



Toys and Young Children

Play is very important to a child's healthy development and learning. According to Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (TRUCE), children use play to build their knowledge, meet their social/emotional needs, and to learn life skills. The way children play is based on their experiences. If children are exposed to violence and bad language from television, video games and computers, their play will be affected by it. Children are spending more time in front of a screen and less time playing with each other. Some parents have a difficult time choosing the right toys and materials to engage their children in healthy play. Toys are expensive and children get bored with them after 20 minutes. Parents, you can change that! Boys and girls love to play dress up and providing oversized clothes you no longer wear will provide hours of play and creativity. Children love to wear their parents' shoes. Let them walk in your shoes. If your toaster breaks, cut the cord and give the toaster to your children to play restaurant or house. Wash out plastic food containers and let your children use them for their imaginary store. Play traditional games like checkers and cards, but change the rules and remember there doesn't always have to be a winner or loser! Puzzles develop critical thinking and math skills. Buy a calendar at your local dollar store and cut puzzle pieces out of each picture and what you'll get are 12 different puzzles for one dollar. Recycle household items like plastic containers, clean food boxes and have your children create structures or glue them together to make a work of art. Organize play dates with your friends and neighbors and let your children play outdoors. Give them the opportunity to choose an outdoor activity. Good toys don't have to be expensive and the good thing about this type of play is that parents can have fun too!