

BUILDING BLOCKS® Early Intervention Service **Parent Information Sheet**

Implementing Play Sessions

Improving your child's social play skills encourages the development of abilities across a range of areas and helps with integration into other settings such as pre-school. By presenting fun activities that involve manipulation of play materials, sensory experiences, construction, exploration of cause and effect, simple sequencing and patterning, you can help your child to begin to understand the numerous functions of objects. The focus of play sessions with your child will include early social and communication skills such as looking, attending, imitation of actions, joint sharing of attention and simple turn-taking.

How to set up a structured play session:

1. Choose 2-3 toys that your child enjoys using and organise them before commencing play.



2. Think about the goals or objectives you will be working on during play and write these down before the play session begins.

For example: *When playing with bubbles the objective may be that your child will look at you before you blow bubbles.*

3. Choose a location where your child is happy to play e.g. on the lounge room floor.
4. Present one activity at a time.

5. Begin the session with a fun, familiar activity.
6. Attempt to have some photos of favourite toys ready to use in conjunction with the activities.
7. Change over the activities you present in play sessions regularly.
8. Always end the session with a highly-favoured activity to reinforce your child for playing with you and to end on a positive note.
9. Evaluate your child's response after the play session by referring back to any notes you made and recording your child's reaction to the activity you presented.

Important points to remember:

- Keep some favourite activities aside exclusively for structured play sessions, and change these regularly.
- Encourage your child to attend to you as well as the activity.
- Offer your child choices between two activities.
- Extend on your child's play by **modelling** and encourage your child to **imitate** your actions.
- Briefly **record** your child's reactions during the play session.
- Continue to leave some toys at other times to assist your child to generalise the new skills he is learning.
- Ensure play is fun for both you and your child by keeping sessions short to start with.



Reference:

Dodd, S., Pierce, E., & Webster, S. (2002). The Early Play Program. Sydney, Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)