

#	Age & Stage	Theme	Title
13	19-24 months	Everyday play using all the senses	Did you know that using the five senses when playing with your toddler helps your toddler's brain development?

It is important to take the time to interact with your toddler. Young children learn while playing as you teach them about the world. Follow their lead. They will show you what they are interested in and when they are ready to learn.

- ◆ Between birth and age three, your child's brain creates more connections than it needs. Over time, the brain will naturally fine tune these early brain connections. The connections that are used often will become permanent in your child's brain. Those that are not used as often will disappear. This is where experience through the five senses plays an important role in a young child's brain development.
- ◆ Children learn through their five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. Using these brain connections regularly creates patterns in the brain that help a child form thoughts, habits and memories. Parents need to provide a variety of social and learning opportunities so that the connections become permanent.
- ◆ Activities that use the senses can include reading to your child, finger-painting, dancing, singing, music, smelling, tasting new foods and touching interesting things.
- ◆ Make play part of your everyday routine. Bath time, mealtime, or dressing your child are ideal opportunities for you to enjoy your child and to support brain development.
- ◆ You can teach your toddler a little more by using something they are interested in: What color is it? Is this bigger or smaller than that?
- ◆ You don't need to buy expensive toys. You can use simple household objects like pots, pans, cardboard boxes and tubes, and plastic containers. Be sure to check for sharp edges or staples before letting your toddler play with these items.
- ◆ You don't always need to have structured play with rules and adult interaction. Free, unstructured, supervised play is also important for young children to figure things out for themselves, and to explore their own interests.
- ◆ Many children 1 ½ years to 2 years old like pretend games. They like to imitate you. Playing dress-up or a game of house will allow young children use their imagination and will help with healthy brain development.
- ◆ Actively supervise the play of young children at all times. Children this age are very mobile and do not understand danger.

Links

- ◆ *Learning to Play and Playing to Learn - What Families Can Do.* Best Start Resource Centre. www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_child_dev/K27-E_LearningToPlay_webFullURLs.pdf
- ◆ *Play.* Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development. www.child-encyclopedia.com/play
- ◆ *Activity Centre.* Parents2parents. www.parents2parents.ca/node/9