

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.



## Food Play and Cooking

Food play with your baby is a way of sharing experiences that stimulate their senses through taste, touch and smell.

### Did you know?

Babies love exploring by touching, smelling, squishing, tasting and playing with food. Letting them explore their food with all their senses may reduce sensitivity and refusal of new foods.

### Add language

Provide the words that go with what your baby is seeing, touching and tasting. Use naming words and describing words. This helps them learn to associate words with experiences. The words they hear most often become the words they learn first.

### Other development

Letting older babies feed themselves develops their coordination and fine motor skills. While exploring the shape, colour and texture of food babies learn about their world. For example some things are wet and cool, while others are squishy and warm!



Leave clean up of your baby and high chair to the end of food time and allow them to enjoy exploring their food. This should be less stressful for you and them.

### Safety

Always supervise babies when they're eating solid food.

- 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](http://www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas) or visit [www.facebook.com/playgroupwa](https://www.facebook.com/playgroupwa)

