



Dad Central

Facts for Fathers

Daddy, Come Play With Me

Play is children's way of being part of the world they live in. Fathers can support play by giving their children chances to play and by being involved with their play.

Play helps children

- Explore and understand their environment.
- Develop their brains – using all their senses and growing their ability to think.
- Learn what they can do with their bodies – coordination, balance, and strength.
- Learn and practise new skills – paying attention, planning, using tools.
- Develop social skills – learning how to get along with other people.
- Learn about life – the lessons of play are the lessons of life for a child.
- Have a good time – play helps make children's lives enjoyable and happy.

Many types of play

There is more to play than toys and games.

- **Hands-on exploring and experimenting** with real, everyday objects.
- **Arts and crafts:** Drawing, colouring, pasting, painting, playing with playdough or clay.
- **Music play:** Singing, dancing, and moving to music.
- **Nature play:** Digging in the dirt, collecting leaves and rocks, hikes in the woods.
- **Physical play:** Running, jumping, climbing, wrestling.

Dad's Roles in Play

Observer/companion

You are nearby and available, but not directly involved in what your child is doing. You may be watching, cheering them on, or doing things side-by-side.

Entertainer

You do things that interest and excite your child. Read a story with a silly voice; put on a puppet show.

Teacher

You can give instructions about how to play. You can also lead by following their choices and ideas. The idea is to help without taking over.

Playmate

You are playing with your children and doing what they want. Sometimes this means being the jungle gym or enjoying a tea party.

How to play well

- Provide a place for children to play safely and freely.
- Give them toys and people to have fun with.
- Have toys that are suitable to your children's age and ability.
- Play with your children:
 - Watch what your children do and follow their lead.
 - Use their actions, words and expressions as your guide
- Give your children some time to play on their own.
- Let them have fun.



Dad Central

Want to know more?

Dad Central Ontario has booklets and other resources for fathers.

Visit dadcentral.ca