'Can I play too?' or, if you see them building a block tower, express enthusiasm by saying something like, 'Wow, I'm going to help build the tower up!'.
- Show the importance of taking turns by engaging in turn-taking games like bowling at home, where it's 'I go, then you go'.

EXPLORING THE PLAYFUL JOURNEY: TIPS FOR INFANCY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD

Playtime holds a special place in our children's world. It's not just about having fun; it's their way of delving into the wonders of life and learning about themselves and their surroundings. Every moment, whether it's rolling trucks or sorting socks, offers rich opportunities for growth and development.

So how does play evolve from 0 to 5 years old, and what can you do to support each stage?



0 – 1 Year Old

Encourage Exploration: Provide a variety of safe objects for your baby to touch, grasp, and explore. Spend quality time making eye contact and sharing smiles, nurturing their social and emotional development. Model simple gestures and sounds for them to imitate to foster early communication skills.



1 – 2 Years Old

Engage in Pretend Play: Encourage imaginative play by providing props and joining in pretend scenarios with your toddler. Support their growing independence by allowing them to help with simple household tasks. Facilitate parallel play opportunities with peers to allow them to observe and interact at their own pace.



2 – 3 Years Old

Foster Creativity: Cultivate your child's imagination through storytelling and make-believe play. Encourage them to take the lead in choosing play activities, to empower their decision-making skills. Facilitate playdates to promote social interaction and friendship building, and provide opportunities for cooperative play with peers.



3 – 4 Years Old

Promote Turn-Taking: Encourage your child to take turns and share during playtime to foster important social skills. Support their growing independence by allowing them to explore their interests and preferences. Provide structured play opportunities that involve acting out sequences or scenarios to encourage creativity and problem-solving.



4 – 5 Years Old

Encourage Group Play: Foster friendships and social skills by organizing small group playdates. Emphasize the importance of following rules and cooperating with others during play. Provide opportunities for your child to engage in structured games or activities that require teamwork and collaboration to prepare them for more complex social interactions.

EXPLORING THE PLAYFUL JOURNEY: TIPS FOR INFANCY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD

Some caregivers may feel like they don't know or remember how to really play, and so the idea of playing with their child may feel foreign or difficult. Play is what children do all day long, and it can be as simple as these ideas, but brings lifelong learning and benefits to even the youngest of children:

- **Play face to face** with your child whenever possible so you can share together in the activity.
- **Engage with child on their level** – if you can, get down on the floor with them. If not, join them on a bed or at the table where you can play together.
- **Follow their lead and what interests them** – the adults don't always have to come up with a game. Follow your child and see what they come up with.
- **Engage in silly play** – not all adults are comfortable being silly, but if you're willing to give it a try, you might be amazed at the engagement you will get with your child when you are just as silly as they can be.
- **Act out play sequences together** – acting out everyday activities helps children learn what to expect and how the world works – it's fun for them to pretend to work at the grocery store, serve you food and be the teacher
- **Encourage child to assist you in daily routine and housework** – even young children can help put things away, and at this age, they have a lot of fun with it. Build good habits now!
- **Explore environment in outside play** – even a quick walk can be an adventure if you follow your child's lead when possible, examine new discoveries along the way, and notice the environment around you.
- **Cook and bake together** – children love to mix and stir and they can learn so much by watching and being a part of the process in making their favorite foods.
- **Read** – reading even one book everyday gives you and your child time to connect, slow down and have some conversation. If your child doesn't want to sit long enough to listen to a story, try reading when they are eating in their highchair or in the bathtub.
- **Sing** – Kids don't care how good or bad you sing – they just love to hear and sing along. You don't even have to listen to nursery rhyme songs all day – whatever you enjoy, they will enjoy too.



What if you only have limited time at home after work/daycare? Play can look like –

- **Mealtime fun:** Getting things out of the cabinet, pouring things, mixing ingredients or even just having your child nearby with a bowl and some spoons so they can “make dinner” alongside you.
- **Mailbox adventure:** Walking together to the mailbox and practicing funny ways to walk on the way. You can hop like bunnies, run like cheetahs, gallop like horses, or slither like snakes.
- **Bath time bonding:** Playing with the soap bubbles in the bathtub or adding some bath toys to the tub and enjoying them together, even if it's not very long
- **Cozy moments:** Cuddling up with a book or singing together before bedtime



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION LIBRARY

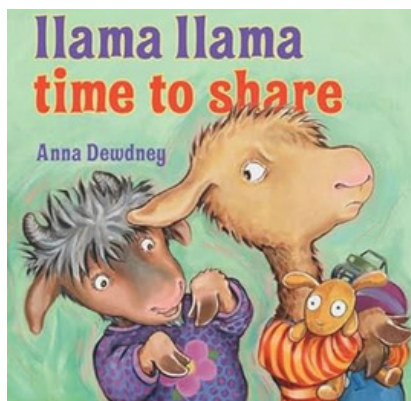
Our favorite DEI books to learn about play



Be Kind by Pat Zietlow Miller

The story follows a little girl learning what kindness means. She explores the ideas of giving and helping others and learning to pay attention to others by listening. She also learns that kindness can be hard when it comes to sharing with a sibling or sticking up for someone when other kids aren't kind.

Read aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAo4-2UzgPo>



Llama Llama, Time to Share by Anna Dewdney

Llama has a new neighbor, Nelly Gnu and they have a playdate together. Llama is still not sure if he wants to share his toys with Nelly, but things change when Fuzzy Llama is ripped. Mama Llama fixes Fuzzy Llama under the condition that Llama is able to share.

Read aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbib1qt-YsG>



Together We Can by Caryl Hart and Ali Pye

This book is filled with vibrant pictures showing children making friendships with each other no matter their interests or what they look like. This book also beautifully showcases diversity and inclusion and how we are more alike than we think when we play together.

Read aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YnY83uDIwQ>



CURRENT SERVICE WAIT TIMES

INTAKE & REGISTRATION

2 WEEKS

Upon receiving the referral, our team will contact family to complete registration and schedule client for a 90-minute developmental screening.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

1 WEEK

During this appointment, a Developmental Specialist will utilize the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 and SE-2 to determine if there are any delays. M-CHAT (if applicable) and a Caregiver Well Being Checklist will also be administered. Recommendations for further assessments and/or community resources will be provided at the end of appointment.

IN THE COMMUNITY

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE WOW (WITHOUT WALLS) FESTIVAL April 4-7, 2024

La Jolla Playhouse's annual celebration of immersive and interactive experiences from local, national and international artists WOW Festival 2024 takes place at venues around UC San Diego

Sign up for FREE tickets to family friendly experiences [HERE](#)

ALL-INCLUSIVE DAY OF PLAY: STARRY NIGHT CINEMA & RESOURCE FAIR!

Saturday, April 13, 2024, 5pm - 9pm

Experience inclusive fun with amazing activity stations, resources and a starlit movie screening.

6753 University Avenue San Diego, CA 92115

Find more details on [website](#)

14TH ANNUAL AAP-CA3 READ & ROMP FUNDRAISER

Saturday, April 13, 2024, 9am - 12pm

Admission includes gift bags for children (while supplies last), crafts/activities, and character meet and greet.

Kid Ventures Liberty Station, 2865 Sims Road, San Diego, 92106

Purchase tickets [HERE](#)

SAN DIEGO EARTHFEST

Saturday, April 20, 2024, 11am-5pm

FREE Earth Day celebration featuring music and activities for kids.

Balboa Park, Park Blvd and Presidents Law

Get free tickets [HERE](#)

An Earth Day celebration is also available in [South Bay](#) at Chula Vista Bayfront Park on Saturday, April 13, 2024 from 11am-3pm



For more information about
Healthy Development Services/C3:

WWW.RCHSD.ORG/HDS