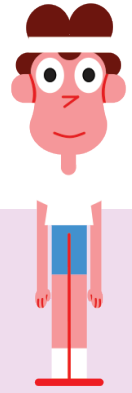




That's Genius!



Play ideas for busy days

Opportunities to play are everywhere if you know where to look.

In the Car/On the Bus

5–10 Minutes: One person chooses a category (such as cities, streets, neighborhoods, countries) and names a place in this category. The next player says another place in that category that begins with the last letter of the previous word.

Benefits: Enhances cognitive skills

Tip: Challenge your child to learn more about the places named by researching them together.



At the Store

10 Minutes: The Search—Select a color to search for in the aisles. Who can find the most items in that color?
Rules: You can't pick them up. Kids must remember the items they see and count them by hand.

5 Minutes: Totals—Ask your child to add up the prices of several items (rounded to the nearest whole number) while shopping. **Rule:** No calculators allowed! How does the answer compare to the subtotal on the receipt?

Benefits: Builds math, analytical, and language skills

Tip: Make sure to congratulate your child on efforts made, whether right or wrong!

Why is play important?

- It contributes to brain development and problem-solving.¹ Much of what children learn about the world begins with play. It allows children to learn through trial and error and master skills needed to move on to the next task.
- Play helps children build coordination, balance, strength, and motor skills.
- It enhances bonds between caregivers and children.²
- Play motivates children to be more successful in the classroom.³ Children learn boundaries, cooperation, and collaboration!

Visit TheGeniusofPlay.org for more amazing facts about play.

the GENIUS of
PLAY

 It's more than play!

1. Dewar, G. (2008-2014). The cognitive benefits of play: Effects of learning on the brain. *Parenting Science*. Retrieved from <http://www.parentingscience.com/benefits-of-play.html>.
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 3. Kohl H.W. III, Cook H.D. (2013, October). Physical Activity, Fitness, and Physical Education: Effects on Academic Performance. In *Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK201501/>.



The Genius of Indoor and Outdoor Play

“Magic happens when an adult and a child play together.” —Kathleen Alfano, Ph.D.

Play is critical to children’s learning, success, and well-being. According to experts at The Genius of Play™, a nonprofit initiative that educates and inspires families to play more, children should have a balance of indoor and outdoor play, quiet and active play, and activities done alone and in a group.

Indoors

It’s so easy to just sit and watch TV together. Challenge your family by trying some new ways to play—without even leaving the house.

Puppetry:

60–90 minutes

Use a craft kit and everyday materials (like paper bags and socks) to create puppets. Act out a story with the puppet characters. Use fairy tales for inspiration, or create your own stories.

Benefits: Enhances creativity and fine motor skills

Roller Coaster:

60–90 minutes

Build an indoor roller coaster using strips of thin cardboard, tape, and books. Add a plastic cup at the end of the track. Release a marble from the top of the roller coaster and see if it travels along the entire track and lands in the cup.

Benefits: Builds problem-solving and engineering skills

Balloon Ball:

20–30 minutes

Organize a game of indoor volleyball using a balloon as the ball and a row of pillows on the floor as the net.

Benefits: Builds hand-eye coordination and physical fitness

Outdoors

Is the weather nice enough? Get outside and try these activities together.

Neighborhood ABC Hunt: **10–15 minutes**

Take a walk in your neighborhood. Look for something that begins with A, followed by B, and so on, until you have reached the end of the alphabet.

Benefits: Builds cognitive and language skills

Sculpture Garden:

30 minutes–1 day

Collect objects, such as sticks and rocks, around the yard or park that can be used to make a wind chime, an animal shape, a lucky charm, or an item to decorate your home. Make as many as you like!

Benefits: Enhances creativity and fine motor skills

Invent a Sport:

60–90 minutes

Try combining several of your child’s favorite sports or games into one! Decide on a goal for the game and how points will be awarded. Collect any sports equipment you have and decide how it will be used in this game. Write down the rules, if you like, then start playing!

Benefits: Builds social skills and physical fitness

The Role of Toys

Toys are one way to promote learning through play. Choosing different toys for your child can help ensure that he or she has a balance of various types of play.

- **Sports gear**, such as jump ropes, pogo sticks, and in-line skates, can help kids stay active and build their physical coordination.
- Kids can use **board games and puzzles** to develop their ability to think flexibly, solve problems, and cooperate with others.
- **Model kits, science sets, and arts and crafts** kits can help kids explore new interests while building their fine motor skills.
- Kids can use **animal or action figures** and dollhouses to build creativity, express themselves, and develop communication skills.



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It's more than play!

Visit TheGeniusofPlay.org for more indoor and outdoor play ideas!