

*Play to Learn, Learn to Play Series*

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**BUILD a READER: PLAY IS POWER**

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION: We have heard it before: Children learn through play. But how exactly does a child learn to read through the wonder of play? How can playing restaurant or building a block city build school readiness? Here's how to translate the activity to the skills.

<b>The Play</b>	<b>The Learning Power</b>
Blocks, boxes, houses, cars, trains, animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Understanding the concepts of sizes/shapes/colors. Discrimination skills needed for understanding sets and identifying letters</li><li>-Judging distances</li><li>-Goal completion (having an idea and making it happen)</li><li>-Match/sort/classify objects by their similarities and into sets. Important for understanding number concepts such as each animal gets one block, etc.</li></ul>
Puzzles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Problem solving and persistence</li><li>-Matching a picture to its background</li><li>-Fine motor/small muscle strength important for writing</li><li>-Visual/spatial skills-seeing how pieces fit together progressing from large knob to interlocking puzzles</li><li>-Builds vocabulary and language skills</li></ul>
Interlocking blocks (Duplo's, Legos) stringing beads, lacing cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Small muscle control and strength</li><li>-Using two hands together (important for writing)</li></ul>
Art Projects-paint, crayons, markers, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Cause/effect (mixing colors makes something new)</li><li>-Creativity and imagination</li><li>-Symbolic/representational thought (a picture can represent an idea)</li><li>-Making choices and a plan of materials</li><li>-Experiment and discovery</li><li>-Fine motor skills including grasp with markers, paintbrush, scissors, etc.</li><li>-Increases language skills as they talk about their project. May want to add words to tell a story with it</li><li>-Practice drawing symbols, may use letters or numbers</li></ul>

Dramatic or Pretend Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Numeric concepts (How many plates does each person at my table need? Practice with understanding each person gets 1.)</li> <li>-Try on and experiment with different roles—what does it mean to be a mom, fireman, teacher, etc.?</li> <li>-Develops empathy and understanding of others</li> <li>-Practice following rules of the play and control impulses</li> <li>-Builds language and vocabulary</li> <li>-Practice with solving problems</li> <li>-Practice writing letters/numbers by making signs, lists as part of their play</li> <li>-Practice how to act in real life (we wait to cross the street, wait in line at the grocery store, etc.)</li> </ul>
Sensory Play (water, play dough, sand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sensory play can be calming and help children focus and learn self-control</li> <li>-Scientific experiments with sizes and measurement (big, little, long, short)</li> <li>-Combine elements to make something new</li> <li>-Make predictions about what might happen</li> <li>-Act out stories with props like cars/animals</li> </ul>