

Games that support development

Games that support attachment

- Hide and seek
- Mirroring activities where one person does an action and the other reflects it back
- Listening games e.g. point to my call, where an adult covers their eyes, and a child hides in the room and makes a sound. The adult has to point to where the child is hiding. If they get it right, the child finds a new spot!
- Partner walks where one person closes their eyes and allows the other to guide them around the room.
- Mirroring and listening games, where a child sits back to back with an adult and builds a tower. They describe the tower to the adult, and the adult listens carefully and tries to build the same tower!

***All of these games support children to feel seen and heard in relationship**

Games that benefit physical health

- Rough and tumble
- Stuck in the mud
- Obstacle courses
- Tag/ chase
- Ball games
- Dancing
- Musical chairs
- Hop scotch
- Skipping
- Adventure playgrounds

***All of these games encourage children to move their bodies building bone strength, muscle mass and cardiovascular health**

Games that support impulse control

- Red light, Green light
- One line story (take it in turns to share one line of the story each)
- Hide and seek
- Rhythm claps, where one person claps a rhythm and the other listens and claps it back
- Tower building, where you try to build a tower as high as possible
- Jenga
- Musical statues
- Ring toss, where you try to throw a ring so that it lands on a target

***All of these games encourage children to pause before taking action, to practice patience and/or to reflect.**

Games that support regulation and grounding

- ‘Move to my beat,’ where the adult drums a beat and the child moves around the space in time with the rhythm
- Creating rhythms together using musical instruments
- ‘3 things,’ - Point out 3 things you can hear, 3 things you can see, 3 things you can touch
- Flower/ dandelion breathing, where you pretend to smell a flower, and then blow the seeds off of a dandelion
- Story time

***These games utilise movement, rhythm, breath and connection to support a child to regulate/ground themselves in the present moment**

Games that spark imagination and creativity

- Role play
- Story making
- Art making
- Anything can be anything, where you take it in turns to pick up a piece of material and transform it into something!
- ‘YES! And....’ Where one person say’s ‘let’s all pretend we are e.g. walking through mud,’ and everyone pretends, until another says ‘YES! and, suddenly, it starts raining!’ and everyone pretends to shelter from the rain whilst walking through mud
- Improv games like ‘park bench.’

***All of these games encourage spontaneity and creativity, known to benefit cognitive flexibility, problem solving skills and emotional resilience (to name just a few benefits). Let’s also not forget, they’re just great fun!!!**

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning."

Fred Rodgers