

Resources for Families and Providers

CCR&R Resources

The Importance of Play



Zero to Three: Play is Essential to Learning for Infants and Toddlers

STEM skills—including science, technology, engineering, and math—are a critical part of everyday life for many adults...and many young children. In fact, children develop STEM skills beginning at birth. How? They learn these skills through everyday play, exploration, and interactions with parents and caregivers.

The truth is that so much of STEM learning is what young children already do quite naturally: Ask questions, be curious, experiment, wonder “*What will happen if...*,” build and create, use tools to solve problems, and explore the people, things, and creatures in the world around them. Supporting STEM skills in the early years is really about nurturing young children’s curiosity and inborn drive to test, learn, and discover.

Learn how to play with your child and support their development of STEM Skills at the same time. Watch these videos from Zero to Three:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/let-s-talk-about-stem-video-series>

Additional resources on play:

[Let’s Play: How Your Child Grows Through Play from Birth to Three](#)

[5 Ways to Play with Sheets](#)

[5 Ways to Play with Socks](#)

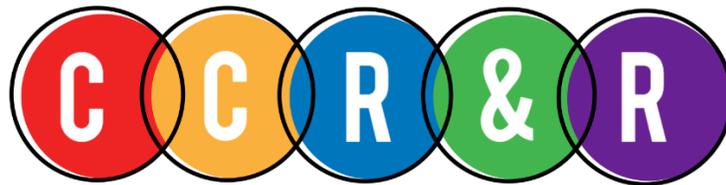
[5 Ways to Play with Empty Plastic Containers](#)

[5 Ways to Play with a Cardboard Box](#)

[5 Ways to play with a Laundry Basket](#)

[A Year of Play](#)

Browse fun seasonal activities by month to find play activities that promote your child’s development all year.



Resources for Families and Providers

DREME

Development and
Research in Early
Math Education

DREME offers free, research-based materials for supporting Family Math. What is family math? Families do many things throughout the day that support their children's understanding of math concepts and skills. Sorting and folding laundry, following recipes, matching shoes and socks and even taking a bath can lead to discussions and activities that support math. [DREME's Family Activities](#) offer tips, games and other materials for families with children from birth to age 8 to use at home. These are playful ways to make math learning easy and fun. These activities are centered around [cooking](#), [daily routines](#), [games and play](#) and [reading together](#).

3 Interactive Storybook Apps for Playful Early Math Learning



Math, reading, and play come together in three free storybook apps designed to support young children's early math learning. The books follow the adventures of three charming monsters—Oona, Tigga, and Marluk—as they explore and implement early math concepts to solve basic everyday life math problems (like figuring out how many frogs are left after some jump away). The stories help children, as parents and caregivers guide them, learn about numbers and problem-solving through fun, meaningful challenges.

Brought to you by Professor Ginsboo's Magical Math Production Company, the interactive storybooks are based on decades of research—mine and that of many others too.

- **Monster Music Factory** focuses on different methods for figuring out the number of objects in a collection as the monsters collect instruments for a concert.
- **Monster Birthday Surprise** shows how numbers can be expressed in many ways, such as objects, dots, and symbols, as the monsters prepare for a surprise birthday party.
- **Monster Frog Pond** teaches important ideas about addition and subtraction, and how words, written numbers, and symbols can be used to express these ideas, as the monsters care for naughty frogs in a pond.

Download Free Apps

The apps are designed for either an iPad (iOS) or a Galaxy or similar tablet (Android). Available to download for free from the App Store and Google Play.



Resources for Families and Providers

National Association for the Education of Young Children



[Math in the Bath](#)

Bath time is perfect for exploring math with your young child. The learning can be playful and messy!

[Explore the Great Outdoors with Your Child](#)

Help your child learn about nature by teaching them to explore the world outside.



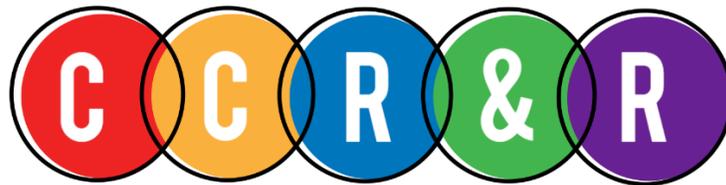
[Things Every Parent Should Know about Play](#)

Play supports children's learning in so many ways. Make sure your child has time to play to promote cognitive, language and literacy, math, social and emotional development through play!



[Fun, Easy Ways to Play with Math at Home](#)

Find games, activities and many more ways to learn math while having fun with your child!



Resources for Families and Providers

4 things families can do with these resources:

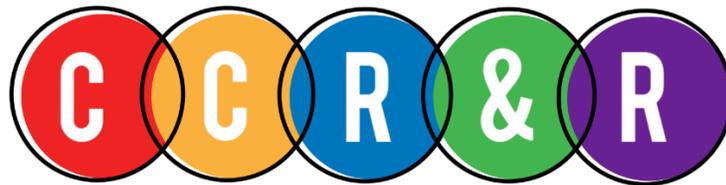
1. Use information from [Zero to Three's Let's Talk about STEM videos](#) to introduce and reinforce STEM concepts as they play with their children.
2. Use the [5 Ways to Play With ... series of activities](#) to support their child's learning through play.
3. Use the [DREME's Family Activities](#) to find tips, games and other playful activities to help their children learn new math concepts and skills.
4. Play with their children outdoors and use the ideas in the [Explore the Great Outdoors with Your Child](#) article to teach science concepts through play.

4 things providers can do with these resources:

1. Share the [videos from Zero to Three](#) with families at a Parent Meeting or through a newsletter to encourage parents to try the STEM activities at home with their children.
2. Use the [Math in the Bath](#) article in a family newsletter to explain how parents can support their child's math skills development through play.
3. Download the flyer, [Things Every Parents Should Know about Play](#). Send it home in the children's backpacks or include it in parent packets that are sent out weekly.
4. Have a Math Night for families and use [DREME's Family Activities](#) at math centers for families to explore ways to support math development at home.

4 things early learning coalitions can do with these resources:

1. Use the ideas from NAEYC on play and [Zero to Three's A Year of Play](#) in social media posts to encourage parents to use play to support their children's STEM skills at home.
2. Share these resources in a newsletter for providers or at a providers' meeting.
3. Show the [videos from Zero to Three](#) at a providers' meeting or family workshop and discuss ways to support young children's STEM learning through play.
4. Include the [5 Ways to Play with... series of activities](#) in family workshops or newsletters for families. These would also be great to include in "play areas" for children in the coalitions' offices or lobby areas.



Resources for Families and Providers



Teachers Resisting Unhealthy
Children's Entertainment

RESOURCE: FAMILY PLAY PLANS



Busy families often find it hard to set aside time for play, especially with the distraction of screens and technology.

TRUCE offers some seasonal, screen-free ideas, using everyday items, to inspire your whole family - whatever their ages - to play together.

Truce invites you to print and share these Family Play Plans without further permission.

Using low-cost, common materials, your family can play together and enjoy hours of family fun throughout the year. Print a

TRUCE two-page guide for each play theme, with easy-to-follow ideas for family play in summer, fall, winter, and spring. Find them at

www.TruceTeachers.org.



SUMMER

Mud
Water
Chalk

FALL
Boxes
Leaves
Playdough



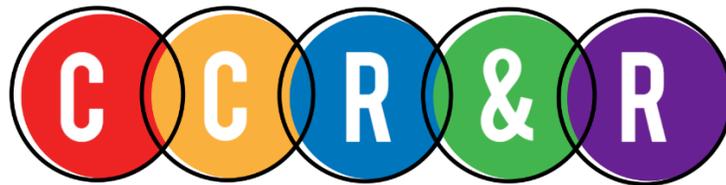
WINTER

Forts
Snow
Socks

SPRING
Bubbles
String
Gardening



WWW.TRUCETEACHERS.ORG



Resources for Families and Providers



Teachers Resisting Unhealthy
Children's Entertainment

TRUCE GUIDE TO PLAYING WITH BABIES

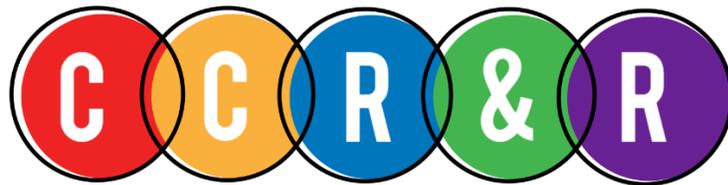
This guide for families, teachers, and caretakers is filled with ideas for activities and games that will delight babies while enhancing their growth and development.

The Importance of Play in Baby's Development

Babies love to play and playing is much more than having fun. Babies learn about the world around them through play. While playing, they are learning about interacting with others, practicing important skills, developing curiosity and creativity, and learning to solve problems. Babies' brains will grow more during the first 12 months than at any other time in life. As you sing, dance, rock, read, and play, your child's developing brain is growing more and more connections. It is important for your baby's development to play together with parents and loving caregivers. At the same time, both you and your baby will have fun, too.

The **TRUCE Guide to Playing with Babies** contains General Guidelines for Playing with Babies, Activities to Do with Babies and Games to Play with Babies.

[Download this free guide.](#)



Resources for Families and Providers



Play & Learn Center



The Magic of Play:

How it inspires & aids early development.

[Learn more >](#)

[Articulos en Español >>](#)



Top Toys
by Age



Toy Safety



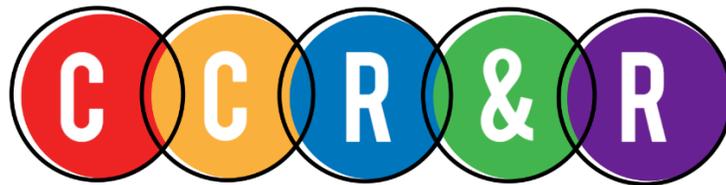
Fun & Games



Being Active

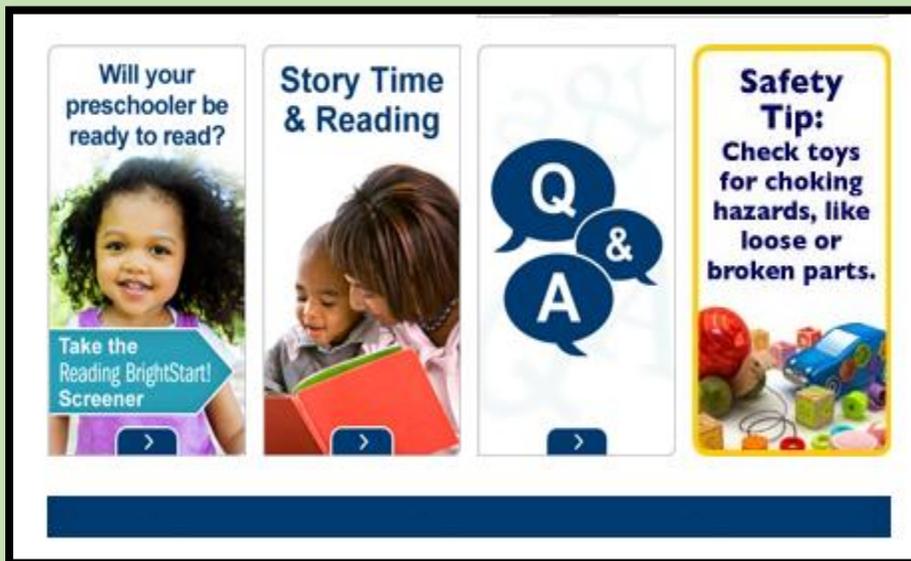
Pretend play lets kids try out new roles for themselves (like superheroes, princesses, wild animals, or even parents) and allows for creative problem-solving. But it also helps them deal with another hurdle of the preschool years: intense emotions. Baby dolls might be put in "time out" and scolded for actions suspiciously similar to your little one's latest offense. An imaginary friend (who's a bigger troublemaker than your child ever could be) might be dreamed up to help your child deal with feelings of guilt and remorse following a moment of lost control, such as hitting a playmate.

[Self-control](#) is a tough skill to learn, and pretend play helps kids practice it as well as play out the frustration it creates.



Resources for Families and Providers

Play Resources from KidsHealth

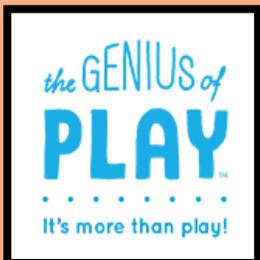


- [KidsHealth Play & Learn Center](#)
- [The Magic of Play: How It Inspires & Aids Early Development](#)
- [Learning, Play and Your Newborn](#)
- [Learning, Play and Your 1 –to 3-Month-Old](#)
- [Learning, Play and Your 4- to 7-Month-Old](#)
- [Learning, Play and Your 1 – to- 2 – Year - Old](#)
- [Toddlers: Learning by Play](#)
- [Story Time & Reading](#)
- [Motivating Kids to Be Active](#)
- [Motivating Preschoolers to Be Active](#)





Resources for Families and Providers

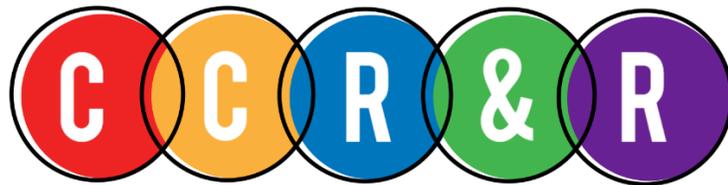


The Genius of Play

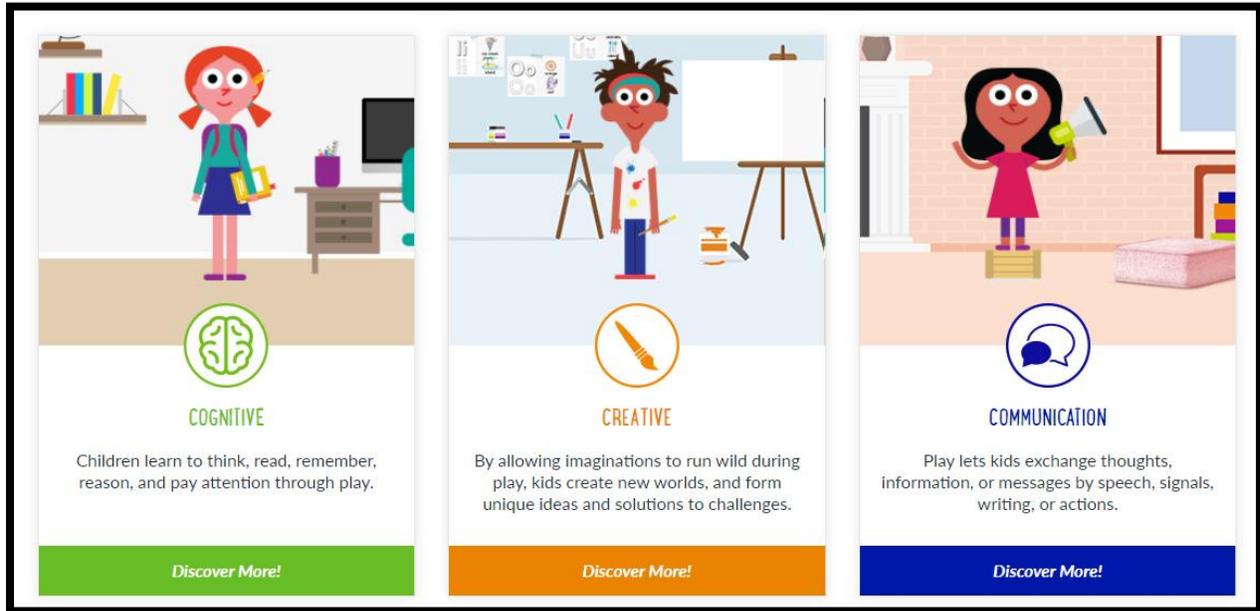
Play isn't all fun and games — it's also an important teaching tool! Through play, kids learn how to interact with others and develop critical lifelong skills. Experts agree that play has a profound impact on childhood learning. The Genius of Play has articles, useful tips, sound advice, and the latest research from leaders in the field on children and education.

The Benefits of Play:

 PHYSICAL Active play helps kids with coordination, balance, motor skills, and spending their natural energy (which promotes better eating and sleeping habits). Discover More!	 EMOTIONAL During play, kids learn to cope with emotions like fear, frustration, anger, and aggression in a situation they control. They can also practice empathy and understanding. Discover More!	 SOCIAL Playing with others helps kids negotiate group dynamics, collaborate, compromise, deal with others' feelings, and share – the list goes on. Discover More!
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Resources for Families and Providers



Additional Resources from *The Genius of Play*:

- [Play Ideas for Children with Special Needs](#)
- [Play Ideas for 0-3 Year Olds](#)
- [Play Ideas for 3 – 6 Year Olds](#)
- [Play and Learn \(Play Ideas and Games\)](#)
- [Play Ideas for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)





4 things families can do with these resources:

1. Use the Family Play Plans from TRUCE to find ways to support their children's learning through play.
2. Select play activities from TRUCE to use with their children for each season of the year.
3. Use the KidsHealth Play and Learn resources to find games and toys to support their children's development and to learn about toy safety.
4. Use The Genius of Play's Benefits of Play to learn how play supports the 6 areas of their children's development.

4 things providers can do with these resources:

1. Feature the seasonal Family Plans for Play in parent newsletters or at family meetings throughout the year.
2. Use the TRUCE Guide to Playing with Babies at parent meetings or in newsletters to encourage families to play with their babies at home. Also, use the guide to stress the importance of staff playing with the babies in their care throughout the day.
3. Use the Benefits of Play from The Genius of Play at a staff meeting to stress the importance of play in all areas of a child's development. Discuss ways staff can share this information with families.
4. At staff meetings, use the information from Play Ideas for Children with Special Needs and Play Ideas for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder to start discussions about the importance of including children with special needs in all types of play.

4 things early learning coalitions can do with these resources:

1. Share all of the resources from TRUCE, KidsHealth and The Genius of Play with providers through newsletters or at provider meetings.
2. Have a family workshop or training on the importance of play utilizing these resources.
3. Feature the seasonal Family Play Plans in newsletters for parents and providers or on social media throughout the year.
4. Use the article, The Magic of Play, from KidsHealth as a theme for a community event or family workshop. Plan activities for families or providers to demonstrate how learning in all domains occurs through play.