



**Roscommon County
Childcare
Committee CLG**

*Supporting Parent and Toddler Groups in
County Roscommon*

PLAY

Resource Pack

Defining Play

Play is essential for children to grow, learn and develop. The aim of this piece is to define play and the different aspects of play for parents. By outlining play and providing realistic examples of how to implement appropriate activities, parents will have a stronger understanding of the developmental benefits of play and how to encourage children to engage in these activities from home.

Why Play? - Aistear

- Learning and development will take place
- Children will lead their own learning based on what interests them Children will use resources
- Available to them (usually materials that are different and pique their interest)

Encouraging children to Play

- Give children time and the space to play, letting them lead the interaction
- Have safe materials that catch children's attention.
- Pay attention to their interests
- Make an effort to join in the play, without taking the lead
- Encourage children to talk during their activities, use vocabulary that is appropriate to the activity and provide them with examples



Developmental Benefits of Play

Children learn, develop and practice their skills through play. The skills acquired through play include motor skills, language and socialization skills, personal awareness and self-regulation, emotional regulation and creativity.

Physical benefits:

- Awareness of body parts and body movement
- Balance and coordination of bodily movements
- Refinement of fine and gross motor skills
- Exercises in general

Intellectual benefits:

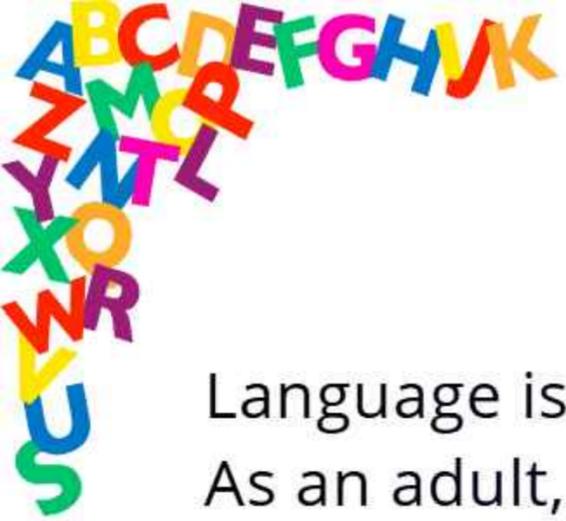
- Language skills
- Awareness for the world around them
- Concept of imagination

Emotional benefits:

- Address regulation Problem solving
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Fun and enjoyment
- Exposure to new situations

Social benefits:

- Concept of sharing
- Social interaction skills
- Cooperation and working as part of a team
- Fair play and rules



Language



Language is an important part of any play activity.

As an adult, it is important to lead by example. Use the appropriate language to the activity and encourage children to use their words to describe the activity and what they are doing

Have fun saying and acting out nursery rhymes together, for example *Ring-a-ring a Rosy, I'm a Little Teapot, 5 Fat Sausages, London Bridge is Falling Down, 10 Green Bottles, 10 in the Bed, Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.*





ACTIVITIES

Back Garden Nature Hunt



Playing outdoors develops children's capacity for creativity, symbolic play, problem solving and cognitive development & overall awareness of the world around them



- Benefits of outdoor activities include:
- helping children to acquire gross motor skills
 - eye-hand coordination
 - encouraging exercise and movement



Can you identify any of the bugs, flowers and other objects on the spring scavenger check list?

Copy or print the checklist and head outside. All you need is your checklist (on the next page)





Sound



Butterfly



Sunshine



Cobweb

Spider



Trees/leaves



Bettle



Flower



Clouds/Rain



Ladybug



Bird/Song



Centipedes



This is just an example of a few things you could have on your checklist: You can make it more challenging or less challenging depending on the age range of the children and their developmental milestones.





Bead Stacks

This manipulative play activity supports children's fine motor development and dexterity.

Included this week is a recipe for non toxic, home made play dough.

4 Ingredient Play Dough

- 2 Cups Flour
- 1 Cup Salt
- 2 tblsp Olive oil
- 2 Cups Water
- Optional: food colouring of choice
- Mix until it forms a ball

Materials

- 4 balls of playdough
- 4 straws/chopsticks/ bamboo skewers
- Beads (Cheerios work well also & are edible)



The Activity

- Place the straws firmly into each playdough ball
- Demonstrate the action of 'threading' the straw through the bead and explain how the beads stack on each other.
- Encourage children to repeat your actions and use the vocabulary. (threading, stacking, hands, fingers)



Sensory Bags

What you need

- Zip lock bags
- Choose between:
- water
 - Shaving foam
 - Jelly
- Food Dye of your choice
 - Glitter/foam shapes/dry rice/ figures (animals or small world figures)



Benefits

- Fine motor skills (finger strengthening, dexterity, in hand manipulation etc)
- Bilateral coordination skills (using both hands together to mold and shape)
- Visual motor skills such as eye-hand coordination.



Sensory Digging

This activity promotes mindfulness and focus in young children. Encouraging the development of fine motor skills, children can use their hands to find and grasp the objects. Playing with textures like foam or suds is a calming sensory experience for children. It's really fun too!

MATERIALS

- shaving foam/ whipped cream (taste safe)/ suds (using soap)
- food coloring or a blob of poster paint
- small objects of interest that children can 'dig' for (eg. Lego, stringing beads, bath toys)
- a large bowl
- spoon for mixing
- a smock or shirt to protect clothes



Implementing the activity

- Taking a large bowl or basin, fill it with cream/ foam/ suds
- Add the chosen color, encourage children to mix the ingredients and watch how it all comes together.
- Ask open ended questions, encourage children to describe what they feel/ smell/ see once the color is mixed, start adding the objects.

Encourage children to keep track of what they are finding, Ask if they can find a specific object like 'find the red block' where is the blue bead...



Recipe and a Rhyme



Cooking with your Little Ones

Why not plan an activity around some baking or cooking. Here is an example of how you can engage your toddler in a different type of activity that is sure to pique their interest. A rhyme to support phonological awareness and sound association skills, and a recipe to encourage them to engage their motor skills by sorting, and mixing the ingredients...

Recipe and Method

MIX A PANCAKE,
STIR A PANCAKE,
POP IT IN THE
PAN,
FRY A PANCAKE,
TOSS A
PANCAKE,
CATCH IT IF YOU
CAN

Say your rhyme
while you mix your
batter!

- 100g flour (of your choice; rice, gluten free etc.)
- 2 eggs
- 300g milk (of your choice)
- put four in a bowl
- add milk
- add eggs to milk and flour mixture
- WHISK WHISK WHISK!
- pour a little in the pan
- flip if you can!
- when they turn brown, let them cool and then gobble them down

Be careful with hot
oils and frying pans

Healthy, Tasty

- toppings
 - strawberries
 - blueberries
 - banana slices
 - honey
 - lemon
- why not make a face
with you fruit and
show how you're
feeling?





Paint and Peel Hearts



Now more than ever, it is important to look after children's Wellbeing and nurture their ability to Think and Explore the world around them.

This open ended activity is perfect for encouraging children to explore materials, colors and forms in art while expressing their individuality.

Paint and peel hearts encourage children to explore and express their individuality and invites them to experiment with different colors. They can create something totally unique.

Art is a form of expression for children and is an opportunity to be creative while representing their ideas.

How to Begin

Some preparation and help is required beforehand. Children may need guidance in cutting their heart stencil. -Cut a heart shape in the card.

-Decide on the stencil being used (the hollowed stencil, for painting inside of, or the centre stencil, for painting around)

- Secure the stencil of choice to the sheet of paper using tape. -Using your sponge, brush or even fingers, paint around or inside your stencil using the poster paints. -

Leave to dry for a few hours.

-Peel and reveal the heart shaped collage of unique colors and forms !

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Per child:

1X Card

1X Sheet of Paper

1X Sponge or Paint brush

Tape

Poster Paints of Choice



Toddler Yoga and Stretching

Yoga helps children manage their anxiety and improves their emotional regulation. Yoga is also known to boost children's self-esteem and encourages children to become more aware of their own bodies. This is an activity that parents can get involved in too! Practice some mindfulness and enhance your toddlers concentration, while encouraging their overall development.



A fantastic outdoor activity for you and your toddler!

This activity does not have to be over complicated...

it can be as simple as going outside and stretching your legs with your little one.

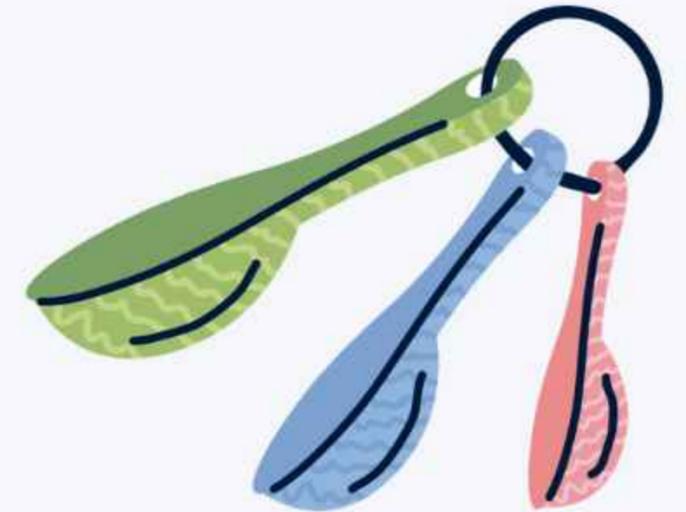
Encouraging your child is the most important part... use phrases like 'touch the sky', 'stand on your tippytoes'

There is no need for fancy equipment, just head outside and and share a mindful moment together.





DIY RECIPES





Here are a few playdough recipes to try...



Extend your playdough making activities into other activities surrounding manipulative play

Recipe 1.

1. **1 part conditioner.**
2. **2 parts corn flour/corn starch.**
3. **Food colouring (optional) That's it! ...**
4. **Pour in the corn flour.**
5. **Give the mixture a good stir.**
6. **Step 4 (optional) Add a few drops of food colouring.**
7. **Mix well using your hands. ...**

Recipe 2.

2 ingredient play dough!

1. **part conditioner.**
2. **2 parts corn flour/corn starch.**

Recipe 3.

You need:

1. **cups of plain flour (all purpose)**
2. **2 tablespoons oil (baby oil and coconut oil)**
3. **1/2 cup salt. (food coloring optional)**





Kinetic/ Moon Sand Recipes...



Moon sand is something different, but still supports all of the benefits associated with sensory and manipulative play.

You need:

1. 8 cups of flour or baby powder
2. 1 cup of oil (vegetable, olive or coconut oil for taste safe options... or baby oil)

You can also add color using poster paint or food dye. Add your color to the oil before mixing with the powder or flour. The color will distribute easier and be more vibrant!



Taste safe options include flour and food oils





Paint Ice Cubes

Ice Paints are quickly and easily prepared



You need:

1. Food dye or poster paints
2. Mix the different colors (a very small amount goes a long way) with water.
3. Pour the mixtures into a ice tray and freeze

Once the paints are frozen solid, there is a lovely sensory activity to be enjoyed. Simply encourage children to explore with the ice on some paper. Talk to your toddler about the different temperatures of the ice and how it melts when they hold it.

Encourage your little one to use vocabulary like ice, melting, frozen... Demonstrate the vocabulary and encourage them to repeat your words





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