

Pointers For Parents

Rough And Tumble Play Can Be Good, Clean Fun

(NAPSA)—Most parents have seen it before—their kids begin playing so hard that it looks as if they are becoming aggressive. However, this kind of intense physical activity can actually be good for a child's physical, social and emotional development.

Called Rough and Tumble play by the experts, this activity is a positive and necessary form of play for children, especially boys, says Rae Pica, a children's physical activity specialist.

"Rough and Tumble play gives boys an opportunity to learn their power and boundaries, develop competence in their motor skills and imitate their role models," Pica said.

Rough and Tumble play can be perplexing for parents, who have to gauge when it turns to a form of aggression. The difference lies in the intent: During appropriate Rough and Tumble play, there is less risk of injury than with combative play because there's an understanding between the players.

For boys, the closer the friendship, the more intense the Rough and Tumble play can be, so children should collaborate and agree on limits.

Parents can help reinforce those limits by following these tips:

1. Set some basic rules, such as "no touching of faces" and "no shoes."
2. Let children be in charge of making some of the rules and enforcing them.
3. Intervene only when the play turns combative; if parents intervene too often or too soon, children won't learn conflict resolution on their own.
4. Not sure if it's playing or fighting? Ask the participants if they see the difference and if everyone agrees.
5. Parents should also engage in Rough and Tumble play with their



Soft toys that children can wrestle with can be a good way to redirect aggression.

children—whether it's wrestling with Dad or "tickle fights" with Mom. The physical contact helps kids build relationships.

If play turns combative, parents can redirect the children's energy by inviting them to race outside as fast and for as long as they can, as well as provide pillows or soft toys such as Mattel's new Brawlin' Buddies with which they can wrestle. "Brawlin' Buddies offer kids a toy to actively engage with alone or with other children to foster physical connection," said Pica.

Modeled after WWE Superstars such as John Cena, Sheamus and Rey Mysterio, the 16-inch plush figures are built tough to take a pounding that will trigger one of 10 signature phrases recorded by these athletic stars. Kids can flip, toss or throw down the figures, go one on one or form a tag team Superstar battle.

Toys such as Brawlin' Buddies encourage children to safely re-create action-packed story lines and experiment with speed, force, cause and effect, balance and spatial relationships. "The open-ended, heroic play lets children create their own stories while also fostering the kind of active play that kids need," said Pica. "Rough and Tumble play, when directed properly, can be a very positive experience for kids—and their parents."