Learn to think about how others are feeling
Take turns and share
Make and follow rules
Work through conflict
Become leaders
Have fun
Use their imaginations
Deal with stress
Work as a group member

Play helps build social skills as children:

Why is play important?

- Many of the skills children need to be ready for school can be learned through play.
- There are four main areas of child development: social-emotional, intellectual (thinking), language, and physical development.
- When children play, they are learning and building skills in all of the main areas of development.
- Parents talking and playing with their children can benefit them even more.

Play helps build thinking skills as children:

- Practice concepts and skills like colors and shapes
- Learn new ideas and skills from adults and other children
- Solve problems
- Experiment with different objects
- Plan what they will do next
- Learn the difference between what is real and what is make believe
- Take risks
Play helps build language and literacy skills as children:

- Speak and listen
- Have conversations
- Practice new words
- Use describing words to talk about their play
- Re-tell stories

Play helps build physical development skills as children:

- Practice using the large muscles in their legs and arms
- Practice using the small muscles in their hands
- Run, jump, hop and do other activities that help them develop coordination

Play activities to do with young children:

There are many fun learning activities you can do with simple items you have at home.

- Pretend play—use items from around your house to play school, restaurant, store, or post office
- Dress-up—give your children old clothes or uniforms to play dress up
- Puzzles—make your own puzzles by cutting apart cereal boxes
- Play dough—make your own with 1 cup flour, 1/2 cup salt, 1/2 cup water and food coloring
- Simple games—play “Simon Says” or “I Spy”