

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



Puzzles

Putting a puzzle together can be an enjoyable activity done alone or with others.

Did you know?

Allowing your child time to work it out themselves helps to develop problem solving skills and pride in their own successes. If your child is finding it difficult, help them by discreetly moving the correct pieces closer or prompting them to rotate pieces, before they become frustrated and stop.

Add language

Try making comments and asking occasional questions to promote reasoning and thinking skills e.g. "This piece has a straight edge. It must be an edge piece. I wonder if it goes on the top or the bottom or the side. It is sky coloured. Where do you think it might go?"

Talking about how shapes and objects are similar and different provides the language to match the visual perception (making sense of what they are seeing) and develops cognitive skills (ability to think and reason).

Other development

Puzzles are an activity that has a clear end and children can recognise their success.

This helps to build self-esteem and emotional development. Picking up and placing small puzzle pieces helps your child to choose their preferred hand (work out if they are left handed or right handed) and refine their hand skills.



Completing puzzles together is a fun way to develop teamwork, sharing and turn-taking skills.

As children develop and try more complex puzzles, they learn early maths and science concepts such as a whole is made of parts. They learn to look for patterns.

Variations

Simple, 3D construction pieces are another way to enjoy puzzles e.g. foam puzzle pieces that can make a house. You could make your own puzzle by cutting up pictures or drawings.

- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa