

## RESOURCES

**“Learning through Play”**

[www.babyhearing.org/  
LanguageLearning/LearnPlay/  
index.asp](http://www.babyhearing.org/LanguageLearning/LearnPlay/index.asp)

**“Activities for Home”**

[www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/  
activities-for-home.html](http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/activities-for-home.html)

**Research News You Can Use: Debunking the Play vs. Learning Dichotomy**

[www.naeyc.org/content/  
research-news-you-can-use-  
play-vs-learning](http://www.naeyc.org/content/research-news-you-can-use-play-vs-learning)

*“Free and unstructured play is healthy and essential for helping children reach important social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones.”*

**New AAP Report Stresses Play for Healthy Development**

[http://www2.aap.org/  
pressroom/play-public.htm](http://www2.aap.org/pressroom/play-public.htm)

*For more information,  
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# Deaf Education at a glance...



KANSAS SCHOOL  
FOR THE DEAF  
OUTREACH

## PLAY PROMOTES LANGUAGE, COGNITIVE, & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Play is considered a joyful part of childhood, a time for a children to have fun and enjoy themselves. However, play is more than “just fun” for children. It is an essential activity for their cognitive, social, and language development. It is learning in action. Research indicates young deaf/hard of hearing children can have delays in play skills, which puts them at risk for delays in language and cognitive skills later on. Deaf/hard of hearing children are also at risk for delayed social skill development. This is why it is especially important for them to have the opportunity to engage in meaningful, self-directed play starting in the very early years.

### Why is play so important?

- Play is the natural way for young children to discover and explore new ideas and concepts. It is not artificial and is more meaningful than more structured teaching, especially during the early years. Children learn best through routines and in scenarios that allow them to explore their world.
- Adult participation in child-led play increases child/parent interactions and promotes bonding between parents and children. Play with siblings and peers promotes social skills and group problem-solving.
- Play gives parents and caregivers an opportunity to model language for children in a naturalistic, functional setting that is meaningful to the child.
- Hands-on, gadget-free play promotes creativity and imagination. It allows children to test new ideas and see them succeed or fail and learn from what they observe in a no pressure scenario.
- Play promotes dexterity and active, healthy bodies.

### How can we promote language development during play?

- Give your child enough time each day to engage in unstructured play. Carve out some time for yourself to sit down with your child during these play times.
- Allow your child to “lead the way.” As a caregiver, do not place demands on your child or quiz them at this time. Label actions and items and/or “sportscast” their play. This provides vocabulary and meaningful language models around activities that interest your child. Repetition is good.
- Provide children with toys that are open-ended and versatile (and don’t need batteries): blocks, dolls/dollhouses, play figures (e.g. farm animals), balls, dress up. There is no “right” way to play, so don’t correct your child. Allow him/her to try and fail. Provide non-judgmental language about your child’s play and play objects.

KSD Outreach Mission: To provide the highest quality of services, resources, and support to children ages birth-21 who are deaf/hard of hearing by collaborating with their families, their communities, and the professionals that serve them.