

All My Child Does is Play All Day!

When children play with pegboards they learn:

- One-to-one correspondence
- To make real patterns, a math skill
- Left-to-right progression, a reading skill
- Concepts of addition as they add pegs
- Symmetry, shapes, order and design
- Eye-hand coordination

When children play on climbing equipment they learn:

- Physical strength, coordination and balance
- To use their imagination
- To cooperate with others involved in group play
- To solve problems
- Self-confidence as they develop new skills

When children play with blocks, cars, and trucks they learn:

- Concepts of shape, size, length and location, all reading and math skills
- To create and repeat patterns, a math skill
- To exercise imagination
- To cooperate with others
- To solve problems
- About the properties of wood and other materials

When children play with sand they learn:

- To exercise their imagination
- Concepts of size, shape & volume, empty & full
- How to use tools
- To solve problems
- Concepts of warm & cool, wet, damp & dry, heavy & light
- How to play socially with others
- To create systems for classifying, ordering and arranging, which are math skills
- To create their own patterns and symbols, which are reading and writing skills
- To observe changes, a science skill

When children sort things they learn:

- To notice details, likeness, differences and to form categories, essential reading and math skills
- Concepts of color, size and shape
- Numeral concepts of more and less
- Logical reasoning

When children participate in circle time they learn:

- To listen, sit still and understand spoken words
- That their ideas have value to the other children and the teacher
- To wait their turn when others are talking
- New vocabulary words
- To remember the words of songs and poems they have learned and to put things in proper order, gaining a sense of time
- The names of others in the group
- To cooperate and be considerate of the needs of others
- To help plan what they will do and when they will need to do it

When children look at objects at a nature table they learn:

- New vocabulary
- Concepts of texture, color, weight and size
- To group objects into categories
- To observe likenesses and differences
- To appreciate nature and develop a sense of wonder

When children look at books & listen to stories they learn:

- That books are important and enjoyable
- That print is written-down words
- To express their own thoughts, feelings and ideas
- To exercise their imaginations
- That pictures tell something just like words
- To make up their own stories
- To handle books with care
- To recognize certain words when they see them in print
- To use more complex language patterns in their own speech
- To follow the development of thought and ideas in the plot of a story
- That they like books and some day would like to read them, when they are ready

When children scribble and draw they learn:

- To hold a pencil or other drawing implement and to control the pressure
- Eye-hand coordination
- To exercise their creativity and imagination
- That their ideas have value
- Concepts of color, shape, size and location
- To express themselves with words when describing their drawings

When children cut with scissors they learn:

- To control the small muscles in their hands
- Concepts of shape, size, color and location
- To exercise their imaginations and creativity

When children easel paint they learn:

- To develop their imagination and creativity
- To develop eye-hand coordination
- To distinguish and purposefully create shapes
- To express their feelings and ideas
- That their ideas have value
- Relationships of space and size
- Concepts of symmetry, balance and design

When children fingerpaint they learn:

- To exercise their imagination and creativity
- About how colors mix to make new colors
- Concepts of shape, size and location
- Eye-hand coordination
- An acceptable way to make a mess and have fun sharing ideas with others who are near

When children play with letter games they learn:

- To recognize and name upper and lower case letters
- To associate letters with sounds they represent
- The letters are parts of words they say and that letters make up all those magical words that people read from books
- To recognize their names and some other words, all on their own, without stress and without fear of failure – only if they want to and are ready

When children play with puppets they learn:

- To express their ideas with words
- To take on the role of someone else
- To use their voice tones as well as words
- To use their imagination
- To learn how it feels to be someone else

When children string beads they learn:

- Eye-hand coordination
- Concepts of color, shape and location
- Number concepts like more, less, longer and shorter
- To create and reproduce patterns
- Pride in accomplishments

When children play with playdough/clay they learn:

- To see the shape against the background of the table, a pre-reading skill
- Concepts of shapes, sizes, length and height
- To see negative space when the cookie cutter shapes are taken away
- To express feelings, especially negative feelings, with squeezing and pounding
- To exercise their imaginations and creativity
- That the quantity of something remains the same even when the shape changes.

When children do cooking projects they learn:

- About nutrition, tastes and food groups
- How heat and cold change things, a science lesson
- Whole-part relationships and concepts of volume and measure, a math lesson
- Vocabulary, a language lesson
- Awareness of their own and other cultures, a social science lesson

When children play in the dress-up corner they learn:

- To be flexible in their thinking
- To express themselves with words
- To try on different adult roles
- To solve social problems through negotiation with friends
- To sort and organize play things
- To improvise and use things in a symbolic way, a language skill
- To have an object represent something else, which is abstract thinking
- To carry out ideas, with the cooperation of others
- To exercise their imagination and creativity

When children play on riding toys they learn:

- Strength, balance and large muscle coordination
- To use their imaginations as they pretend to be characters and to make different “road” noises
- To negotiate and take turns
- To solve problems
- Self-confidence, as they master new skills

When children dance they learn:

- Balance and coordination
- To be conscious of moods and rhythms of music
- To express themselves physically