

Grow Through Play

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Grow Through Play: Milestones Made Fun

Play is not only fun, but also the natural way children learn and grow! And did you know that age-appropriate play activities can help kids achieve developmental milestones across all domains?! It's true! Here's a breakdown of play activities by age range:

IT'S PLAY TIME!

Infants (0-1 year old)

- Sensory exploration through rattles, soft toys with different textures, teething toys, gentle massages, light-up toys, mobiles, activity mats.
- Tummy time encourages head lifting, pushing up, and crawling readiness.
- Offering toys just out of reach, encouraging them to grab your finger.
- Cause and effect toys like noise makers, soft blocks to knock over, push buttons that light up.
- Nursery rhymes, simple songs, board books with bright pictures.
- Face to face interaction, making silly expressions, cooing and talking in a high-pitched "baby voice."



Toddlers (1-3 years old)

Physical: (Gross and Fine Motor)

- Kicking/throwing balls, dance parties, pushing and pulling toys, building with large blocks, simple puzzles, playdough.

Cognitive:

- Nursery rhymes, sing-alongs, simple sorting and matching games.

Communication and Language:

- Asking "What's this?" to encourage naming objects around them and in board books, engage in conversation by responding to their babbling.

Social Emotional:

- "Peek-a-boo" game, simple books that explore feelings, pretend play with dolls/stuffed animals/dress-up options.



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Preschoolers (3-5 years old)

Physical: (Gross and Fine Motor)

- Hopscotch, riding tricycles/bicycles, "Red Light, Green Light" game, building with smaller blocks, drawing, making jewelry with beads.

Cognitive:

- Puzzles with more pieces, board, card, or memory games, exploring the outdoors.

Communication and Language:

- "I Spy" game, scavenger hunts, cooking together, interactive books.

Social Emotional:

- Label and discuss feelings of characters in stories, arrange playdates to practice sharing and conflict resolution, dramatic play with multiple roles.

School-Age (6-12 years)

Physical: (Gross and Fine Motor)

- Team/individual sports, bike riding, dancing, making jewelry.

Cognitive:

- Complex puzzles, brain teasers, strategy board games, science experiments, playing musical instruments.

Communication and Language:

- Chapter books, writing stories/letters, regularly engage in open and honest conversations.

Social Emotional:

- Emotion charades, role-playing, reading stories about characters experiencing many emotions.

Teens (13-18 years old)

Physical: (Gross and Fine Motor)

- Team/individual sports, bike riding, dancing, hiking, martial arts, jewelry/sculpture making.

Cognitive:

- Complex puzzles and board games, explore and research topics of interest, creative expression through art forms.

Communication and Language:

- Discuss current events, exchange personal stories, call a friend or family member to practice active listening, play charades.

Social Emotional:

- Journaling, gratitude exercises, identity art projects, engaging in community service.

Life Skills and Independence:

- Cook nutritious snacks and meals, learn to drive, budget weekly expenses, plan a trip.

