

Parent Topics

Decoding Play: Why Variety Is Key To Raising Successful Kids



Providing a variety of toys inspires kids to play in many different ways, which helps them build a full arsenal of crucial developmental skills.

(NAPSA)—Have you ever watched a child during playtime switch between building blocks, putting together a puzzle, and talking with their stuffed animals? Through each of these unique types of play, kids are building strong developmental skills that will no doubt come in handy later in life.

According to experts at **The Genius of Play**, a national movement to bring more play into kids' lives, children learn through both structured and unstructured play, with different types of play honing various abilities and behaviors. Just as kids need to study a variety of school subjects to stimulate distinct parts of the brain, engaging in diverse types of play will create a more well-rounded individual, ready to tackle life with all the skills they have learned early on.

To ensure that your child is getting a balanced mix of play, check out these toy examples and their developmental benefits:

- **Games & Puzzles Build Mental Agility.** Brainteasers, puzzles and strategy-based games strengthen critical thinking skills by facilitating a child's ability to strategize and focus. They can also sharpen their planning skills and attention spans.
- **Dolls, Action Figures and Playsets Teach**

Emotional Intelligence. Kids are not yet able to express their emotions as adults would. These toys let kids show fear, frustration, anger or aggression, among other emotions, in a situation they can control.

- **Outdoor Toys Encourage a Physically Active Lifestyle.** Active play is critical to proper physical development. Through outdoor activities like bike and scooter riding, kids can hone their coordination, balance, gross motor skills and even fine motor skills.
- **Arts & Crafts Nurture Creative Thinkers.** Get kids thinking outside the box with activities like arts & crafts. Creative play provides children the freedom to explore new possibilities while coming up with unique ideas and solutions.
- **Dress-up/Role-Playing Is a Rehearsal for Future Star Communicators.** Role-play gives children a chance to use words they've heard adults and other kids use—helping to improve their vocabulary.

More expert advice and everyday play ideas based on a child's age or developmental area are available at **TheGeniusofPlay.org**. Follow @GeniusOfPlay on Facebook and Instagram.