

Learning through Play

- **Dramatic Play-** puppet theatre, dress up, doll house, kitchen/home living, farm, flower shop, grocery store, restaurant, shoveling pretend snow
- **Early Literacy-** books, print, letters, storytelling, puppets, writing/fine motor materials, language prompts, musical instruments, rhyming basket
- **Construction-** wood blocks, foam blocks, large blocks, cups, sticks, tubes, tape, accessories (cars, animals, signs)
- **Social Emotional-** mirrors, feelings chart, books, social problem solving opportunities, sharing, soft materials, rugs, quiet area, dolls
- **Science-** light table, sensory bins, nature, balance, experimentation, tubes and balls, problem solving, prompting thought processes, cause and effect, water, tubes, wheels, cars
- **Math-** collections of materials, numbers, counting, math games, measurement, sorting, ordering, scooping, pouring, magnets, dice, clay
- **Large Motor-** stepping stones, bikes, balance beams, balls, ball pit, step stool, scarves, umbrellas, tunnels, forts, yoga/movement cards, mirrors
- **Art-** provide open ended art experiences and materials
- **Social Studies-** provide diverse materials (books, people, dolls, food boxes, sensory, music), encourage clean up

Created By Laura McFalls,
Early Childhood Specialist
lmcfalls@akronlibrary.org



Possible Play Time Topics/Themes

- Shadows/Lights
- Loose Parts/Beautiful Stuff
- Rain & Rainbows
- Under the Sea
- Mini Makers
- Spark Joy
- Fizz! Pop! Boom!
- Happy Campers
- Funny Valentine
- Fantastical Fun
- Preschoolers Who Code
- Petite Chefs
- Under Construction
- Baby Disco
- Fall Explorers
- Rock On
- Big Play Date
- Teamwork Tuesday
- Sing, Dance, Celebrate and Learn
- Blast Off
- Outdoor Adventure

Why Play is Important

- Creative Thinking Skills
- Scientific Skills
- Early Literacy Skills
- Early Math Skills
- Problem Solving
- Concentration & Focus
- Imaginative Play
- Social & Emotional Skills
- Oral Language
- Motor Skills
- Independence
- Confidence & Self Esteem
- Negotiation Skills
- So on.....



"Children need the freedom and time to play. Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity." ~Kay Redfield Jamison

Why Play in the Library

1. Children learn best through hands-on, open ended, free play experiences.
2. Learn turn taking and other social-emotional skills when playing with others.
3. Encourages parents and other important adults, the opportunity to interact through play (teach and model).
4. Can extend on the story time topic, which develops further understanding.
5. Meets individual needs and special needs, as well as interests of children.
6. Learning through play is developmentally appropriate and meets best practice standards.
7. More opportunity to talk, extending language development.
8. Practice problem solving and negotiation skills.
9. Encourages creative and higher order thinking vs. rote memorization.
10. Opportunity to move freely developing motor skills, dramatic play, imagination....
11. May be the only place children are allowed to cut, use playdough, paint, and play in water.
12. Place to do research.
13. STEM/STEAM/STREAM
14. Both children and adults become comfortable with being in the library, and want to come back.
15. Because it's important, it's the right thing to do, a call to action! It's the right of every child to be able to play. The Library can honor that. We need to support children and their right to explore.

How to Incorporate More Play in the Library

- Offer Play Programs
- Play Before or After Story Times
- Embed Play during Story Time
- Add Toys/Activities in the Stacks or in the Children's Area



"Play is not frivolous. It is not something to fit in after completing all the important stuff. Play the important stuff. Play is a drive, a need, a brain building must-do"~Denita Dinger