

PARENT'S PAGE—TODAY'S TOPIC IS PLAY

ENCOURAGING PLAY APPROPRIATE FOR ALL CULTURES

Children's play practices are often reflective of the values and beliefs of their culture. This can influence the amount children play, they types of play they engage in, who they play with, the roles they believe are acceptable, the objects they use during play and the meaning of their play activities (Frost et al., 2012). Thus, it is important to be sensitive to the diverse play practices of children from different cultures. Parents can do this by first reflecting on how their own cultural background affects their beliefs about play Next, they should learn about the cultural background of the children they engage with and remain open to beliefs and views different from their own (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002). Parents should also ensure that the toys and materials they provide to children are reflective of their social and ethnic backgrounds (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002). However, this should not include making assumptions or following stereotypes (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002).





HOW TO SHOW SENSITIVTY TO A CHILD'S GENDER IN PLAY

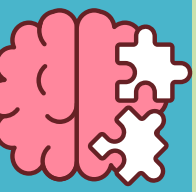
It has long been recognized that the play of boy and girls is remarkably different. While it is likely that some of difference in play interest is purely biological, some of the difference is likely the result of the social environment (Frost et al., 2012). This is important because the ways boy and girls play and they toys they engage with can provide very different opportunities in the skills promote (Coyle & Liben, 2018). Thus, it is important for parents to not label toys as 'boy toys' or 'girl toys' or encourage children to play in certain ways depending on their gender (Coyle & Liben, 2018). Additionally, it is important to ensure that regardless of gender, children have opportunities to practice a variety of skills.





DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES SHOULDN'T HINDER PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

In order to promote play among children with developmental differences, parents must first become aware of each child's unique abilities and challenges (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002). Next, parents should ensure that the environment is accessible and the materials offered to each child can be adapted to their abilities (Frost et al., 2012). It can be helpful for parents to model appropriate play behaviors and facilitate play activities at times (Frost et al., 2012). However, it is also important for parents to allow children to engage in free play and to encourage all play behaviors (Frost et al., 2012).



PLAY ENVIRONMENTS MATTER



The environments where children play have the ability to indirectly affect development through the opportunities they provide (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002). Thus, parents should ensure they expose their children to places and materials that provide appropriate skill building opportunities. For instance, parents should ensure that their children are exposed to a variety of stimuli in their environment including clay, sand, mud, puzzles, blocks, musical instruments, and pretend play objects as these each help build appropriate developmental skills (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002). Additionally, parents should ensure that children are able to play in outdoor environments that allow space to run, dig, climb, and build (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002).



RESEARCH

In a study by Moon-Seo et al. (2024), results showed that mothers and fathers have different beliefs on the importance of play for learning and development. For instance, mothers were more likely to view play as a tool for learning and believe that play supports children's development of self-regulation (Moon-Seo et al., 2024). Fathers, on the other hand, were found to believe more in the importance of physical play (Moon-Seo et al., 2024).. However, fathers were found to value play for it impact on social development (Moon-Seo et al., 2024). Understanding these beliefs is crucial because it affects the play opportunities families provide and thus the skills children develop.





REFERENCES

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