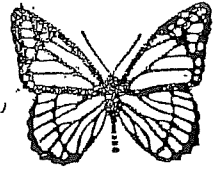







# The Importance of Play



When Children Do this:	They Are Learning To:
 Put blocks in trucks and dump them out Use blocks and wooden animals to create a zoo  Balance one large block on top of another	Understand size, weight, and number concepts (math) (science)  Recreate the world around them (geography) (social skills)  Control and coordinate muscles (physical coordination)
  Put on dress-up clothes Pretend to be grown-ups	Use their small muscle skills (self-help) (writing)  Understand their experiences better (abstract thinking)
Separate cups and plates at clean-up time	Group objects in categories (math).
 Put pegs in a pegboard Finish a puzzle	Coordinate the actions of their eyes and hands (reading/writing readiness)  Complete a task (study habits) (self-esteem)
Sort pictures that are the same	Match and classify (math)
 Make playdough	Recognize how materials change (science)
Gather paper, scissors, and glue for a project	Plan and carry out a task (study habits) (independence)
Draw a picture of a person	Use symbols (reading/writing readiness)



Make boats sink  
Play beside other children

Pour without spilling



Turn pages of a book from beginning to end

Scribble on paper

Listen to a story and talk about what happened



Watch bread dough rise or melt butter

Follow directions in a recipe that call for adding ingredients by teaspoons, cups, etc.

Make a salad for the family dinner or bake muffins for breakfast



Create different sounds by putting more (or fewer) beans in cans and shaking them

Sing or do a finger play with the other children and the teacher

Find ways of moving across the rug without their feet touching it



Try out a computer program together with another child

Respond to program feedback

Operate a computer mouse, put a disc in the computer, and turn on a computer



Catch and throw balls

Talk about changes in plants, people, and things outside as seasons change

Recognize cause and effect (science) (logical thinking)

Get along with others (social skills)

Use their small muscle skills (physical coordination)

Read a book from left to right (reading and writing readiness)

Use writing as a means of communication (reading and writing)

Love books, remember details, and express ideas (language development)

Understand that foods can change their physical states (science)

Understand measurement (math skills)

Take pride in their accomplishments (self-esteem)

Explore cause and effect (science) (logical thinking)

Participate cooperatively in a group (social skills)

Think creatively to solve problems (independence) (problem solving)

Share and play cooperatively with others (social skills)

Follow directions, apply old learnings to new situations, and understand cause and effect (thinking skills)

Improve their coordination skills (physical development)

Coordinate eye and hand movements (physical development)

Sharpen observation skills (science)