Using Play for Growing Smart Children:

THINGS YOU CAN DO AND TOYS YOU CAN MAKE

Conrad N. Hilton FOUNDATION

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INTRODUCTION

Playing is important to children. It is the way they practice growing up. Toys are the tools children use in play. Toys can be purchased, or they may be as simple as kitchen pan lids or paper sack puppets. Toys do not need to be expensive or purchased. Anything children can play with safely can be a toy. In fact, you may have watched children open presents and noticed that they spent more time playing with the ribbon and wrapping than with the toy inside.

Toys can be categorized by the stimulation and development appropriate to each age group. Toys can also be categorized according to the area of development that it stimulates. However, many toys can be used to develop multiple areas of development; for example, a doll can be used for social development/make-believe and dressing a doll can benefit fine motor development. Here are examples of toys and the key domain of development that they stimulate:

- Toys for physical or muscle development such as wagons, bikes, boxes, puzzles, blocks, brooms, and shovels.
- Toys for sensory development (touch, sight, sound, taste, smell) such as water toys, musical instruments, bubbles, play dough, and sand toys.
- Toys for make-believe and social development such as dolls, dress-up clothes, cars, trucks, games, and books.
- Toys for creative and intellectual development such as clay, crayons, paints, books, paper, and scissors.

Purpose of the manual

This manual aims at helping caregivers at home or at early childhood development (ECD) centres to understand the relationship between toys and the child's developmental milestones. The manual also guides the caregiver in stimulating children with age appropriate activities and in making toys with locally available materials.

Importance of educational toys

Children should be in an environment that enhances creativity and allows for healthy physical and mental development. Children need to have direct experience with the world in order to make sense of and learn about it. Toys can help children learn how to talk and to increase mobility. Toys can help children learn what things are and how they work. Through play and toys, children learn about people and the world.

Here is an example of how toys help children to interact and understand the world around them in a meaningful way. Infants may accidentally let go of a rattle and notice that it falls to the floor. When it is returned, they may deliberately drop it to see if it falls again. They will enjoy the “drop the toy” game for as long as you are willing to play. Soon everything in their grasp becomes a toy for dropping — bottles, spoons, balls, and even bowls of food. They practice this “experiment,” playing this game with everything they touch, and through it they learn about gravity and cause and effect relationships.

Toys can help children develop all of the developmental domains including motor skills, language and social and emotional development. Children exercise gross motor and fine motor muscles with toys. Toys also invite children to create and use their imaginations for social and emotional development. Toys can be the basis for friendships as children learn to share, negotiate, and compete with each other.

As children master their toys — as they finish a puzzle, ride a bike, or blow a bubble — they develop a sense of self-confidence and often finish a task by saying, “I can do this. Look at me." Children want to show what they can do with their toys; it is important to recognize their accomplishments. When an adult pays attention to the child’s play, the child feels worthwhile and gains self-confidence and self-esteem.

Creating a safe playing environment

Before play begins, caregivers should make sure the environment is safe for children, offering them areas for free exploration. Remove breakable items and small choking hazards; put cleaning and other toxic fluids out of reach; cover electric wires and outlets (or tape them up); and cover hard edges or corners of furniture. In addition to removing harmful materials, caregivers should sweep the floor and make the area sanitary.

Outdoor play space should have ample room for climbing, running, swinging, etc. and should have separate spaces for younger and older aged children. Outdoor play space should have shade, water for drinking, sturdy equipment and adult supervision. The caregiver should make sure that all children can be seen and not hidden by shrubbery, etc. The caregiver should make sure that play spaces are close to available medical facilities and ideally, caregivers should be knowledgeable in basic first aid care.

Safe toys for young children are well-made (with no sharp parts or splinters and do not pinch); painted with nontoxic, lead-free paint; shatter-proof; and easily cleaned. It is important to remember that typical wear and tear can result in a once safe toy becoming hazardous. Adults should check toys frequently to make sure they are in good condition.

0-6 MONTHS

Introduction

Babies in this age group are exploring the world through all of their senses. Babies like to look at people — following them with their eyes. Typically, they prefer faces, lights, and bright colours and patterns. Babies play with their hands and feet, turn their heads towards noise or light, and are interested in brightly coloured toys with multiple textures. Newborns learn through their senses (touching, seeing, hearing, tasting). Play with a child by looking at them, singing, talking cuddling or making facial expressions.

Infants are interested in looking at toys, touching them with their hands and mouth, fitting pieces of things together and making sense of their world. Toys should be washable, non-breakable, and have no sharp edges that might cut or scratch. They should be large enough so they cannot be swallowed and they should have no small attached pieces (like eyes on a stuffed animal or bells on a shaker) that could be pulled off and swallowed. At this age, babies put everything into their mouths as part of exploring their worlds. Any toys they are given must be safe when used in this way.

Choose toys for them to look at, feel, chew on, hold, and drop. Appropriate infants toys include: rattles, squeak toys, blocks, crib mobiles, stacking toys and rings, push-pull toys, stuffed animals or dolls, nested boxes or cups, books with rhymes, simple picture books, noise making toys, small soft toys for throwing, strings of beads (large, plastic), and music-making toys.

SINGING SONGS AND POEMS

Instructions:

- Songs should be short and repetitive.
- The tone should be soft.

Benefits:

Singing songs to children and reading to them helps them develop better language skills. Even though infants do not understand the songs, singing to children prepares the child's ear, voice and brain for language.

PEEK-A-BOO

Instructions:

- Place your hands over your eyes (facing your baby) and then remove them saying "peek-a-boo" and repeat.

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Benefits:

This teaches the infant an important skill called "object permanence;" that is people or objects can still exist even if they are not visible. This is a significant milestone as the baby shows signs that he or she is advancing in cognitive developments both in memory and his ability to think abstractly while growing.

TOUCHING THE BABY GENTLY

Instructions:

- Gently touch baby's hands, fingers, and toes and rub her forehead or back. This can take place when bathing the baby, rocking her to sleep, breastfeeding, etc.
- Sing to the baby while doing this to make it more relaxing.

Benefits:

Such activity helps to develop sense of trust, attachment with the child.

EYE CONTACT AND SMILE/TALK TO THE CHILD

Instructions:

- Hold the baby facing you or have the baby lying down in front of you and speak to her with animated face and eye contact.
- Smile at the baby and make silly sounds. You may also sing to the baby gently.

Extension of the activity:

- As infant's speech (cooing and babbling sounds) begin to develop continue talking to the child calling her name, other people names, identify objects and things in the surroundings, etc.
- When the infant says simple words or sentences, repeat them with correction when necessary.
- Read or tell simple stories and sing to the infant.

Benefit:

- Providing time to make eye contact encourages baby's initial social skills. The activity encourages the baby to smile and feel secure. This activity can also be used to develop child's cognitive skills through encouraging the child to recognize people close to him and different objects.

MOBILE

Materials:
Hanger, string, scissors, colourful objects. Important: objects must be firmly secured to the mobile. Avoid any small or sharp objects.

Instructions:

- Get a hanger, string, scissors, and colourful objects (not too small; choking hazard) from around the house.
- Cut the strings to different lengths, some short and some long.
- Tie the cut pieces of string on the hanger's base.
- On each of the different pieces of string, tie your objects.
- Hang the hanger over the infant (but out of reach) and let them try to grasp the objects.

Benefits:
Mobiles provide visual stimulation for the child as he follows it with his eyes. Mobiles can also help to develop motor skills as the child becomes able to reach for the colourful shapes and objects. Science says that kids who are exposed to more visually appealing objects at a young age are more likely to make more connections in their brain.

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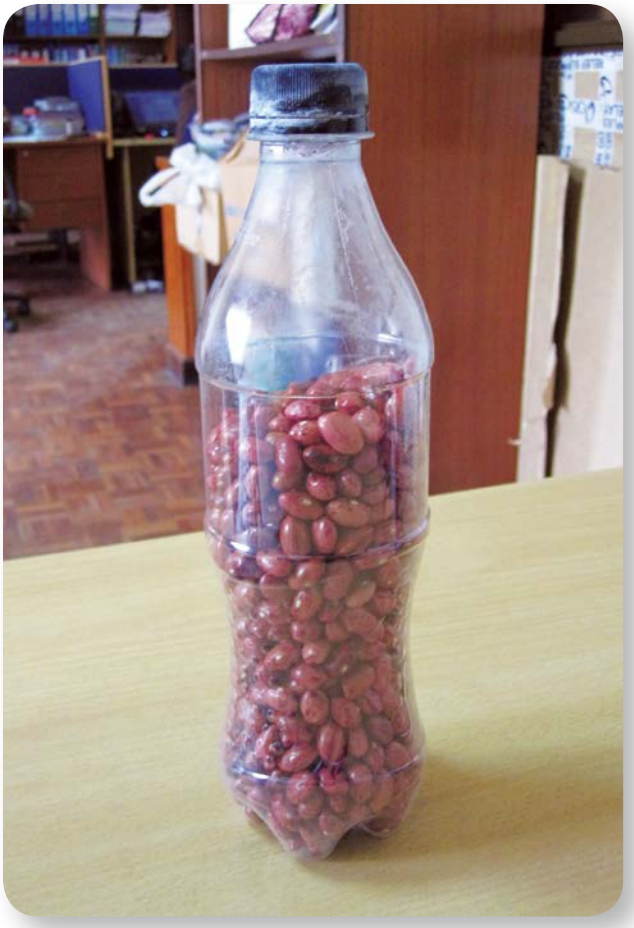
RATTLE

Materials:
Bottle, beans, bottle tops, tape; optional: wire/string

Instructions:

- Get a bottle, beans or little pebbles (stones), and tape (optional).
- Put beans or pebbles in the bottle and cap it.
- Tape or fully cover the top to ensure that the rocks/pebbles don't come out.
- Optional: Wrap the bottle with colourful paper.
- Alternative: Rattles can also be made using bottle tops looped to a wire. Other noisy objects such as keys can also be used as a rattle.



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Benefits:
Rattles promote curiosity and provide both visual and auditory sense stimulation. Babies like the sound they can make and they can figure out how to manipulate or change that sound. By holding the rattles, children develop gross motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

6-12 MONTHS

Introduction

Older babies are movers — typically they go from rolling over and sitting, to scooting, bouncing, creeping, pulling themselves up, and standing. Babies in this age range understand their own names and other common words, can identify body parts, find hidden objects, and put things in and out of containers. The first year of life centres on play through movement, listening to and making sounds, mimicking adults' facial expressions and gestures, and manipulating objects. Simple items to hold, touch, taste, and explore are their favourite playthings and interaction with caregivers is their favourite past time.

SOFT BALLS

Materials:
A bright-coloured piece of cloth, needle, thread and small pieces of sponge

Instructions:

- Cut out 6 square pieces of cloth.
- Sew the four together to make an open cube.
- Sew the remaining two pieces on the top and bottom.
- Make sure to leave a hole on a corner to fill up with stuffing.
- Close hole.
- Can also be made with old rags tied with string.

Benefits:
Children love balls! Balls are beneficial too — as young children roll and grasp soft balls, they improve their motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

UPPER AND LOWER PHOTOS: ELLYSIA OVERTON FOR CRS

BABY DOLLS OR STUFFED RABBITS

Materials:
Bright coloured piece of cloth, needle, thread and coloured pens for marking the eyes

Instructions:

- Draw and cut cloth into a doll or rabbit.
- Sew around the edges of the shape and fill the inside with soft materials like cloth or cotton.
- Mark mouth and eyes with the colour pen.

Benefits:
Baby or rabbit dolls offer children lots of opportunities for developing their cognitive, fine motor, and self-help skills. Kids often find it easier to practice these skills on someone (or something) else before they can apply them to themselves. The baby doll is a toy that can really help open up and expand a child's pretend play. Imaginary and interactive play with the dolls offers children the opportunities to use and practice their speech and language skills. Soft dolls also provide opportunity for children to touch and feel different textures.

UPPER AND LOWER PHOTOS: BETTY CHIDUO/CRS

BANGING ON PANS

Materials:
Pans and spoons

Instructions:

- Place the metal pans upside down.
- Bang with the spoons.

Benefits:
Children like to bang on pots and pans to discover the sound it makes and the ways in which they can manipulate or change the sound that is produced. This activity develops fine and gross motor skills as they have to grasp a stick or spoon and raise their arm to bang on the pot.

EGG CARTON SORTER

Materials:
Egg carton, glue, items of various textures

Instructions:

- Get an empty egg carton, different textured materials and glue.
- Glue the different textured items into the bottom of the egg carton in the egg slots.
- Let your child touch and discover the new feelings.

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Benefits:
The egg carton sorter provides children with items to stimulate their sense of touch. The children will be able to feel the different objects and discover new textures. This can also help them find a sense of curiosity and discovery. It will also enhance their fine motor skills, having to touch and grasp slightly.

12-24 MONTHS

Introduction

As children become toddlers, they will also explore and experiment with their world, including the limits you set for them. This is the time to start teaching good health habits, including how to wash hands often. In this stage the child begins to show stubborn behavior, simultaneously wanting independence as well as the caregivers' presence and attention. They also begin to make-believe play and to recognize the names of familiar people, body parts and objects.

One and two year old children like to sort things and try movement tasks like rolling a ball over and over. They still love to play with caregivers, and they like playing next to other children and imitating them. At 15 months they tend to say several single words.

At two years the child seeks and enjoys other children and begins to use two to four word sentences. Always on the go, two-year olds can walk steadily and even climb stairs. They like to experiment — but need adults to keep them safe.

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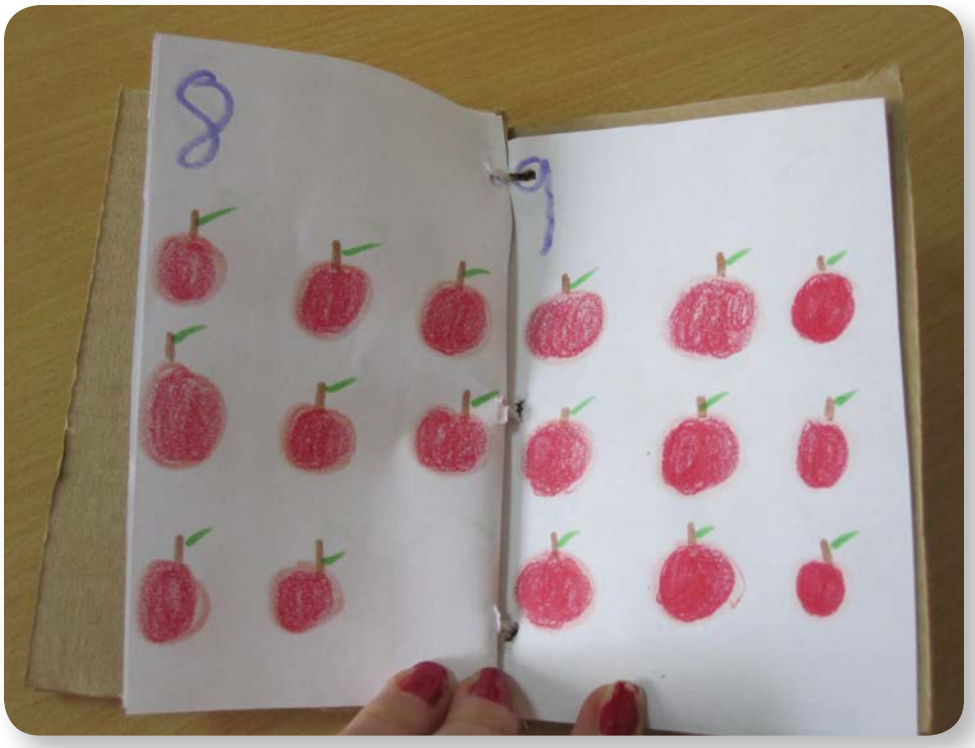

READING WITH YOUR CHILD

Materials:
Story books

Instructions:

- To make your own storybooks, glue pictures of animals, everyday objects, or drawings onto pieces of thick cardboard, and bind the pages with glue or yarn.
- For a more interactive experience, glue pictures on fabric or papers of different textures.
- Read out stories to the baby or let the baby point at the drawings on the book.

Benefits:
Reading together is a great time for the child to bond with the caregiver. Books also help with early literacy, diction, pronunciation, language and vocabulary.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Materials:
Wooden blocks, foam or plastic blocks, flat and smooth surface.

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Instructions:

- Make blocks of the same size either wooden, foam or plastic.
- Place them on top of each other to make the desired structures.

Benefits:
Blocks of wood, foam, or plastic can be used in many different ways. They can be used to help children grasp concepts of numbers (more or less), size (big or small), colours, and patterns. Blocks develop fine motor skills as children build towers and stimulate children's cognitive skills and imagination as they experiment with making things.

DRAWING/COLOURING

Materials:
Pencils or coloured rocks or charcoal, cartons or papers, small sticks can also be used for drawing in the sand or dirt.

Instructions:
Give the child materials and demonstrate how to draw or colour.

Benefits:
Young children have difficulty expressing with words, so drawing gives them a way to communicate. Drawing helps the brain grow and develop the areas of observation. Drawing also encourages imagination, hand-eye coordination; and if they use both hands to draw, it helps develop synchronization.

SHAPE SORTERS

Materials:
Small box, glue, knife/scissors/ razor blade

Instructions:

- Cut shapes of any size into the sides of a small box.
- Optional: colour or paint the box and the shapes.
- Have the child put the shapes into their correct slots on the cube; help the child remove them from the box to repeat the activity.

Benefits:
A shape sorter toy challenges children because they need to use logical thinking, problem solving, and cognitive skills to figure out where each shape goes. The shape sorter also helps them develop fine motor skills for placing and removing the shapes from the box. Older children will be able to name the shapes they are sorting.

BETTY CHIDUO/CRS

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SHAPES ON PEGS

Materials:

Piece of timber, 3 wooden pegs, nails, cardboard, paints/colours.

Instructions:

- Get a wide piece of timber and three wooden pegs (should not be sharp or rough).
- Nail the pegs on the board.
- Cut the cardboard in different shapes i.e., square, triangle and circle.
- Poke a hole in the middle of each shape.
- Colour each shape differently.
- Have children stack according to the different shapes.

Benefits:

A peg board helps improve cognitive skills and fine motor skills as children put shapes onto the right peg.

24-36 MONTHS

Introduction

Toddlers are rapidly learning language and have some sense of danger. They love exercising gross motor skills through physical activities like jumping, climbing, rolling, running, etc. and also exercising fine motor skills by moving and playing with small objects. Toddlers also really enjoy music which is good for language development, socialization, soothing, reinforcing rituals, and increasing cooperation.

Toys for two to three year olds:

- Things for solving problems — wood puzzles (with 4 to 12 pieces), blocks that snap together, objects to sort (by size, shape, colour, smell), and things with hooks, buttons, buckles, and snaps
- Things for pretending and building — blocks, smaller (and sturdy) transportation toys, construction sets, child-sized furniture (kitchen sets, chairs, play food), dress-up clothes, dolls with accessories, puppets, and sand and water play toys
- Things to enhance creativity — large non-toxic, washable crayons and markers, large paintbrushes and finger paint, large paper for drawing and painting, coloured construction paper, toddler-sized scissors with blunt tips, chalkboard and large chalk, and rhythm instruments
- Picture books with more details than books for younger children
- Things for using their large and small muscles — large and small balls for kicking and throwing, safe ride-on equipment, tunnels, low climbers with soft material underneath, and pounding and hammering toys

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PLAY DOUGH

Materials:

Clay/soil/sand and water/cooking oil

Instructions:

- Mix together clay, soil and water.
- Knead this mixture; the play mixture should be completely smooth.
- If too dry add more water; if too wet add more clay.
- Keep sealed in plastic bag when not using so it can be reused.
- Optional: To keep it smelling nice, add a pinch of mint flavouring or spice. Non-toxic colouring can also be added.

Benefits:

Molding and playing with play dough helps your child be more creative and develop two-handed skills.

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TELEPHONE CANS

Materials:

Cans, heavy string, scissors and tin punch tool

Instructions:

- Get two cans, string, and scissors.
- Put two holes in the middle of the bottom of the can.
- Secure the string through the two holes in both of the different cans.
- Tie the ends in the can.
- Stand apart from your child and talk to each other through the cans.

Benefits:

Playing with telephone cans helps children develop language and social skills as they practice communication.

PUPPETS

Materials:
Old sock, coloured pen or buttons for marking the facial features

Instructions:

- Get an old sock, needle, thread and buttons.
- On the toe of the sock, mark the facial features with a coloured pen or buttons. The buttons should be large and securely attached to minimize choking risk.
- Put the sock on your hand.
- When you open up your hand, colour in the open section for the mouth. Sewing yarn or any other material on the head of the puppet is optional for the hair.

Benefits:
With a puppet on their hands, children are free to take on a new role and act out their feelings. Puppets help the child develop creativity, imagination and stories. Playing with puppets can improve the child's oral skills by speaking aloud and by trying to find the right words to express their feelings or their story.

UPPER AND LOWER PHOTOS: ELLYSIA OVERTON FOR CRS

CARDBOARD AND SHAPE PUZZLES

Cardboard puzzle materials:
Piece of cardboard, markers/crayons, charcoal, coloured rocks, scissors

Instructions:

- Get a piece of cardboard, scissors, pen, and markers.
- Draw a picture on the cardboard.
- Trace puzzle pieces onto the cardboard.
- Cut these out and have your child put them together.

Shape puzzle materials:
Flat wood and another piece of wood to cut shapes, paints

Instructions:

- Draw different shapes on top of flat wood.
- Use sharp knife to cut shapes drawn.
- Use separate piece of wood to draw and cut same types of shapes (with same measurements).
- Paint and cut shapes with different colours.

UPPER AND LOWER PHOTOS: ELLYSIA OVERTON FOR CRS

Benefits:
A recent study has shown that children who play with puzzles develop better spatial skills than ones that do not. Puzzles require children to plan, focus, and learn patience and logical thinking. Other studies have shown that doing puzzles increase overall brain function as well. Fine motor skills are also used because the children have to manipulate the puzzle pieces in order for them to fit in their correct spots.

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MUSIC TOY (GUITAR)

Materials:

Used box, scissors, rubber bands, pen/pencil

Instructions:

- Get a shoe box or cardboard box with a lid on it.
- Cut an oval shaped hole in the lid in the middle of the box quite long and wide.
- Wrap rubber bands around the box lengthwise making sure they go over the hole.
- Place a pen or pencil at the top of the hole under the rubber bands.
- Strum the strings.

Benefits:

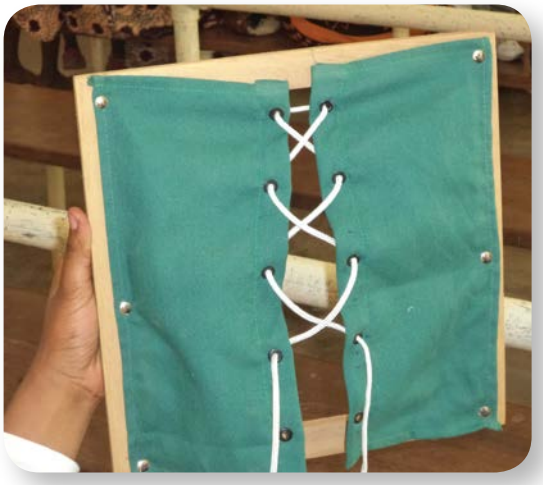
Musical toys can help encourage curiosity and improve fine motor skills. Some studies have even shown that musical training or playing a musical instrument can increase math scores, social developments and improve cognitive skills.

MANIPULATION BOARD

Materials:
Piece of wood or sturdy cardboard, colourful piece of cloth, buttons or shoe lace, cotton and pins

Instructions:

- Cut four pieces of wood with same length and join them together to make a square shape.
- Then cut two pieces of cloth with the same measurements as the square shape.
- For button-hole manipulation board, attach cloth with button holes onto one side of the board and attach cloth with buttons onto the opposing side of the board. Place the cloth pieces so that they are able to be joined together as one would join the two sides of a shirt together.
- For lacing manipulation board, attach cloth with lacing holes on two opposing sides of the board. Place the cloth pieces so that they are able to be laced together.
- Stick the pieces of cloth on top of the square shape using pins.
- Encourage a child to put the shoe lace through the holes or fasten the buttons.



UPPER AND LOWER PHOTOS: BETTY CHIDUO/CRS

Benefits:
Children at this stage need to learn how to manipulate their fingers as a way of improving their fine motor skills. They can also be encouraged to count the number of holes or buttons.

RAFAEL KINGAI FOR CRS

PLAY HOUSE

Materials:
Big used boxes, string, pins, scissors and paint

Instructions:

- Draw and make holes for windows and doors.
- Use another flat box to make a roof. Put on top of the box and secure with pins.
- Paint with appropriate colours to make it attractive.
- Optional: It is recommended to make a house that is big enough to accommodate household equipment such as chairs and cooking utensils as well as people for children to use it effectively.

Benefits:
Children at this stage enjoy and learn a lot from pretend play. They observe and learn from adults. Language and social skills improve through such opportunities.

3-5 YEARS

Introduction

Children in the age range of three to five years have a longer attention span, talk a lot, and ask a lot of questions. They like to experiment with things and with their emerging physical skills. They like to play with friends and are better than toddlers at taking turns and sharing. Three-to-five year old children love imaginary play and they love to sing and dance. They love to make up stories and act them out with other children. They love to hear stories told or read by an older child or adult. They love to draw and play with clay and craft materials. For children in this age range, "play" is a more developmentally appropriate channel of learning than formally structured learning. Five to six year old children can begin structured learning of reading, writing and number skills, but play is the foundation for discovery, brain development and a life-long love of learning.

Good toys for 3 to 5 year olds

- Things for solving problems — puzzles (with 12 to 20+ pieces), blocks that snap together
- Things for creating patterns — collections of small objects to sort by length, width, height, shape, colour, smell, quantity, and other features; e.g., plastic bottle caps, plastic bowls and lids, keys, shells, small coloured blocks
- Things for pretending and building — blocks for building complex structures, transportation toys, construction sets, child-sized furniture ("apartment" sets, play food), dress-up clothes, dolls with accessories, puppets and simple puppet theatres, and sand and water play toys
- Things to create with — crayons and markers, paintbrushes and finger-paint, paper for drawing and painting, coloured construction paper, preschool-sized scissors, chalk, modeling clay and play dough, modeling tools, paste, cloth scraps or other materials for collage
- Things to make music with — rhythm instruments and keyboards, kayamba, marimba, etc

- Picture books with even more words and more detailed pictures than toddler books
- Things for using their large and small muscles — large and small balls for kicking and throwing/catching, swings, ride-on equipment including tricycles and wagons, tunnels, wheelbarrows, plastic bats and balls, plastic bowling pins, targets and things to throw at them
- If a child has access to a computer: programs that are interactive (the child can do something) and that children can understand (the software uses graphics and spoken instruction, not just print), children can control the software's pace and path, and children have opportunities to explore a variety of concepts on several levels

SKIPPING ROPE

Materials:
Ropes of appropriate length for children

Instructions:
You should find a rope that reaches nearly up to your shoulders when it's folded in half. This will give you enough room to comfortably jump over it, but not so much that you trip over the rope.

Benefits:
Skipping rope helps in physical fitness and gross motor skills. Children also acquire social and emotional skills by interacting with others.

HULA HOOP

Materials:
Bendable sticks, wire, old bicycle tire

Instructions:

- Bend the sticks into circle shape and tie the ends.
- Spin the hoop around the waist.
- Hold horizontally touching the small of the back.
- As the body is turned in one direction the hoop is spinning the other direction.
- Shifting weight and the rocking motion keeps the hula hoop spinning.

Benefits:
Hula hooping improves children's self esteem because it is always a skill that a child can master. It also helps their physical fitness, strengthens muscles, tones the body and enhances coordination skills.

UPPER AND LOWER PHOTOS:
FIDELIS MUTHONI/CRS

BEADING

Materials:

Beans, maize, used straws, strings and blunt wires

Instructions:

- Soak the beans and maize.
- Make holes on the beans and the maize.
- Pass the string through the holes.
- Tie both ends of the string.
- Clean the straws.
- Cut them into equal small pieces.
- Pass the string through them and tie ends of the strings.

Benefits:

Beading improves children cognitive development skills as they form patterns with the beads. It also improves their fine motor skills.

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BETTY CHIDUO/CRS

PICTURE COLLAGE

Materials:

Pen, paper, glue, different coloured paper and marker pen

Instructions:

- Draw the outline of an object on white paper.
- Cut coloured paper in small pieces.
- Apply glue inside the outline.
- Glue the small pieces of paper on the picture. Use different colours to indicate different details.

Optional:

Use black maker pen to draw eyes

Benefits:

This age group enjoys the opportunity to be creative through making different items and this activity gives children the opportunity to use their own creative mind to make what they want. Praise children on what they do even when it is not perfect. Let children talk about their creative work as a means of encouraging language development.

HOPSCOTCH

Materials:
Flat safe surface, stick/chalk/charcoal and stone/pebble

Instructions:

- Draw squares large enough to fit two feet and to make sure a stone thrown into the square will not bounce out too easily.
- Throw the stone/pebble so that it lands inside the square without touching the border or going out.
- Child hops to the square where the stone has landed by placing one foot in each square and being careful not to have more than one foot on the ground at a time.
- After reaching the square with the stone, the child picks it up and aims for another square and repeats hopping in each square until reaching the end of the hopscotch squares.
- Always keep your foot inside the square as you hop. If you step on a line, hop on the wrong square or step out of the square you lose.

Benefits:
Children learn important social skills such as how to follow instructions, wait their turn and be a good winner or loser. Children's motor skills, balance and agility are explored. If counting is included with the hopscotch game, numeracy skills can be improved.

GODLOVE YONA FOR CRS

DODGE BALL, "KATI"

Materials:
Large soft ball

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Instructions:

- Have some members of the team forming an outside boundary and others inside the boundary.
- Ensure there is adequate distance between the inside and the outside.
- Members forming the outside boundary will try to hit the inside members with the dodge ball.
- Once hit with the dodge ball you are eliminated from the game.

Benefits:
The game develops agility and hand-eye coordination and enhances physical fitness. Physical fitness in dodge ball includes developing arm strength, improving flexibility and reflexes.

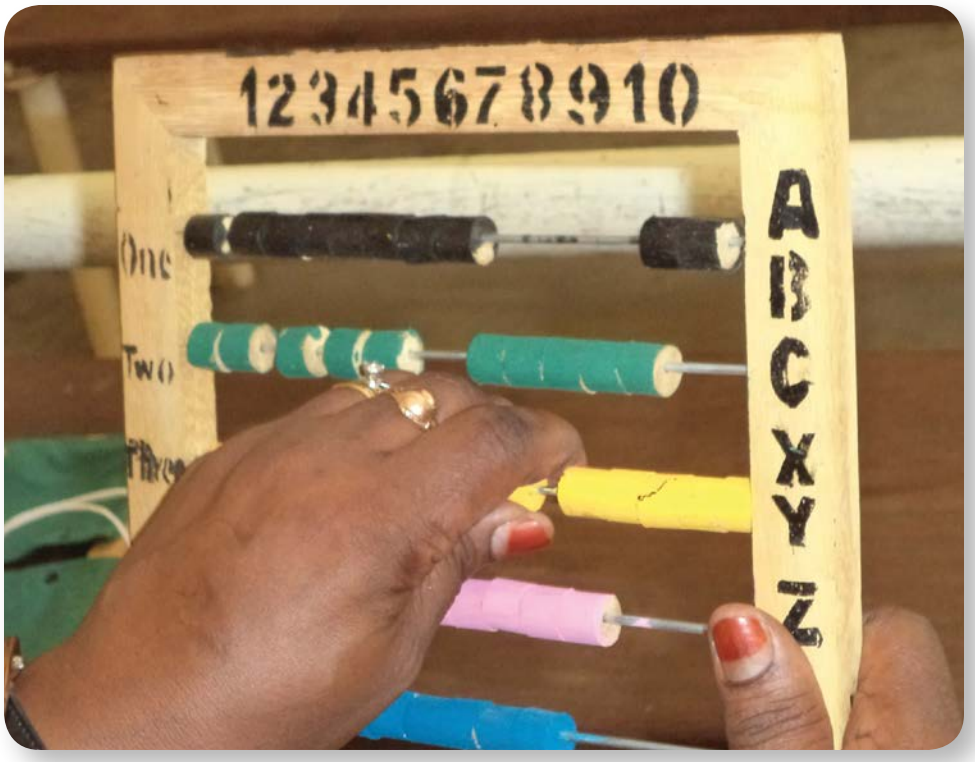
HIDE-AND-SEEK

Instructions:

- Recruit a group of players and set the rules of hiding places.
- Identify the seeker and home base.
- The seeker closes his or her eyes and counts loudly as the others hide.
- The seeker attempts to locate each one of the group members and once found must outrun each other to the home base.
- The player who gets found first will become the seeker in the next round of the game.

Benefits:
Hide and seek encourages interaction, improves children's mental and cognitive development and encourages children to keep secrets.

GODLOVE YONA FOR CRS



COUNTING ABACUS

Materials needed:

Wooden frame and soft wood for cutting round shapes, paints, thin wire and nails

Instructions:

- Cut soft wood into round shapes (counters) and paint them with different colours.
- Make a hole in the middle of each counter and add ten counters on each line to reach fifty or hundred.
- Join them together on the frame using nails. Draw numbers on top of the frame.

Benefits:

Children at this age begin to understand number and colour concepts. Counting, naming colours and comparing using the abacus will strengthen their numeracy skills.

SAND CORNER

Materials needed:
Sand and various tins

Instructions:

- Put sand/soil in a safe place.
- Place tins of various sizes and shapes in sand corner.

Benefits:
The sandpit is a great opportunity for social, emotional and language development. While playing in the sand, children use communication skills to talk about what they are doing and how to do things together. They share equipment and learn to get on with each other. As they role play and work together, this also provides an opportunity for storytelling and imaginary play.

SACK RACE

Materials needed:
Large and sturdy sacks

Instructions:

- Find a clean sack and a clear space that is flat and free of debris.
- The sack should be waist level of the child.
- Pull the sack over both feet and hold about waist to mid-chest.
- Hop towards the finish line and the first participant to reach the line becomes the winner.

Benefits:
Sack racing improves eye-leg coordination; it also helps in acquiring gross motor skills.

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TIRE ROLLING OR TIRE CRAWLING

Materials needed:
For tire rolling, a used vehicle/bike tire is needed. For tire crawling, 5-8 painted tires are needed

Instructions:

- In a safe space, child rolls the balanced tire with hands or a stick.
- To create a space for tire crawling, dig holes on the ground and partially cover the tires with soil or cement so they are secure.

Benefits:
Through tire rolling, children develop their hand-eye coordination. By creating spaces for children to crawl on or around tires, children are able to develop their motor skills. This activity also encourages social skills as they take turns crawling under the tires.

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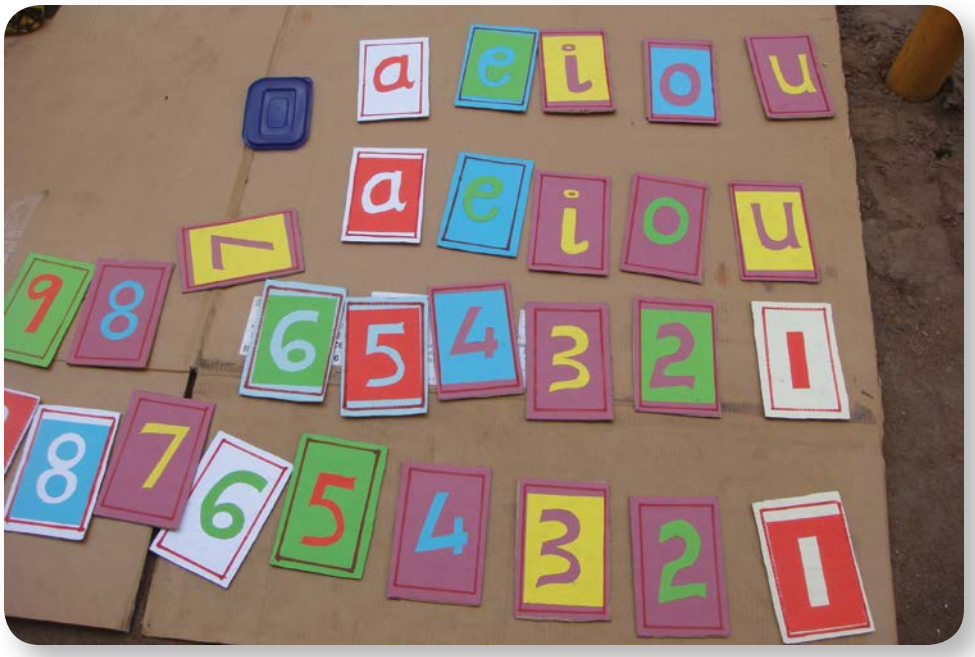
EMMANUEL MASSAWE/CRS



NUMBER/LETTER CARDS

Materials:

Manila cards of different colours, papers of different colours, pencil, scissors and glue

Instructions:

- Write a number or letter on the paper, colour and cut them.
- Glue the letters or numbers onto the manila card squares.

Benefits:

Number and letter recognition is crucial in cognitive development. Playing games with number or letter cards allows children to learn these crucial skills through play. Number and letter cards can be used to play games such as matching cards, find missing number/letter etc.

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