

# Play Skills - Elementary

**Rationale: Play** allows **children** to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. **Play** is **important** to healthy brain development. It is through **play** that **children** at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them

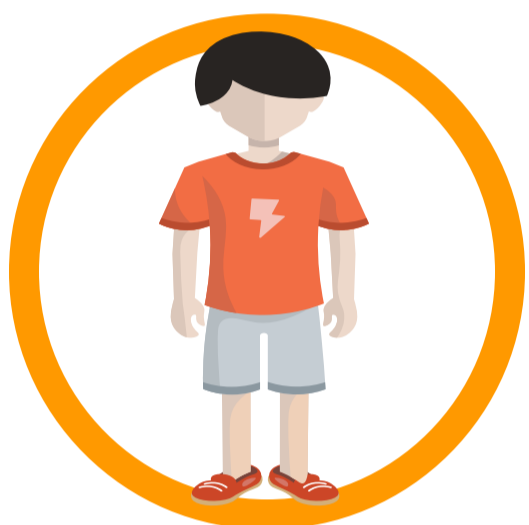
## How to Teach Play Skills

### Types of Play



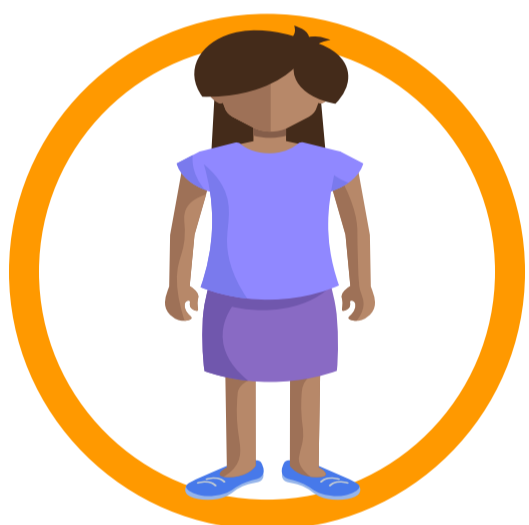
#### Repetitive Play

Repetitive motor actions with or without objects (e.g. baby shakes rattle, child pounds on the piano)



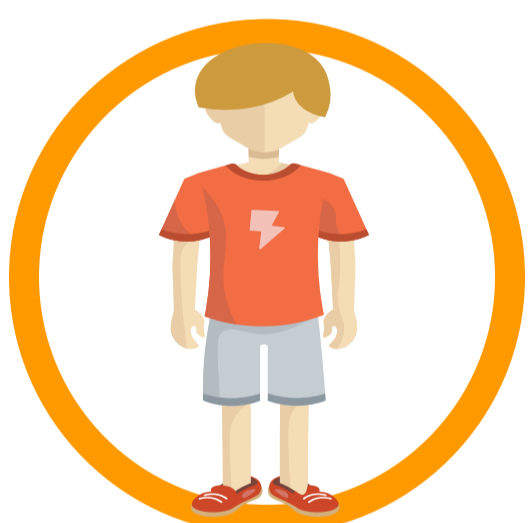
#### Constructive Play

Manipulating of objects to construct something (e.g. play-dough snakes, block tower, mud pies)



#### Imaginative/Dramatic Play

Symbolic and imaginary role-play / pretend play (e.g. playing in centers)



#### Organized Play

Games with Rules (e.g. sports, card games, board games)

### Imitation

You can imitate your child's play to see if your child takes notice. Once you have their attention, try to add something new to the play (e.g. your child is rolling a car back and forth on the ground, show them how your car rolls off the table to see if they will copy!) (Hanan Early Language Program, 2018).

### Prompting

Prompt your child to engage in play independently and with others (e.g. sibling). You may need to coach them on what to say (verbal prompt) or how to complete an action (guide the child's hand).

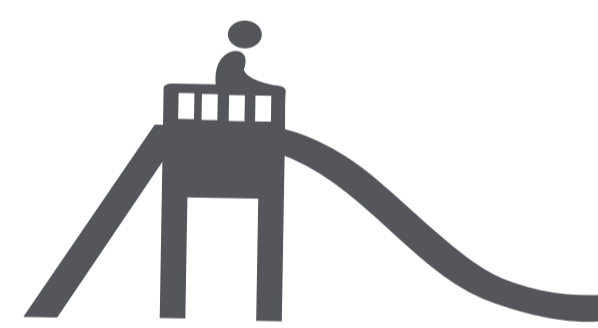
### Reinforcement

Use positive reinforcement to encourage your child to engage in play! When working on play skills, first try playing with toys your child really enjoys and giving them lots of praise! See the "Power of Reinforcement" handout for ideas!

### Repetition

Practice, practice, practice! Like all other skills, play skills take time and repetition to develop!

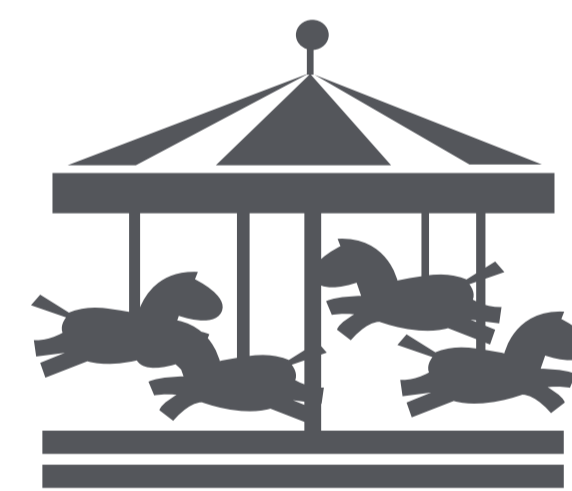
## Social Styles



#### Solitary Play

Child often plays alone - limited interest in others

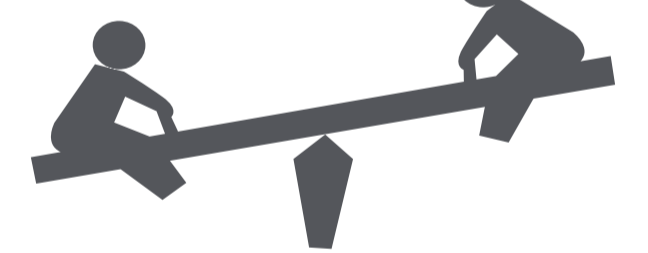
Child may exclude others from their play or space



#### Parallel Play

Typically develops after "solitary play"

Child plays "beside" a peer but not "with" a peer



#### Interactive Play

Typically develops after "parallel play"

Child will engage/interact with other children that share a common goal/interest

### Common Barriers

- Communication difficulties
- Understanding the feelings of others
- Challenges with transitions
- Rigidity with routines
- Understanding and following social rules (e.g. turn-taking, sharing, destroying a peers block tower)
- Restricted interests

**It is important to understand the child's level of play as well as their social style before implementing effective strategies to promote social skills** 

References:  
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Hanan Early Language Program. (2018). Hanan 4 "I"'s to Socialize.  
Parten, M.B. Social Participation Among Preschool Children. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1932, 27, 243-269  
Piaget, J. Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood. New York: W.W. Norton, 1962

