

Play & Social Skills in Early Childhood

Why is PLAY important?

Play time is not just for fun, play is how children learn. Play encourages development in many areas: intellectual, social, emotional, and physical.

Why are SOCIAL SKILLS important?

Social skills are what we use to interact and communicate with others. Children need to be taught social skills. Learning social skills are often taught through play. Social skills help children:

- regulate and express emotions
- share & take turns
- develop relationships and friendships
- problem-solve
- communicate & cooperate
- perspective-taking, empathy



How can I help my child learn social skills?

Social Play – sometimes called cooperative play, children play with other children or adults

This looks like racing, board games, sports, hide & seek, physical play (jungle gyms, running, jumping, climbing, slides & swings), pretend or imaginary play (kitchen, dress-up, dolls, fort, pirates, etc.)

*While playing, your child may talk to themselves, to their toys, or have their toys talk to each other

What skills are we learning when we play?

listening

reasoning

negotiating

motor control



math

patterns

exploring

making & following rules

compromising

Resource:

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/18/06/summertime-playtime#:~:text=Emotional%20development%3A%20Especially%20in%20social,lead%20and%20when%20to%20follow.>