

Social play

Play is central to the development of social skills. Social skills are crucial for the development of positive interactions with others, and developing and maintaining relationships. Social play happens when children engage with adults or their peers in games or activities that are enjoyable.

Aspect
@anywhere

Here for you *wherever you are*

Playing socially with others increases one's awareness of others' thoughts and feelings. Play provides a wonderful opportunity for children to develop key skills including; communication, cooperation, problem solving and perspective taking. Through playing together children have an opportunity to practice their social skills with others. Developing the ability to play interactively with other children may take time.

As children get older, play gradually becomes more social and more complex. The most important step initially is to ensure that your child has opportunities to mix with other children of similar age. This is important because it encourages children to be more aware of others and also to observe how other children play and interact. Taking your child to the park, playgrounds, and play groups will provide them with opportunities to be around peers.

Sensory story time and social play

Sensory Story time is a great way to engage your children in a motivating and engaging activity that will support the development of social play. We can encourage the development of social play with our children by modelling appropriate and positive social behaviours, taking turns in play, making social comments and using simple language that may be used in play (e.g. repeated lines of the story).



Tips to help support your child to play socially

- Choose an appropriate time when your child is most receptive to playing together and play in a familiar place where they feel safe and comfortable.
- Consider the sensory environment if your child has sensory issues.
- Model appropriate ways of getting people's attention in play.
- Show your child how to join in play e.g. If children are engaged in the sensory story time - encourage your child to join.
- Demonstrate how to take turns and share.
- Model simple language and use visual supports to help with understanding turn taking, waiting and sensory story time 'rules'.
- Praise children for appropriate play and initially keep activities short and positive.
- Comment on how others may be feeling or what others are thinking during play.