PLAY

Ideas to try with your child

Why is play important?

Through play, children are able to discover and explore, use their imagination, solve problems, and test out new ideas. Play helps children to grow and develop.

Play helps physical health and development, communication and language, and attention skills. Play develops the basic skills for social interaction. Children learn how to cooperate, share, and be sensitive to the feelings of others during play.

Let your Child lead the play

Children learn best and like it when they lead the way during play. It is not unusual for parents to find playing with their children hard. They may feel silly, don't know what to do or they may want to take control. It is better to comment or describe what the child is already doing, rather than asking too many questions e.g. "I like the spikes on your dinosaur".

Types of play

- **Exploratory play**- exploring things around them/messy play. Use household materials such as cardboard boxes, water play, playdoh and paint.

- **Turn taking games-**such as pop up pirate, snap, board games

- **Small world play**- such as figures or miniature toys

- **Physical play-** will help your child learn how to control their body and gain independence. e.g. climbing, chasing games, catching beanbags and large balls, peddling bikes, musical statues

- **Pretend play-** Playing with teddies and dolls. Role play and dressing up.

- **Construction play-** going from duplo to finer lego pieces helps to develop fine motor, logical skills and visual skills e.g. copy from the box

If your child is having difficulty playing, you can play alongside them and show them what to do. You can teach them how to win and lose, and how to take turns in games.

Be aware of the amount of time your child spends watching TV/computers/other media: increased screen time can affect attention, self-esteem and mood
(Public Health Enaland 2013)

Physical activity is associated with improved concentration levels and positive social behaviour. At least one hour a day of moderate activity is recommended.