



Tell Your Kids: Go Out And Play

(NAPSA)—The next time you tell your children to stop playing and hit the books, you may want to think again. The Genius of Play, a movement to bring more play into kids' lives, wants you to know that playtime is critical to healthy child development. Through play, kids build physical skills, improve cognitive abilities, learn communication and social skills, process and express emotions, and increase creativity.

Parenting expert and author Meredith Sinclair, M.Ed., offers four fun tips to help parents encourage more playtime every day.

• **Look for opportunities to make chores or activities you already do with your kids more playful.** For example, grocery shopping can be a great chance to play “I Spy,” or you can make flash card drawings of items you want your child to help you find. When you’re doing the laundry, have your child roll the socks and make it a basketball challenge.

• **Create a simple “Pops of Playfulness” jar for those moments when there’s “nothing to do.”** Fill a mason jar with slips of paper that say such things as “tell us your best joke,” “pillow fight!” or “five-minute puppet show.” Whenever you need a spontaneous spark of playfulness, simply pull one from the jar and jump in.

• **Make a time for a play-date.** Whether it’s playing with friends or family, playdates are an important part of childhood—a time when your children can learn to resolve problems and hone their social skills.

• **Check out nearby parks and playgrounds.** They can be great places for your kids to make new friends and learn about other cultures. Don’t worry about language barriers. The language of play is universal.



Kids need a well-rounded diet of play to develop into well-rounded adults.

Research shows that play is essential for kids to reach developmental milestones and learn. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children spend 60 minutes daily engaged in open-ended, unstructured play.

Here are three amazing facts about play:

1. Play enhances the progress of early development from 33 percent to 67 percent by improving language and reducing social and emotional problems.

2. Children with access to a variety of toys were found to reach higher levels of intellectual achievement, regardless of the children’s sex, race or social class.

3. Research points to a direct correlation between play and stress reduction.

It’s Child’s Play: Great Ideas and Resources for Parents

Parents and other caretakers can get expert advice, play tips and ideas based on their children’s ages and developmental stages from www.thegeniusofplay.org. Created with the mission to help raise happier, healthier and more successful generations through the power of play, the Genius of Play website and social media channels show how to help kids build confidence, creativity, critical thinking and other skills that will serve them throughout their lives.