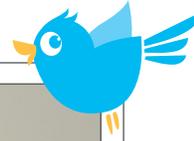


Setting up the Environment for Core Routines: Floortime/Play Time



Play is a way children learn to make sense of the world. Functional play is a powerful tool for supporting global development. Play develops a child's problem-solving skills through the discovery of properties of actions and objects as well as understanding daily life experiences (e.g., hard/soft, fast/slow, and how things work together). Functional play is also important in social interactions. Children interact with each other through play with toys, equipment, and action sequences. Sharing enjoyment in play develops a sense of connectedness with others.

- Set up the environment so that the child is able to focus: turn off the tv, remove distractions, pull out a few toys or activities.
- Discover what your child is interested in and join in! Follow their lead to join their world. While engaging with your child, ask yourself "is this my idea or my theirs?"— we want it to be theirs!
- Start by imitating how your child plays and observe if they notice your imitations. You can use this as a way to expand on their ideas on how to play with the toy. Encourage your child to imitate you.
- Use a slow pace while playing. This can help your child to maintain regulation and attention.
- Gradually introduce new toys and sensory experiences because some children need to be exposed to a new toy for a while before initiating a purposeful interaction.
- Generalize play sequences into a social context (e.g., incorporate play with sibling, 'act out' preferred movies/shows or personal emotional experiences through character play).

Setting up the Environment for Core Routines: Floortime/Play Time



Activity to Try at Home: Cars/ Trains

- Many of our kids are highly motivated by cars and trains, but frequently spin the wheels and demonstrate limited functional play and ideation. Below are some simple tips to promote functional play skills in your home environment within each developmental domain.
- **Communication:** Use simple language narrating play of the child. Model expansion of the child's verbal output by adding 1-2 words. Examples include labeling "train" or "go", then pairing the two together "Go train!" paired with the action of moving the train.
- **Fine Motor:** Building a train track is like a one-step puzzle, promoting problem solving and fine motor control. Using chalk to draw a train track or road can be a fun way to incorporate drawing into play and can also promote visual attention for your child to be able to follow the road/ track.
- **Gross Motor:** Positioning while engaged in play on the floor is a great way to incorporate strengthening into functional play. Encourage your child to sit up without leaning or have them lay on their belly propped on their elbows. Be sure to encourage your child to keep their head up to promote full body strengthening! Incorporating a game of "chase" with cars while in a crawling position can promote reciprocal movement patterns, shoulder girdle and postural stability, and social play. You can also have your child engage in a bridge (holding self up on hands and feet) and roll the car or train under.
- **Social Emotional:** Use of highly preferred toys to promote joint attention and practice turn taking can be highly effective and is a great place to begin for social play. Rolling the car back and forth between you and your child is a way to engage in turn taking while promoting joint attention, a foundational skill of learning. You can also promote skills of turn taking by offering to trade another highly preferred toy and engage in parallel play with your child, promoting ideation through modeling. Help your child begin to use these skills with siblings or friends once they begin to master these games with you, working towards generalization of skills, sharing, and social interactions.
- **Cognition:** You can help your child work on following one step commands of "Stop!" and "Go!" with toys, eventually expanding to "Red Light, Green Light." Modeling prepositions to describe the location of the toy (under the table, on top of the book, over the track) while paired with the action can promote understanding of these concepts.
- **Expanding beyond functional play:**
 1. Set up themes and incorporate other toys (the train has to pick up food and deliver for a picnic, the cars are visiting family members, the train has to bring animals to the vet).
 2. Develop problem solving skills (the car broke a wheel, how can we fix it?).

