

Child's play



TOP TEN TIPS
for parents and families

Child's play

All parents want the best for their children – and one of the best things is play! All children can play, no matter what their ability. Play isn't just messing around – it's a very important part of growing up. Through play, children are learning about the world around them, practising talking and listening as well as finding out how to make friends and get along with others. Here are some **TIPS** to help you and your child play.

Getting started



Just because your baby can't talk, doesn't mean they're not learning. Babies learn all the time through watching and listening. Talking (or signing), singing and reading all help your baby's development – and they will enjoy it too. Talk (or sign), read and sing to your baby to give them the best start in life.

Messy play

Children really love messy play. Play with things that your child can get their

hands into something as simple as a bowl of water or sand



can be fun to a child. Keep messy play to one area in your house and put down a plastic sheet or newspapers. If you can, get messy, playing outdoors.

Outdoor play

This is important for physical fitness and developing self confidence. Activities need a bit of challenge and uncertainty – too safe can equal boring! Make friends with other parents in the area – the more adults keeping an eye out for children, the safer it will be to play outside.



Safety

Teach your child about safety – this includes road safety, stranger danger and safety at home.

Make sure to supervise small children playing with water, and don't leave small objects within easy reach – if it can fit inside a toilet roll then a child under 3 can choke on it.



Leave the clearing up

Don't get too worried about having a tidy house. The dust will still be there tomorrow!



Small children and tidy homes just do not go together and you will miss out on more important things like having fun with your child. Make sure you make time to play!

Be creative

Children don't just play with toys. Children love playing



with household items such as pans, wooden spoons, and sponges.

Leave your child to choose what to use and how to use it, for example, a sheet thrown over a table or chairs makes a great den.

Helping out

Young children love helping around the house. What may seem like boring chores to you can be fun

as well as a real learning experience for your child.

It may take longer but laying the table, Hoovering, dusting, washing up can be good fun when you do them together.



Play with the elements



Let your child experience playing with water, wind and earth.

Make mud pies, go exploring through the woods, have water fights, play in the bath, make and fly kites! When it's wet and windy go out for a walk with your child – children love splashing about in puddles.

Free play

When you first give your child a new toy or puzzle, they may need your help, but it's also OK for children to play on their own. When your child plays alone, they're learning how to keep themselves occupied. When children play with friends they make up games and learn how to get on with others.



Look after yourself

Being a parent isn't always easy, so it's important to look after yourself as well as your child. Make sure you have people to talk to when you need to and get time to yourself – even if it's only a cup of tea and reading the newspaper while your child's playing.



National Playday

Every year there is a national playday in Scotland. To find out what's happening this year visit [**www.playday.org.uk**](http://www.playday.org.uk)

Local libraries

Libraries welcome families and children. As well as offering a variety of resources to borrow from books to DVD's, they run activities for parents and children such as mother and toddler sessions, help with homework and 'bouncing rhymes' for parents with young children.

Where to find help:

Contact

0808 808 3555

Offers information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with any special need or disability.

www.contact.org.uk

Enquire

0345 123 2303

Practical advice and information about education and additional support for learning in Scotland.

www.enquire.org.uk

Families Outside

0800 254 0088

Support and information helpline offers help and support to prisoners' families.

www.familiesoutside.org.uk

Lone Parent Helpline

0808 801 0323

The Lone Parent Helpline provides support and advice on anything from dealing with a break-up, moving into work or sorting out maintenance, benefit or tax credit issues.

www.opfs.org.uk

Parenting across Scotland

You can access free parent resources, support networks and parent helplines on a range of topics.

www.parentingacrossscotland.org

ParentLine Scotland

0800 028 2233

For any parent or carer in Scotland who needs information, support or guidance or simply someone to talk to.

www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

08080 10 10 11

Provides support and advice to anyone concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use.

www.sfad.org.uk

Sleep Scotland

0800 138 6565

Sleep Scotland's free sleep support line provides on-the-spot guidance to parents and guardians struggling with their children's and teenagers' sleep problems.

www.sleepscotland.org

Young Minds

0808 802 5544 parents' helpline

Information on child and adolescent mental health. Services for parents and professionals.

www.youngminds.org.uk


Parenting
across Scotland



playtalkread

For more tips about play:

www.parentingacrossscotland.org

www.playscotland.org

www.playtalkread.com

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