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## The Power of PLAY!

By helping your child to get active, you help their body to develop, you help them to learn and to feel safe, and you show them they are loved.

### Why is play so important?

- **Play builds early reading and language skills.** During play, children practice new sounds, use new words, and learn storytelling by using their imagination.
- **Playing with others helps your child to learn social skills** that will help him or her relate to others—learning to take turns, follow rules, and collaborate.
- **Play allows children to learn how things work.** Repetitive play lets children master new skills!
- **Play helps with your child's physical development.** Increased coordination, fine and gross motor skills and muscle strength are all benefits of play.
- **Play gives children choices.** When children choose from a number of toys or activities, they are able to express themselves.
- **Play makes children smarter!** Interacting with toys (rather than a screen) helps children to learn so much more. *Turn off the TV and the educational phone apps!*

## Keeping Play Safe

1. **Block** your child from dangerous items and areas. Use baby gates to block stairs and fireplaces, cover outlets using plugs, use child locks on cabinets and door knobs, and pad sharp corners.
2. **Move** toxic or dangerous items out of your child's reach. Stash electrical cords and cords from window blinds away from children who like to explore. Anchor heavy furniture to the wall to avoid accidents from pulling or climbing.
3. **Stay alert** to your child's activities and needs. The best preventative measure for keeping your child safe is proper supervision!
4. **Avoid** dangerous substances and items in your child's play area. This may include cleaning supplies, medication, choking hazards, or power tools.
5. **Teach** your child about safety and danger, using words like "Ouch" or "hot", and redirect by offering an alternative toy to play with.

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## Save the Date: Holiday Breakfast

**When: Friday, December 8th, 9:00am-11:00pm**  
**Where: Easterseals' West Allis Office**  
**What: Breakfast with Santa and other fun surprises!**  
**More Details to come soon!**

\*\*For current Easterseals Birth to Three families only.\*\*



# Get Involved: Play with your Child!

You make a difference in how much your child learns through play.

## Join in the Fun!

You are your child's favorite play partner.

- You might become the driver of a dump truck, the veterinarian who checks a dog who is sick, or the doctor who checks a baby.

See what your child is trying to figure out.

Let your child guide the play.

- Think about all the things your child is learning, such as sinking and floating when he/she drops different objects into the bathtub.

## Provide support!

Show your child that he/she is important.

- Perhaps your child needs you to lift her/him up to touch an interesting object; stand behind your child to help him/her make it up the stairs of the slide; provide more blocks to make a taller tower.

Present new challenges!

Your child is ready.

- When your child is learning to crawl, move a desired object a little farther away so he/she can experience the power and joy of movement.

"Children need the freedom and time to play. Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity."  
- K.R. Jamison

Experts recommend that toddlers (12-36 months) get:

- At least 30 minutes daily of structured physical activity
- At least 1 hour of free play each day.

## Ideas for Play with your Child

### Playtime for Babies

0-12 months

**Tummy Time**— Spending time on his/her belly helps your baby develop body strength.

**Peek-a-Boo**—Try hiding behind your hands, a diaper, or a onesie as you dress your baby.

**Sing and Dance**—Listen to different kinds of music and dance in different ways to see what your baby likes the best.

**Read to your Baby**— Children, even babies, love to have stories read to them. Seeing pictures and words is key for development!

### Movers & Shakers

12-24 months

**Running, Climbing, and Action Games**—Go to the park, playground, or back yard. Encourage your child to move, sing, listen, take turns, and cooperate.

**Let's Do it Again... and Again**— Through repetition, children figure out how things fit together and work. This may include reading your child the same book, or singing the same song, night after night.

**Busy Hands**—children love to make things work. Have your child finger paint, color, play with play dough, or squeeze water out of a sponge.

### Older Toddlers

24-36 months

**Act it Out**—Act out stories using movement and dance.

**Move & Groove**— Encourage your toddler to use his/her body and move freely to any type of music.

**Obstacle Course**—Set up boxes that your toddler can crawl through, pillows that she/he can climb on, and blocks that she/he can run around.



Information was gathered and used from the following sources. For more information on these and other topics,

please visit the following:

- ZeroToThree.org
- KidsHealth.org

LetsMove.gov

WhatToExpect.com