

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.



Autumn Play

Autumn brings cooler temperatures which are perfect for playing outside with toddlers. In some places the first few rains of autumn can be an exciting time as streams begin to flow again.

Did you know?

Making 'boats' to race down streams or float on puddles helps your toddler learn early science concepts. They experiment with different materials such as leaves and sticks. They discover what moves fast and what sinks.

Add language

Autumn is full of changing colours and textures. Talk about colours, textures, shapes and sizes while looking at nature with your toddler. Follow your toddler's lead. Provide the words that go with what has captured their interest.

As their language develops, you can introduce your toddler to concepts such as "fast, faster, fastest" when the 'boats' are racing. You can also talk about their size, weight, and shape as you experiment together. See what floats and what doesn't. This provides the words which match these early maths and science concepts.

Other development

Taking turns to experiment with or race the 'boats' helps your toddler develop their social and cooperative play skills.

Collecting natural materials and making their own 'boats'



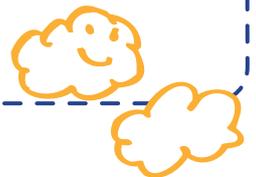
helps toddlers strengthen their fine motor and problem solving skills.

Variations

Autumn is a great time to go for a walk outside together. You could collect some "treasures" or play a game of "spot that". Bushland, beach, parks or gardens, even your own backyard, can all be perfect locations for engaging with nature during autumn. Why not get wet, get dirty, get barefoot or dig? Children will discover the scientist within while engaging with the autumn world. They will build resilience and self-esteem as they get to play without being hurried or interrupted.

Safety

Always supervise children around water.



- 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