

Children are interested in things around them. Set out a new toy and watch a young child explore it. She carefully looks at it, feels it, shakes it, puts it in her mouth, tries to take it apart, sits on it, steps on it...This child is learning about the toy and herself as she plays and explores. Think about this list and use it to help explain the benefits of play to your parents! And then go PLAY ☺!

When children play with	They are learning	This leads to
Blocks	How different sizes and shapes fit together	Math skills
Small blocks	Control of small muscles in their hands — picking up and moving objects	Writing skills
Pop-up toys	How things work — cause and effect	Thinking skills
Puzzles	To look for what's different between the background and the picture	Reading and writing skills
Beads to string	How to use their hands and eyes together	Writing skills
Paint — mixing colors	Cause and effect	Science skills
Pens, pencils, markers and crayons	Control of small muscles in their hands; Making marks to express their ideas	Writing skills
Water	To explore the size and shape of containers with different amounts of water	Math and science skills
Wet and dry sand	Cause and effect — water changes sand to something new and different	Science skills