



PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL



- Why is play important?
- Barriers to acquiring play skills
- How does your child prefer to play
- Guide to observing a play session
- Interests & Motivators
- Pair with your child
- Build onto their play skills





- Play occurs across a continuum
- Peer play is significant for a child's development (Fromberg and Bergen, 2015)
- Symbolic and social play occur across all stages and ages (Howes & Matheson 1992).
- According to Broadhead, play serves many purposes (2003):
 - Tactile experiences (through textures sand, water, rocks, dirt) promotes discrimination & imaginary play
 - Cooperative play promotes problem solving, flexibility, and innovation
 - Solitary play encourages connecting with lived experiences and memory skills
 - These experiences allow for diverse learning opportunities to take place:
 - Early academic exposure to architecture & mathematics skills
 - Expansion of vocabulary
 - Physical balance
 - Visual harmony
 - Emotional regulation
 - Emotional expression



- These challenges are predominant in the core deficits of Autism Spectrum Disorder and other social/communication disorders (American Psychiatric, 2013).
- Often those that struggle with expressive or reciprocal communication, restrictive or fixated interests, have limited communication, impaired imitation, and anxiety across social situations will show difficulty with play



LETS FIRST IDENTIFY HOW YOUR CHILD PLAYS



Photocopiable resource

Table 2.1 The Social Play Continuum - Side 1: a tool for play observation, pupil assessment and evaluation of Areas of Provision

Observation start time:	Children entering play:	Observation finish time:
Area of provision:	Children leaving play:	

L = Language

RL = Reciprocal language

A = Action observed

RA = Reciprocal Action

UA = Language and Action combined

RURA = Reciprocal language and reciprocal action combined

ASSOCIATIVE DOMAIN	SOCIAL DOMAIN	HIGHLY SOCIAL DOMAIN	COOPERATIVE DOMAIN
<p>A: Looks towards peers</p> <p>A: Watches play</p> <p>A: Imitates play</p> <p>A: Object offered, not accepted</p> <p>A/L: Object taken, altercation</p> <p>A: Parallel play period</p> <p>L: Self-talk</p> <p>A/L: Comment on action directed at peer; peer does not respond</p>	<p>A: Smiling</p> <p>A: Laughter</p> <p>L: Play noises, play voice</p> <p>RA: Eye contact made</p> <p>A: Object taken, no altercation</p> <p>RA: Object offered and received</p> <p>L/A: Consent sought and object accessed</p> <p>L: Approval sought, not given</p> <p>RL: Approval sought and given</p> <p>L: Instruction given, no response</p> <p>L/RA: Instruction given, positive response</p> <p>L: Question asked, no response</p> <p>RL: Question asked, response given</p> <p>L/RA: Comment on own action/ described intent directed at peer, peer looks</p> <p>RL: Comment on own action/ described intent directed at peer, verbal response</p>	<p>RA: Offering/accepting of objects evident</p> <p>RL: Dialogue, a mix of activity related and non-related but a play theme is evident</p> <p>RL: Comment on own action/ described intent with acknowledgement leading to extended exchange</p> <p>RL: Sporadic dialogue develops role play themes</p> <p>RA/L: Eye contact/laughter (play noise) combined as behavioural cluster</p> <p>RA/RL: Brief reciprocal sequences, e.g. giving/following instructions, seeking/giving approval, offering/ accepting objects, asking/ answering questions</p> <p>RURA: New ideas or resources have impact on developing theme</p>	<p>RA: Offering/accepting objects sustains/extends play theme</p> <p>RL: Sustained dialogue is activity related and clear theme(s) emerge</p> <p>RL: Explanations/descriptions utilized</p> <p>RURA: New ideas/resources extends play and is sustained</p> <p>RURA: Children display a shared understanding of goals</p> <p>RL: Offering and accepting verbal help</p> <p>RA: Offering and accepting physical help</p> <p>RURA: Verbal and physical help combined</p> <p>RURA: Problem identified and solved</p> <p>RURA: Sustained dramatic scenarios enacted linked to play theme(s)</p>









CAREGIVER OBSERVATION SHEET

Observation Date/time:

Tasks:

1. Collect items your child frequently asks for, grabs, or gestures towards

2. Greet child

3. Set timer for 5-10 minutes and start observation

4. Describe interactions

Steps:

Place child's toys/activities in one room or area

Bring child to observation space and invite them to play

Set timer and write down any items he/she interacts with

Ex: Shake ribbons; sing specific song; roll cars, smiling and waving hand, etc.

Interaction 1:

Interaction 2:

Interaction 3:

Interaction 4:

Interaction 5:

Interaction 6:

Interaction 7:

Interaction 8:

WHAT ARE MOTIVATORS & INTERESTS



Interests are: Items, activities, people, or experiences that your may seek out, ask for, or show “enjoyment” when engaged with

Motivators are: Often interests that hold a higher value than typical interests. These can change for a variety of reasons, but because of its value, a child will often work harder to access it.

Looking at the observation sheet, what are some items your child frequently engages with, or can engage in with long periods of time?

What are some items your child is willing to wait for following an adult led activity (i.e. brush teeth, then iPad?)



PLAY AT YOUR CHILD'S LEVEL

- Make a list of items that your child has shown interest in for short periods of time, or long periods of time.
 - These can be as simple as a favorite spoon!
 - Be as specific as possible
- Thinking back to the play continuum how does your child play? (1 or More areas may be appropriate)





Do's	Don'ts
Bring out your child's "fun" items	Avoid placing any demands
Be fully present and available (eliminate distractions)	Refrain from correcting or guiding play
Honor all requests (within reason)	Avoid moving toys unless led by child
Deny unreasonable requests but redirect to an alternative (that is compatible if possible)	Refrain from reacting to other inappropriate behaviors (focus is play!)

Ruppel, 2021

WHAT PAIRING CAN LOOK LIKE



WHAT IT CAN ALSO LOOK LIKE





BUILD ON YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS

- Child who enjoys wagon rides could extend into other games:
 - Tag
 - Red light , green light
 - Wagon Races
 - Animal parade



- Child who enjoys to stim with objects such as bags
 - First try similar sounds, visual appeal, etc
 - Then move into diverse objects that are equally as enjoyable
 - Things that float/fly
 - Or things that make certain noises



PLACE HIGH INTERESTS (POTENTIAL MOTIVATORS) IN BETWEEN TASKS

- Child who stickers may enjoy other games:
 - Activity books
 - Word activities with stickers
 - Math games counting with stickers
 - Sorting by categories of stickers



- To integrate tasks within play try:
 - Simple requests (your child can do with minimal support)
 - Slow integration of requests
 - Ensure not all play activities include requests
 - Use across motivators only within play



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