



States of Guernsey  
Children and Family  
Community Services

Children's Occupational Therapy

# Fun Ways to Play



## **The Importance of Play**

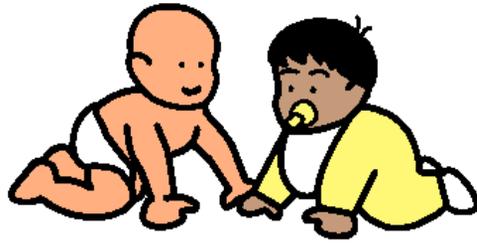
Play is the single most important activity for the under-fives; it is the 'work' of your child. It is how they learn about themselves, the world around them, and their place in it. Play encourages them to be flexible as they adapt to challenges they encounter. Through play, your child develops their physical, learning and social skills.

There are lots of easy ways you can encourage your child to play:

- Turn off the television and ensure there is plenty of time for play throughout the day.
- Take play outside, as well as indoors.
- Leave toys out for them to use over time, if you can. That way the play scene can continue over several days.
- Join in with your child at times, following their lead. Let them decide what you are going to do and how you are going to do it.

Playing with your child should be fun and is a great way to find out what is important to them.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to play and there are not necessarily any results to show at the end. Your child should be able to play in their own way.



## **Have Fun with Tummy time**

All babies need some time playing on their tummies every day, so long as you are supervising them. 'Tummy time' helps them learn about movement and develop the skills to roll over, sit and crawl. It allows babies to move about freely, unconstrained by a car seat or buggy.

Tummy time also develops their visual skills by allowing them to look at the world at eye level (rather than seeing only the ceiling). You can place your baby on their tummy from birth. It's best to start off with a few minutes of tummy time twice a day and build up from there as they get older. If they find this difficult, you can always begin with laying them across your legs or on your chest. Being face-to-face with your baby or placing a mirror or brightly coloured toy in front of them will also help.

Please remember, you should always supervise your baby when they are on their tummy and always lay your baby down to sleep on their back.

## Encourage a Variety of Games, Toys and Experiences

Children learn through their senses. As well as to touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing, the senses also include 'proprioception' (body awareness) and 'vestibular' (balance and movement).

It is important for your child's development that they get lots of opportunities to experience a wide range of sensations.

'Messy' play is a great way to give your child lots of different sensations and it helps them to develop hand and finger coordination. You could try:

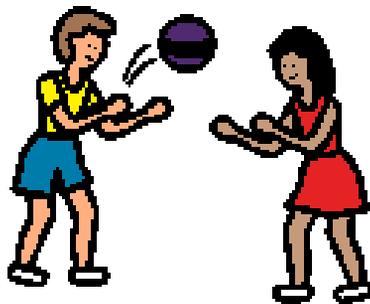
- Playing in water or sand and making bubbles at bath time.
- Playing with yoghurt and jelly – e.g. by hiding objects inside a blob.
- Hiding toys to find in sand, a box of lentils, jelly or shredded paper.
- Playing with shaving foam in a baking tray and adding drops of food colouring.
- Painting and making marks with finger paints.
- Helping with cooking and baking, especially mixing by hand.
- Making and kneading play dough (please see recipe enclosed).
- Playing in 'Gloop' (a mixture of corn flour and water).
- Sticking with glue.



If you your child is hesitant to dip their fingers into messy sensory materials, or even outright hates it, try giving them a tool such as a paintbrush or spoon. This will allow them to engage with the tactile media without actually having to touch it. It also serves as a nice introduction to messy play. Then as your child becomes more comfortable engaging in sensory play with the tool, they can gradually begin to explore the messy “stuff “on their own terms, when they feel ready.

Children need a range of play experiences. As well as activities that develop hand and finger coordination, they need games that let them use their big muscles and develop large movements.

Don't forget to let your child play with items from nature, such as sand, water, shells and pine cones.



## Home

Give your child play food and tea sets and let them play at being a chef or party hostess. Give them a toy broom or vacuum cleaner and let them pretend they're cleaning the house. Or add stuffed toys, dolls, a high chair or play bath and let them role-play being a mummy or daddy.

## Office

Let your child play at being at work. Give them an old keyboard, a toy phone, pens and paper or a handbag. Give them forms from the bank or post office to fill in.

## Shop

Using empty boxes or packages, canvas shopping bags, plastic cards, play money and a till or tin to collect it in, help your child to set up their own shop. They will love treating you as their customer.



## Recipe for Uncooked Play Dough

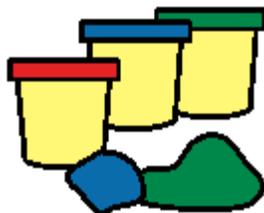
### Ingredients

- 3 cups of flour
- 1/4 cup of salt
- 1 tablespoon of cooking oil
- 1 cup of water
- Food colouring (liquid is best)

(Optional - flavouring, such as peppermint or vanilla to create a scent).

### Method

1. Mix flour and salt together in a large bowl
2. Add water, oil and food colouring (and flavouring if using)
3. Mix it all together - You will have to knead it with your hands at the end
4. If mixture is too stiff, add more water; if it is too sticky, add more flour
5. Store dough in airtight container



## Contact Us

Child Development Service

Children's Occupational Therapy

Team

Le Rondin School and Centre

Rue des Landes

Forest

Guernsey

GY8 0DP

Tel

01481 213600

