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Principles to Inspire Families to Play Well

Developed in collaboration with parenting expert Jessica Joelle Alexander following the findings of the LEGO® Play Well Report

1 Challenge Your Mindset

Start by challenging the way you think. Play is not the lazy choice. The benefits of play are profound for children, families and society. Believe in them and commit to making play a priority, be it in the physical, digital or both worlds.

2 Encourage Free Play

The less structured and supervised play is, the more rewarding children find it. Give a few inspirational directions but let children direct the action. Free, self-directed play empowers children, so they develop confidence, autonomy and self-esteem.

3 Kickstart with Physical Play

A small amount of physical play can help parents get into the right mindset for play, especially after a long day at work. Just ten minutes of an activity that gets hearts pumping and creates laughter helps families to connect in a way that is fundamental to family play.

Variety is key

There are many ways to play: physical, creative, emotional, social, digital and cognitive. Balance and variety is essential to develop a breadth of skills. Encourage your child to pick from a menu of multi-sensory play activities – active social play, online storytelling played out in real life, critical thinking and puzzle games, fantasy and constructive play.

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5 Go with the Flow

Flow is a psychological state we get to when we play well. We become highly creative, lose sense of time and experience deep contentment and learn most easily. When play starts to unfold easily and effortlessly, note what you were doing...then do more of it the next time you play.

6 Think Creativity over Mess

Most of us like to keep the house neat and tidy, but that can mean we are hiding away vital playthings. Children don't see mess, they see a stimulating environment full of tools to help them be creative. Adopting this view should help us leave out toys and craft supplies more easily, even at times when we struggle to see nothing but mess!

7 Embrace Mistakes

If your child makes a mistake when you are playing a game together online, or building something in the real world, don't tell them or fix it straight away, let them figure it out for themselves. Ask them why they are correcting it in the certain way. Help to support and not direct, it will help build resilience and a growth mindset.

Be Silly

Children like seeing parents being silly. Choose a real-life or imaginary person, film or TV character together and play it out with your child. Funny voices, mimicry and physical actions help children flex their imaginations and storytelling abilities and helps you explore emotions together and better get to know your child's world.

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9 Plan a Family Playdate – and Keep It!

Children love having something to look forward to, so plan a family playdate together, even if it's just 15 minutes before dinner. Let them call the shots by choosing layout, snacks, games to play or movies to watch. Planning the date themselves will encourage them to be creative and train their decision-making skills.

Gamify Chores

We all have to do chores – even kids – but they don't have to be boring. A simple way to make them more fun is just to put on some music and turn dusting or folding into a dance party. Or add an element of competition by trying to beat the clock as you all join in to clear away the dishes, turning chores into precious bonding time.

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