



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**  
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**  
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**  
Program Topic : **Fun Play Ideas (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:**

**Fun play ideas for you and your little one!**

**Objectives:**

- To consolidate the concept that play is very important for children’s happiness, wellbeing, development and learning.
- To remind adults that play is a child’s right and that they have a responsibility to ensure children have opportunity to play.
- To emphasize that play is also fun and a wonderful way to engage with your child.
- To give adults lots of ideas of fun play activities to do with their children in different settings.

- To encourage them to play with their children.

### Introduction

The last couple of weeks we've been learning a lot about the importance of play for children, not only for their enjoyment and well-being, but also for their brain development. We have learned that children learn best through play. We've also learned that play is a child's right, and that we as parents have a duty and responsibility to ensure our children have opportunity, time and materials for many different types of play. Last week, we looked at some of these different types of play and what learning is taking place during this play.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>In the last two weeks we have learned some of the serious purpose behind children's play. In fact, we've learned such a lot about the importance of play for children's development, that we might be forgiven if we think that play is so serious that it's no longer fun! Is this right?</i></p>	<p>Of course not! While the purpose of play for children's development is very important, that's the wonderful thing about play – it is and should be fun! Children love to play and once you get involved in your child's play, it's fun for you too! And it's a wonderful way for you to build a strong, happy and fulfilling relationship with your little one. There's a saying that goes: A family that plays together stays together!</p>
<p>2. <i>Sometimes it's hard for grownups to think of play ideas and things to do with their children. So today we're going to find lots of fun play ideas for you and your little one.</i></p>	<p>That's a wonderful idea! Where shall we start? I know – today's Mums and Dads often work or are busy doing home chores. Let's look at some play ideas for the kitchen. For a crawling baby or toddler, the kitchen is a wonderful place to explore – exciting doors and drawers to open and close (watch little fingers!). Cupboards can be full of plastic containers that can be</p>

explored, stacked one on top of the other or fitted one inside the other; a pot and a wooden spoon can become a drum; a gem squash or an orange can become a ball to crawl after. Just make sure that your baby or toddler is always safe; not able to touch anything hot or pull pots or kettles on top of them and there are no sharp objects within reach. Your 3 to 5 year old will love to feel that they are helping, and this builds their self-esteem. Setting the table helps to develop maths concepts as they work out how many plates, forks and spoons to put out for each person. You could put out a whole lot of potatoes on the ground & let your child sort them into sizes, or see how many fit into the pot; or how many need to be peeled for the family to have one each, or how many she can carry. Once you and your child start to get ideas, let your imagination flow!

3. *We often bring our groceries or veggies home in a cardboard box. How could these be used for play?*

Cardboard boxes, especially apple boxes are the most wonderful toys! They can become anything the child imagines! A cardboard box can become a car, a stove, a table or a cot for a doll. Put 4 or 5 boxes in a row and it becomes a train. Arrange 4 or 5 boxes in a circle or square and it becomes a house, stacked one on top of another and you have a tower! A toddler just learning to walk can push the box along or, if you attach a piece of string, pull it behind him. Once you add dress up clothes (any unusual or adult items) or other props such as little cars,

<p>4. <i>Do you have any other ideas for imaginative fantasy play that do not cost lots of money?</i></p>	<p>dolls, or yoghurt cups as a tea set, wonderful imaginative play will take place. Join in your child's play and let him or her lead and direct the play with his own ideas and imagination. If you go to the back of a supermarket or store, they usually give away the packing boxes for free.</p> <p>Absolutely! Once parents start to use their imaginations, almost anything can become a toy. The only criteria are that it's safe, not sharp, not poisonous and can't be swallowed! My children love to play house under a table with sheets, blankets or tablecloths draped over to reach the ground. It makes a safe, cosy little nook for all sorts of imaginative play. It can be a house for children to play out the roles of mum and dad as they care for children (dolls), make supper, talk on the telephone, drink tea and any number of the things us grownups do everyday. It can be a fort or safe space from things that frighten children; it can become a shop or a hospital or a train station or a garage. The only limit is the child's imagination. And if you add props – dressing up clothes such as old hats, scarves, shirts, shoes or other toys or household items, your child will develop a vivid imagination. Do join in if your child invites you, even if you have to crawl under the table. Your precious little one will just love it!</p>
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5. *What are some fun ideas for us to play outside?*

I'm glad you've remembered that it's important for children to play outside everyday if possible. Children are full of energy and need space and time to run, jump, climb and explore. If you don't have much outside space at home, do take your child to a park or open space to play often. Balls are not expensive, or could even be made by stuffing a stocking or sock with old rags or foam. Playing ball with your little one is great fun and develops lots of skills such as kicking, throwing, catching, rolling, hitting a target or hitting with a bat. You can make skittles out of large plastic bottles and see how many can be knocked over with the ball. Babies love to crawl after a ball and if your knees are strong, join in this chase. Your baby will shriek with laughter! Another game babies love is 'peek a boo' when you hide your face behind a cushion or cloth and peek out at him. He will chuckle with delight! This game turns into hide and seek as your baby learns to walk. She will love to come and find you and then to hide herself. As he develops language, you can hide objects and then give language clues to help him find the object. This helps your little one to learn the important words for position such as behind, under, in front, next to, above and others. And then of course there are chasing and catching games that children all over the world play. These are good exercise for you too!

<p>6. <i>And what about sand play?</i></p>	<p>If you have space in your yard, sand play will provide your children with hours of fun. They love to feel the sand and to fill and empty containers. Any containers will do. You don't need to spend money buying fancy buckets and spades. A spade or scoop can be made by cutting a 2 litre strong plastic bottle, and you can use the neck part of the bottle as a funnel. If you punch holes in the bottom of another 2 litre bottle, you have a sieve. Your child will be learning about the effects of gravity as he pours sand, as well as important maths words like full, empty, half full, heavy, light, bigger, smaller etc. add water and you have even more fun in store, even if it's very messy! Your little one will love to float boats and learn about what sinks and what floats. Shells are great to experiment with. Here we have the start of scientific thinking, as your child predicts what might happen and then tries it out. Just remember to protect your sand from animals using it to wee or poo. Keep the sand covered when not in use and disinfect it every week by sprinkling coarse sand over it.</p>
<p>7. <i>Often when I travel to the rural areas I see children making wonderful things out of clay from the river. This could be a fun activity to do with children.</i></p>	<p>Yes, children love to explore and create with clay. It is possible to buy clay, if you're not from a rural area, or playdough is easy enough to make. Does everyone have a paper and pen handy? If so – I'll give you the recipe: 1 ½ cups of flour; 1 cup of salt; ½ cup of water; 2 tablespoons of oil and a few drops of food colouring. Mix it all together and knead it into a</p>

<p>8. <i>I know one of the things parents find hard is keeping young children entertained while traveling by car, taxi or bus. Do you have some fun ideas here?</i></p>	<p>firm dough and it will keep for weeks in a plastic bag if stored in a cool place. Children love to pound, squeeze, break apart, mould and roll into snakes or worms. And all this is really good to develop the little muscles in their hands and fingers. The 4 to 5 year old child will start to make the clay or dough into little figures, people or items. You can add a plastic bottle to roll or blunt knives, forks, biscuit cutters or even a comb to make patterns. It's best to do this in the kitchen or verandah, so that dough doesn't get stuck in the carpet!</p> <p>This is where sound and language games can be great fun. For your baby, you can keep him occupied by having new things for him to look at, handle, drop or put into containers. And you can mimic her sounds and play sound games with her. As your little one develops language, a whole new world opens up and masses of games become possible. You can look for different colours of cars and count how many you see. For an older child you could do this with specific types of cars or vehicles. Rhymes and songs are always a great favourite and you can have great fun making up new ones about family members or other interests the child has. Giving each person time to tell or make up a story makes travel time pass quickly and then of course for the children over 4 there's 'I spy'. For those that don't know this game, it goes like this: 'I spy with my little eye, something</p>
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<p>9. <i>Those are some great ideas to have fun while travelling and make the time pass quickly. What about other games in the home that quieten children down and help them to concentrate and think?</i></p>	<p>beginning with, and you add the beginning sound of an object such as 't'. Your child has to look around and find an object that begins with that sound – e.g. tree. For a younger child you can get them to copy sequences of sounds, for example ba, ba, da, da, ta; ba, ba, da, da, ta. This helps to develop their listening skills. you could also clap the syllables of names or objects, for example 'Non-hlan-hla' has 3 claps; 'Tem-ba' has only 2.</p> <p>As your toddler becomes more able to sit and play for a couple of minutes, you can start playing simple games or doing puzzles. It's easy to make simple jigsaw puzzles by finding a clear and simple picture that will appeal to your child and sticking it onto a piece of cardboard. An old cereal box is ideal for this. For a toddler just cut the puzzle in 2 or 3 pieces and let him put the pieces together again. As your child develops and gets the idea of matching pieces, you can cut the picture into more pieces and make it more difficult. Do start collecting bottle tops and lids of all colours, shapes and sizes from any containers. There are masses of games you can play with these. They can be sorted into different colours, shapes and sizes. They can be sequenced according to size from biggest to smallest. You can make up patterns of sequenced colours for the child to copy or continue – for example: red, red, blue, blue, green; red, red, blue, blue, green. They can be</p>
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<p>10. <i>Lots of families have a set of playing cards lying around. What games can you play with little children?</i></p>	<p>stacked according to size one on top of another. Your little one will be learning many words and concepts that will help his brain develop and do well in school later. For your older child, if you add a dice, you can have great fun with number and maths. The child must throw the dice and find that number of blue lids, or square lids or big lids. Let your imagination flow!</p> <p>Yes. If you have a pack of playing cards, there's any number of games you can play that the whole family will enjoy. From about the age of two, little ones can get the idea of SNAP. Select about 5 sets of 2 matching cards. Give 1 set to your child and you take the other set. Each of you takes a turn to turn over one card and place it on the table face up. If the cards are the same, the first person to shout SNAP collects both piles of cards. As the child gets older, or there are more players, you can increase the number of cards. Focus on the fun and not the winning! Your child will be learning how to take turns, share and follow the rules of the game. Memory game is a great way for children to learn to observe closely and remember. Once again, for a very young child, don't have more than 5 sets of card pairs. Place each one face down on the table. Each person gets a turn to turn over two cards. If they match, she gets to keep them. If not, turn them back to face down in the same position and you have to remember where they were for your next turn!</p>
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## Conclusion

So what we've learned today that the only limit to the fun activities you can play with your children is their imagination and yours! And the more you grow the imagination – yours or your child's, the more it grows! Find out from your family and friends the things they enjoyed as children and try them out with your little ones. Every culture has wonderful indigenous games that are passed from generation to generation. What games were your favourite as a child? What are the games popular with children in your culture? Let's get everyone playing! One of the most famous people in the world's history is Albert Einstein. He once said, 'We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing!'

## Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Understand that play is very important for children's happiness, wellbeing, development and learning.
- Remember that play is a child's right and that they have a responsibility to ensure children have opportunity to play.
- Recognise that play is also fun and a wonderful way to engage with children.
- Gain lots of ideas of fun play activities to do with their children in different settings.
- Feel motivated to play with their children.