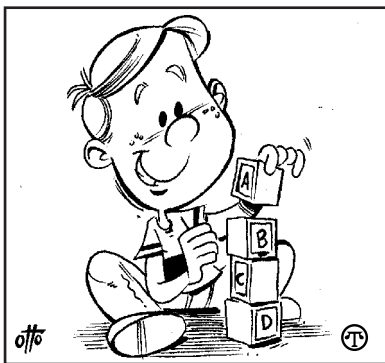


Pointers For Parents

Learning Through Play

(NAPSA)—Play is such an essential activity for healthy childhood development that occupational therapists consider it part of a child's "job." Toys are the tools of play, and playing with appropriate toys helps children learn important physical, mental and social skills.



Occupational therapists are good resources for people who want to select toys with a specific purpose, like developing communication skills. Occupational therapists can also help adapt toys for children with special needs, such as a child with a condition that makes it difficult to use the hands and fingers to grasp objects. Many occupational therapists work in school systems and health care facilities, helping children who have a health problem or learning difficulty.

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) offers free information on play, toys, and other topics related to healthy childhood development. Occupational therapists help children and adults who have conditions that affect their ability to engage in everyday "occupations" at home and at school, and at work and play. The tip sheets are available at AOTA's Web site, www.aota.org, under the "consumer" section.