

Fascinating Facts

From Miss Melissa's Frog Room

Let's play with blocks.



“Time to play!”

I tried to teach my child with books;
She gave me only puzzled looks.
I tried to teach my child with words;
They passed by her often unheard.
Despairingly, I turned aside,
“How shall I teach my child?” I cried.
Into my hand she put the key;
“Come”, she said, “Play with me.”

This is not just a cute poem that brings a tear to your eye and a smile to your face... it is a FACT! Research has shown us that that while it may appear that all children are doing is playing for fun; it is actually a much more important part of a child's developmental process. Playing is a very natural way for children to learn because it uses all of their senses. They learn about their own bodies, about the environment, and about people around them.

To us adults, playing blocks seems like just stacking them and knocking them down. But to kids, playing blocks is a way for them to practice fine motor skills. They are practicing their fingers to grasp and hold the block, lift it up and balance it on top of another block to make a stack. That is a very BIG thing for kids. You may think that playing in water is just splashing water, pouring water in and out and making a mess. But playing with water helps kids learn that not all things are hard, there are liquids too. There is also the concept of empty and full when they pour water out of a cup.

Play also helps a child do the following:

- ❖ **Develop physical skills.** Gross motor skills are developed as a child learns to reach, grasp, crawl, run, and balance. Fine motor skills are developed as children handle small toys.
- ❖ **Develop cognitive concepts.** Children learn to solve problems through play. (“What does this do?”, “Does this puzzle piece fit here?”) Children also learn colors, numbers, size, and shapes. They have the ability to enhance their memory skills as well as their attention span. Children move on to higher levels of thinking as they play in a more stimulating environment.
- ❖ **Develop language skills.** Language develops as a child plays and interacts with others. This begins with parents playing cooing games with their baby and advances to practical levels such as telling make believe stories and jokes.
- ❖ **Develop social skills.** Learning to cooperate, negotiate, take turns, and play by the rules are all important skills in early games. These skills grow as the child plays. As a result, children learn the roles and rules of society.