



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **The importance of Play (LOVE)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

The importance of play

Objectives

- Promote the value of play in children’s development
- Encourage playtime for parents to conduct with their children
- Encourage playful spaces where children are free to explore and discover
- Parents are aware of the importance and value of play when choosing an ECD programme/ centre
- Emphasize that children learn through play

Introduction

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child's life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent. All it takes is your love, play and talk.

As the world moves on we tend to forget that playtime is essential for children. But this is now under threat as more parents and also crèches forget about this and see it as time consuming. Play is actually a right of the child. We need to ensure that children have lots of time to play because children learn best through play. It is not an activity for your child to do alone while the parent or caregiver is busy with something else. Play is important for your child's development and while it is play, it should be taken seriously.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>We've mentioned play before on this show. Why do we need to talk about it in more detail?</i></p>	<p>Because play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.</p> <p>When children are asked about what they think is important in their lives, playing and friends is usually at the top of the list.</p> <p>Play is so important that to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child</p>
<p>2. <i>How do we define what 'playing' actually means?</i></p>	<p>Play is all about exploration, imagination, wonder. Play – real play – is about spontaneity, discovery, and creativity. Kids have an innate sense of play and desire to play. Adults 'grow out of it', or become</p>

<p>3. <i>Why is play important?</i></p>	<p>inhibited and so will not play.</p> <p>Play can be described as: 'what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way, and for their own reasons.' Play is about more than just 'letting off steam'; it can be quiet and contemplative, as well as active and boisterous.</p> <p>Play is essential to the healthy development of children and young people – not just their physical development, but their social and cognitive development too.</p> <p>Play – the old-fashioned kind – is a lifelong skill that builds and satisfies curiosity, broadens the way we think, reduces stress, and boosts energy levels. Having time and space to play gives children the opportunity to meet and socialise with their friends, keeps them physically active, and gives the freedom to choose what they want to do.</p> <p>Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. Play allows children to create and explore a world they can master, conquering their fears while practicing adult roles, sometimes in conjunction with other</p>
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<p>4. <i>What are the benefits for children in playing?</i></p>	<p>children or adult caregivers.</p> <p>Research shows that play has many benefits for children, families and the wider community, as well as improving health and quality of life. Recent research suggests that children's access to good play can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase their self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-respect • allow them to increase their confidence through developing new skills • promote their imagination, independence and creativity • offer opportunities for children of all abilities and backgrounds to play together • provide opportunities for developing social skills and learning • build resilience through risk taking and challenge, problem solving, and dealing with new and novel situations • provide opportunities to learn about their environment and the wider community.
<p>5. <i>Does play assist with children's development?</i></p>	<p>Yes! Play helps with communication by providing opportunities for children to</p>

<p>6. <i>Is their research that backs this up?</i></p>	<p>develop their speech and language abilities and also to practice listening. It can be invigorating to watch your son dress up as a superhero and save their toys from the evil emperor. It helps with relationships by promoting social interaction and social skills and competence and boosts cognitive development. Imaginative play and role-playing are particularly powerful kinds of play that help the brain develop in more functional and positive ways. Children who engage in these kinds of play have a more sophisticated level of interaction with others and with their environment than those who do not.</p> <p>Research shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children whose dads played with them were found to have greater levels of imagination and cognitive ability compared to kids whose dads were non-players.• Children whose mums played with them experienced more secure attachment to their mums, and enjoyed more positive development when compared to children whose mums were unavailable for play.• Older children who played with their
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<p>7. <i>Why is play sometimes not seen as important?</i></p>	<p>parents were also more engaged in other activities, experienced positive school engagement, had positive mental health, stronger friendship networks, and enjoyed greater family closeness compared with older children without playful parents.</p> <p>Play' is sometimes compared with 'work' and characterised as a type of activity which is essentially unimportant, trivial and lacking in any serious purpose. As such, it is seen as something that children do because they are immature, and as something they will grow out of as they become adults. Many people think that when children are playing, they are not learning. The opposite is actually true – children are learning, often in the best way – while they are playing. The value of play is increasingly recognised, by researchers, for adults as well as children, as the evidence now shows how it improves intellectual achievement and emotional well-being.</p>
<p>8. <i>What do children learn through play?</i></p>	<p>Don't underestimate the value of play. Children learn and develop: cognitive skills – like math and problem</p>

11. How can parents make time for play?

weather to stop them. Just dress them appropriately. Look for places where your child can play outside, even if you don't have a backyard.

Think about local parks or even on the footpath outside home if the street is generally free of traffic and children can be seen and supervised.

Play is the main way that babies and toddlers learn about the world. With your help, it's also a wonderful way to support their language development. As a parent, you are your child's best playmate so try to spend time every day playing together.

Everyone needs to play - even adults! But in early childhood, it's much more important to learn how to play for the fun of it. Most children from 2 to 6 years of age do not care about who wins, the final score, or even the rules for the game.

As a parent, understanding the simplicity of early childhood play and facilitating the joy of playing are important for child development.

Remember that for children to play freely is important, so you don't need to be trying to teach them something while they are playing.

12. How does one play with babies?

There is simply no better way for your baby to learn about the world he inhabits and to develop strong motor skills than through play. And as his parent, your approach to his learning through play will have an enormous impact on his early development. It's essential that your baby be given limitless opportunities to learn to play in a variety of settings so that he can practice the skills that will allow him to conquer the world later.

Newborns love physical play, especially when you gently tickle their face or count their fingers and toes.

Make sure your baby has lots of time on the floor – on a mat – with things to play and explore.

When your baby gets a little older and stronger, offer her lots of toys or things that are safe to go into her mouth, and talk about the objects for her.

Make lots of play sounds to go with what's happening, like “brmm, brmm” as you push a car along. That way, your child will hear different speech sounds and learn that listening to voices is fun.

Your baby will love hearing the same little rhymes and stories, and playing games like peek-a-boo, over and over again.

<p><i>13. How can caregivers ensure play is part of their child's life?</i></p>	<p>You don't need lots of toys to play – your baby can play with safe, simple things around the house.</p> <p>As your baby gets older, don't try to teach him anything during play. He will learn best if he chooses what to play and you follow his lead.</p> <p>Don't let your baby spend too much time in baby seats and carriers as they will restrict his movement and force him to be more passive in his interaction with his environment.</p> <p>Children under the age of 2 years don't need screen time (TV, computer etc) – be careful this can become a convenient babysitter that does little to enrich your baby's playtime experience.</p> <p>Apart from ensuring that children have ample time to play every day, parents also need to be thoughtful about the kind of environments (schools or ECD centres) that they send their young children to. Play is important at all ages, but particularly in the early years. More and more ECD centres and pre-schools are under pressure to do academic work with children, thereby limiting the time available for play. Therefore when selecting a pre-school</p>
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<p><i>14. Can you suggest some ideas for parents to encourage play in their homes?</i></p>	<p>environment for your child, make sure that there is a strong recognition – not just verbally but in the time spent during the day on this – for children to play.</p> <p>Remember that encouraging play, is not about having lots of toys and resources. Research has shown that the most effective toys are the basic ones – like wooden blocks for building, balls, crayons and paper for drawing and a soft toy. Encourage your child to construct things, to play with other children, and to pretend (playing at house or hospitals). We will discuss more about pretend play at the next show.</p> <p>However the most important thing a parent can do to encourage play is to play and be playful themselves! Make time to explore your child’s world with them and to play and learn together.</p>

<p>Conclusion</p>
<p>It’s worth saying again that play, is not about having lots of toys and resources. It is about time and ensuring that your child has lots of time to play. Play is a human right of the child. Remember it is important that you are available to play along!</p>

Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Understand the value of play for their child's development
- Encourage play
- Create lots of opportunities for play and play with their children
- Be aware of the importance and value of play when choosing an ECD programme/ centre
- Make homes playful spaces where children are free to explore and discover
- Know that children learn through play