

## Growing and Learning Through Play

Children are wired to play—you can see this from very early in a child's life. Even at just a few months old, babies' curiosity about the world around them is evident when they reach for objects, mimic facial expressions and sounds, and giggle and laugh. Their growing brains crave these playful connections, which help to build a sense of safety and trust.

That play-based, curiosity-driven way of moving through the world continues as children get older. Playful experiences serve as a vehicle for children's growth and development. Through play, children learn to regulate their feelings, adopt new perspectives, think flexibly, solve problems, and much more. That's why it is so important for the grown-ups in young children's lives to support, encourage, and model many ways to play. Consider these ideas to facilitate children's play:



- **Tower talk.** Playing together helps children consider new ways of doing things, uncover different perspectives, and build cooperation skills. Together, build a tower (out of blocks, food storage containers, paper cups, or whatever you have on hand) and taking turns adding to the stack. With each turn, share something about yourself. As the tower gets taller, your relationship will grow, too!
- **Mix it up.** Add play into your daily tasks by inviting children to help you think of different ways to get things done. Instead of folding towels, you might roll them. Instead of walking to get the mail, you might hop like a bunny! What other ordinary chores can you do in a creative, playful way?
- **Imagine it!** Store-bought toys can be special, but don't underestimate the playful power of objects you might have laying around the house. With just a little imagination, bowls turned upside-down become a drum set. Couch cushions become castle walls. And that box is *definitely* a spooky cave!
- **Push play.** When children (or grown-ups!) have big feelings, such as frustration or sadness, a playful outlook can make a big difference. Together with children, draw a circle on a piece of paper. In the circle, draw two lines (like a pause button) and an arrow (like a "play" button). When things start to feel serious or stressful, "push" the button to "pause." Take a deep breath and think of a way to approach the situation playfully. Now pretend to press the "play" button. Can you turn this stressful moment into a game?

## Play...All Grown Up

As you know, children look to grown-ups for guidance for almost everything, including play. It can be difficult at times for us to tap into our playful side, but it's worth the effort! Keep these things in mind:

- **Rediscover it.** We can model play by rediscovering it for ourselves. Play may look a little different as a grown-up, and that's okay. The key is to find—and regularly do—things that bring you joy. Consider joining a recreational sports team, book club, or video game league. Fill pages of a journal with short stories, or a canvas with colorful paint.
- **Schedule it.** While spontaneous play is wonderful, with our busy schedules, being intentional can help us make play a regular part of our lives. Can you set aside time for play each week? Can you schedule it into your daily routine? You might try to choose a time each day in which you need a natural pick-me-up, such as in the middle of the afternoon or first thing in the morning. Include the children in your care, but remember that you can play without children, too!
- **Savor it.** In the video above, Zoraima Rosario-Rolón, provider to FFN caregivers, explains how the "lightbulb moments" that children often experience during play can also be a beautiful gift for caregivers to receive. As you nurture a playful attitude in yourself and in your relationships with children, you can be confident that you truly are making a positive difference. You're setting the stage for children's success in life!

This Article is from Sesame Street in Communities for more resources like this, please visit: <https://sesameworkshop.org/resources/growing-and-learning-through-play/>.

## Paper Plate Rainbow Fish Craft

Inspired by the gorgeous picture book 'The Rainbow Fish', we've created our very own ADORABLE paper plate Rainbow Fish craft. The more observant of you will notice that our rainbow fish is less rainbow and more purple, white and blue with a fleck of the essential silver. Well sometimes you just have to work with the materials you have to hand and as far as my kids are concerned, it's just like the Rainbow Fish character they adore!



That aside, with lots of painting, cutting and sticking involved, this is a great craft for developing fine motor skills. And of course, while we've based our fish on 'The Rainbow Fish', Arty Crafty kids are free to present their fish however they choose and are encouraged to explore their creativity and simply go with the flow.

### Paper Plate Rainbow Fish Craft

- \* Paper Plate
- \* Tissue Paper
- \* Tinfoil or Silver Wrapping Paper
- \* Blue Paint
- \* Stapler
- \* PVA Glue
- \* White Paper or Large Googly Eye



To begin, paint the paper plate. Preschoolers and young children like to paint and use lots of it! Depending on the quality of the paper plate there's potential for it to get very soggy and take a while to dry. Try swapping the paintbrush for a sponge and this 'should' prevent 'over use' and soggy paper plates!



Once the paper plate is dry, cut out a triangular shape to create a mouth and staple the triangle to the opposite side to form a tail.

Next, cut out multiple pieces of colored tissue paper and begin sticking the tissue paper to the paper plate to create scales.



Finish off with a large paper eye and ta-da, your Arty Crafty Kids should now have a gorgeous colorful Paper Plate Rainbow Fish Craft.

For this article and more resources like it, visit <https://www.artycraftykids.com>.

## Kids in the Kitchen

### FroYo Bites

Fruity FroYo Bites deliver the goodness of yogurt and fresh fruit in a fun way, without added sugars.

### Ingredients

Pink

- 1 cup yogurt, plain
- 1 cup strawberries

Purple

- 1 cup yogurt, plain
- 1 cup blackberries (or blueberries)

### Instructions

For pink, blend plain yogurt and strawberries together in a food processor or blender.

For purple, blend plain yogurt and blackberries or blueberries together in a food processor or blender.

Using a piping bag or small spoon, scoop yogurt into a mold or ice cube tray. Freeze until ready to eat. Makes 10-12 'cubes' of each flavor.

For this fun recipe and others, please visit [www.superhealthykids.com](http://www.superhealthykids.com).



## Provider Appreciation Day!

Join us on May 12th to celebrate your child care provider, teacher or early educator. Providers play such a big and important role in our community.

They care for, nurture, and support our children and their families. Please take a moment to let them know how much they are appreciated. You and your child can create a card for them, text a message of thanks, bring them a favorite treat, or let your legislator know how much they mean to you. Thank you for helping us lift up these often unsung heroes.

For more ideas about celebrating the day, visit <https://providerappreciation.org/>



## Bartlett Beginnings Opportunities

Bartlett has so many offerings for families with babies. Please register for the groups you plan to attend by contacting Sara Gress, 907-796-8975 or [sgress@bartlethospital.org](mailto:sgress@bartlethospital.org), on the [Bartlett Calendar](#) website, or through [Bartlett Baby & Toddler Group Facebook Page](#).

### Bartlett Baby-Parent Time

Every Thursday 12-1:30pm, in-person @ Bartlett Regional Hospital

### Parents of Toddler Group

Mondays from 11 am-12:30 pm at the Gymnastics Academy

### Dads & Kiddos Play Group

First Saturday of every month, meet as an outside walk and/play group. Details of location and time available via email [sgress@bartlethospital.org](mailto:sgress@bartlethospital.org) or through [Bartlett Baby & Toddler Group Facebook Page](#).

### Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Group

Last Wednesday of the month, from 6:00-7:00 pm via Zoom. Contact Sara Gress for more information and a link to the meeting.

### "Real Talk" Mothers' Support Group

Last Wednesday of the month, from 7:00-8:00 pm via Zoom. Contact Sara Gress for more information and a link to the meeting.



Alerts about this bulletin are emailed to families whose children are enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Find this bulletin and many other family resources at [www.juneaufamilies.org](http://www.juneaufamilies.org). The Juneau Parent Bulletin is created by SEAAEYC in coordination with the **Juneau Partnerships for Families and Children**, with funding support from **thread**. Find us and Like us on [Facebook!](#)

SEAAEYC | 3200 Hospital Dr. Ste. 204, Juneau, AK | 907-789-1235 | [www.aeyc-sea.org](http://www.aeyc-sea.org).

## Imagination Library

Do you have a child in your life who will be 5 by September 1, 2023? It's time to get them registered and ready for kindergarten!

Help them get ready by reading *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!* by Nancy Carlson

**SUMMARY OF BOOK:** Henry wakes up excited for kindergarten and gets ready to go, with some reminders from his mom. They talk about what to expect, but when they get to school, Henry is nervous. After checking out the classroom, he decides to stay and have fun.

**\*BEFORE READING** (Ask questions and use what the child already knows to add to the discussion):

Try questions such as these:

1. "Looking at the cover, what do you think this story is about?"
2. "What do you think happens in a kindergarten classroom? What do you find most exciting about kindergarten?"

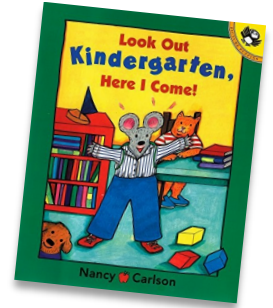
**DURING READING** (ask these questions):

1. As you read about Henry getting ready, ask your child what she does to get ready for the day. What's the same/different?
2. What has Henry learned already to be ready for kindergarten? Help your child learn those things, too.
3. Why did Henry want to go home? Why did he decide to stay?
4. Will Henry like being a kindergartener? Why or why not?

**AFTER READING** (activity to extend book experience):

1. If you can, set up a time to visit a real kindergarten classroom, talking with your child beforehand about what he might see.
2. Play kindergarten, with you as the student and your child as the teacher. Toys can be classmates.

For tips and resources to help your child transition to kindergarten, visit the 'Ready for Kindergarten' page on [www.juneaufamilies.org](http://www.juneaufamilies.org). For more literacy activities like this one, visit [www.bestbeginningsalaska.org](http://www.bestbeginningsalaska.org).



## thread Child Care Referrals and Child Care Assistance

Looking for child care? thread is ready to help you find the care your family needs. Try thread's online search tool at [threadalaska.org/search](http://threadalaska.org/search). A quick search by child care program name or location gives you details like cost and ages served. For a free referral with a thread Specialist, call 800.278.3723, from 8 am - 4:30 pm, Monday-Friday. You'll receive tools and resources to assist with your search for quality care. thread also administers the Child Care Assistance Program to help eligible families cover the cost of care. For more information, call 855.479.2212 or email [threadCCA@thrivalaska.com](mailto:threadCCA@thrivalaska.com).



Be sure to visit [www.juneaufamilies.org](http://www.juneaufamilies.org) to get in touch with partner agencies and find out what services, classes, and resources they offer, or call 907-789-1235.

## We Can't Do It without YOU!

Did you know that donations from supportive people like YOU make books available to children all over SE Alaska? Yep! Dolly gets us started, but **your generous donations keep the program going**. For \$30 a year you can ensure that a child receives a free book in the mail every month. Make your tax deductible donation today at: <http://www.aeyc-sea.org/imagination-library.html>. A big thanks to volunteers Trish Custard and Cora Brunette for giving their time to enroll children.