



Play Skills: A Parent's Guide



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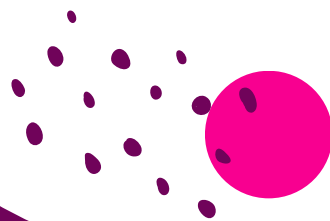
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What are Play Skills?

Play skills are essential for a child's overall development, aiding in the enhancement of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical abilities.

Through play, children learn to explore, communicate, solve problems, and regulate their emotions, fostering crucial skills for their future.



Types of Play:

There are different types of play that children engage in across their development. Some of these include:

Solitary Play: Playing alone without interacting with others.

Parallel Play: Playing alongside others but not actively engaging with them.

Associative Play: Informal play with others, but without a set goal or structure.

Cooperative Play: Collaborative play with defined goals and rules, often involving teamwork and coordination.

Diagnosing Play Skill

Difficulties:

Play skill difficulties are typically diagnosed through comprehensive evaluations by paediatricians, child psychologists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, music therapists and art therapists. These evaluations involve observing a child's behaviour during play, assessing their communication abilities, and analysing their interactions with peers.



Checklist for Parents: Characteristics of Play Skill Difficulties

- ✓ Lack of interest in play activities.
- ✓ Difficulty in understanding rules and guidelines of
- ✓ games.
- ✓ Limited imaginative play.
- ✓ Trouble initiating or sustaining play with others.
- ✓ Difficulty in sharing or taking turns.
- ✓ Challenges in expressing emotions during play.



Steps if You Suspect Play Skill Difficulties:

1. Discuss concerns with your child's paediatrician.

2. Seek a referral to a developmental specialist including psychologist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist, music therapist or art therapist.

3. Keep a detailed record of your child's behaviours and interactions during play to assist your medical and/or allied health professional.



Strategies for Children with Play Skill Difficulties:

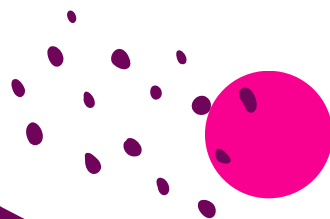
At Inspire Allied Health and Education Group we support children's play skills in a number of ways, some of which includes:

- Structured play activities with clear objectives.
- Use of visual aids to explain rules and guidelines.
- Social stories to enhance understanding of social cues.
- Incorporation of sensory play to encourage exploration.
- Turn-taking games to foster sharing and cooperation.
- Peer modelling to demonstrate appropriate play behaviour.
- Positive reinforcement for cooperative play.
- Facilitating small groups to encourage social interaction.
- Setting up a predictable play routine to promote comfort.

- Teaching problem-solving strategies during play conflicts.
- Encouraging creative play to stimulate imagination.
- Incorporating technology-based interactive games for skill-building.
- Providing a variety of play materials to encourage exploration.
- Modelling appropriate social behaviours during playtime.
- Implementing structured play breaks during learning activities.
- Incorporating movement-based play activities for physical development.
- Collaborating with educators to reinforce consistent play strategies.
- Encouraging outdoor play for physical and sensory stimulation.
- Utilising social skills groups to practice communication and cooperation.



Understanding and addressing play skill difficulties is crucial for your child's overall growth and development. By actively engaging with your child and seeking support from professionals, you can create a nurturing environment that fosters their play skills, social interactions, and emotional well-being, laying a strong foundation for their future success and happiness. Please reach out to Inspire Allied Health and Education Group to find out how we can support your child and family.





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