

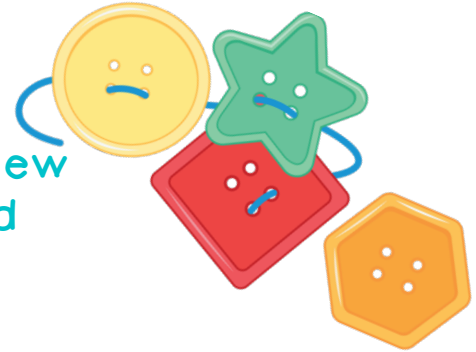
# The Importance of Play!

1 Children learn how to strengthen and refine their skills which helps them grow and be confident.



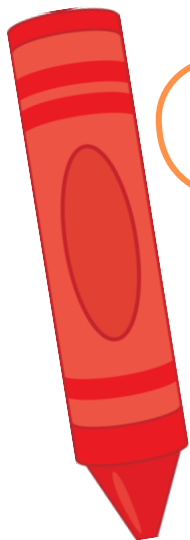
2 Children are motivated to learn when they are having fun, and learning is neuro-protective!

3 Structured play introduces new skills, direction following, and gets children moving!



4 Unstructured play helps children develop their creativity, problem solving and critical thinking. Skills that lay the foundations for emotional regulation and executive functioning!

5 Pretend play is linked to language development, perspective taking and social emotional development.



6 Play is both extrinsically and intrinsically motivating; intrinsic motivation is important for being able to persist through challenges!

7 Through play, children develop their interests and their sense of self.



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## Credits



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Therapy Resources  
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## How NeuroPLASTICITY Happens in PLAY Handout

**What is Neuroplasticity?**  
Neuroplasticity refers to the process of the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout its life. Neuroplasticity allows us to recover from injuries and adapt to new experiences. It is the brain's ability to change and grow throughout our lives.

**Why is Play Important?**  
Play is an important way for children to learn and grow. It helps them develop their social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Play also helps them learn to regulate their emotions and manage stress. Children who play regularly have better brain development and are more resilient to stress.

**How to Promote Neuroplasticity in Play**  
Help your child grow their brain by engaging them in structured and unstructured play and providing opportunities for learning. Some activities to try include:  
- Reading books  
- Building a puzzle  
- Building a fort  
- Drawing and coloring  
- Playing board games  
- Practicing mindfulness

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## EMOTIONAL Regulation Handout

**What are Emotional Regulation Skills?**  
Emotional regulation skills are the ability to manage and control our emotions. These skills help us to stay calm and focused, even when we are feeling stressed or upset. They are essential for our physical and mental health.

**An Overview of Emotional Regulation**  
Emotional regulation refers to our ability to manage and control our emotions. It involves recognizing our emotions, understanding their causes, and using strategies to manage them. We learn to regulate our emotions through play and social interactions.

**Why is Emotional Regulation Important?**  
Emotional regulation is important for our physical and mental health. It helps us to manage stress and anxiety, and it is essential for our social relationships. Children who have good emotional regulation skills are more likely to succeed in school and in life.

**How to Practice Self-Regulation Skills**  
Help your child learn to handle big feelings by providing opportunities for learning through play, modeling social emotional skills, and identifying coping strategies together. Some fun activities to try include:  
- Meditation  
- Deep breathing games  
- Feelings Charades/Blings  
- Exploring coping tools  
- Roleplay with toys, puppets  
- Red Light, Green Light

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## SPOT THE MATCH WITH Sensory TOOLS

Spot the Match with Sensory Calming Tools!

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## EXPLORING Emotions WITH Animal Walks

Exploring Emotions with Animal Walks!

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