



Learn to PLAY

"Birds fly, fish swim, children play."

G. Landreth

What is Learn to Play?

Learn to Play is a program that supports children who are eight years or younger with developmental delays, autism spectrum disorders, find playing difficult or need help playing with friends (Stagnitti, 1998). During the Learn to Play sessions your child will have time to develop pretend play skills that are expected for their development and age. The sessions will provide a range of play activities that match your child's current development and where they feel most comfortable. The play activities will gradually challenge your child as their play skills develop.

How can play help children learn and develop?

There are many different play types and categories; however according to the literature a play type called 'pretend play' proves to be imperative for children's healthy development and wellbeing. Pretend play can also be called imaginative, dramatic, make believe or fantasy play. The process and skills that are needed for pretend play allow for the natural development of social, emotional, language and cognitive skills (Stagnitti, 2009).



Pretend play helps children.....

Increase their social skills: During play children have the opportunity to practice skills such as sharing, negotiating, co-operation, collaborating and initiating play.

Understand emotions: Pretend play helps children practice strategies when they are upset or angry during play. As children play, they may focus on emotions (for example: making a teddy really sad because it hurt himself, the child may create crying noises or they may comfort the Teddy).

Use different thinking strategies: Pretend play encourages children to imagine and create story lines, characters and develop themes in their play. During this type of play children can use problem-solving strategies.

Express themselves: Children use lots of words during pretend play. This assists children to develop their verbal language. Also by developing stories and themes during play children will be supported developing literacy concepts.

Be happy: Playing makes children feel happy and healthy. When children find happiness in play feel good hormones are released from their brain.
(Stagnitti, O'Connor & Sheppa, 2012) (Stagnitti, In press)

Who will benefit from the program?

- Children with developmental delays and Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- Children who are over 18 months developmental level and have one meaningful word or gesture.
- Have difficulty playing and find socially interacting a challenge.
- The child may or may not have a diagnosis.



Jean Borg
BECE, MCPT

Playful Minds
Play Therapy

Play Therapist
0449 005 257
playfulmindsplaytherapy@hotmail.com
www.playfulmindsplaytherapy.com