

Pointers For Parents

Play Is Essential To School Readiness

(NAPSA)—Children love to imitate their parents—from pulling clothes out of mommy's closet and playing dress-up to stealing daddy's shaving cream and smearing it all over their face.

Parents have an important responsibility in guiding their child's development, whether academically or socially, to help nurture him or her into a well-rounded person. An easy way parents can help young ones be more prepared for school and life is through good old-fashioned play.

Many schools now expect children to be well-versed in skills such as reading, writing and communication before they enter first grade and, increasingly, even before kindergarten. For 3- to 8-year-old children, developing their cognitive, social and emotional skills is also essential for school readiness.

That is why toy manufacturer Playmobil partnered with Yale researcher Dr. Dorothy Singer to develop the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of Play. The RDA of Play provides a set of guidelines to help parents foster imagination—and therefore learning—in their children.

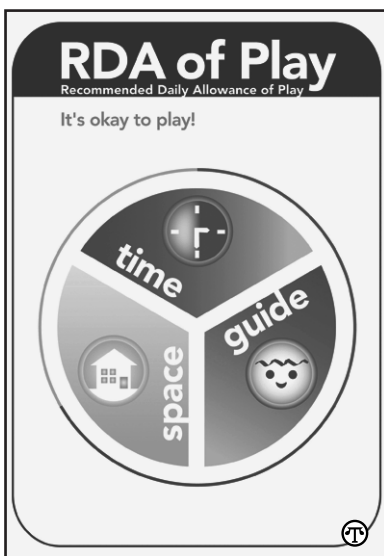
"The RDA of Play lays the foundation for imagination and creativity," said Singer. "It's like giving a child a multivitamin of learning because play has the ability to fortify all of their skill development goals in one RDA."

RDA of Play:

- **Time**—Provide children approximately 30 minutes of pretend play a day.

- **Place**—Designate a place for your children to play. Whether it's the family room or a playroom, this is a space where toys do not have to be picked up and usual "house rules" don't apply.

- **Guide**—Parents can take an



active part in their child's play by following a few helpful tips:

- **Inspire and encourage**—Let your kids know that "it's OK to play." Convey to your child a sense of involvement and warmth by showing excitement when play-time is about to begin.

- **Leave it up to them**—You may have the urge to jump in if the kids stray from realistic play scenarios, but leaving them play helps build their imaginations. Intervene only if they ask for help.

- **Give children props**—Welcome your child's play experience not only with warmth, but also by giving them objects to play with. Good props make your child the active participant and will better develop his or her creative skills. Play sets like Playmobil's Grande Mansion allow children to interact with figurines and create their own story in an imaginative play world.

Becoming a play guide is an important step in your child's development and they will appreciate learning while having fun!