

Pre –School Home Teaching Top Tips for Play

- ✓ **Make time to play!** *Children learn through play. In a busy world, it can be easy to get distracted. Plan to build play into your child's daily routine. By making play a regular activity your child will be reassured by the routine; will learn to expect and be more accepting of others company in play; have the opportunity to practise their skills and begin to learning new ones.*

- ✓ **Get to know your child's cues!** *Start with what you already know! The best time for play is when your child is happy, settled and secure. Make sure your child is fed, comfortable and well rested. Children tend not to engage well, or learn, if the timing isn't quite right. (This will only lead to upset and frustration for both of you.) Allow for some flexibility. If your child is happy to play extend your play session slightly, if time allows. If your child is restless consider postponing play until another time or shorten your play session. Get to know your child's likes and dislikes. Toys can be really useful to calm, reassure and distract children.*

- ✓ **Limit distractions!** *Children's focus and attention, at times, can be extremely limited. You might have to work really hard to get your child's attention or engage your child in play. Busy environments can be over stimulating and both children and adults can become easily distracted. It's a good idea to: choose a time that is quieter, when less people are about; choose a limited amount of toys you want your child to play with and tidy the others away; turn the T.V. off, remove tablets out of sight and put mobile phones of silent.*

- ✓ **Have everything you'll need at hand!** *Try where possibly to plan ahead and offer your full attention to your child. Children will quickly wander off if you lose focus, even just to collect something. Start with a toy or activity that interests your child. Aim to offer just one toy at a time, keeping the others out of sight..*

- ✓ **Be supportive and patient!** *It can be a challenge for some children to engage in play and make progress in their learning. Some children would not necessarily choose to play with toys, while others can get stuck on one activity and their play can become repetitive and often solitary. It is important that children experience a broad range of play experiences to promote learning opportunities in all areas of their development and well-being. Children aren't always born with a natural ability to play or socialise with others. This is why children need adult support to teach: people and play can be fun; learn how to use toys and resources and offer support to manage emotions and challenges that can arise during play. The pace of progress can at times be extremely slow which can make it difficult for adults to keep motivated. Take small steps and remember... it is important to celebrate your successes and achievements as well as your child's!*

- ✓ **Have Fun!** *Some children will be happy to play for long periods of time, while others will only offer brief periods of attention or settle at play for a few minutes at a time. If carrying out a play session is a challenge, look for fun in everyday activities and routines e.g. splashing in the bath; peek-a-boo games during dressing or changing; playing drums or aeroplanes with a spoon during mealtimes etc. Like some adults, Children can also feel at times uncomfortable, self-conscious and unsure of what they are expected to do in play. Learning how to support your child in play is a skill that can be learned like any other. Have fun learning together!*