



HELLO PARENTS,

Independent play is just as important as group play for children. In fact, independent play teaches children how to be self-reliant, creative, imaginative, and even improves focus and thinking capabilities. Independent play has so many incredible benefits to children. It allows children the freedom to explore and create on their own. During free independent play, children create and execute ideas, test hypotheses, learn about themselves and their likes and dislikes. They learn to focus on tasks, solve their own problems, practice getting into deep thinking, be creative, and imaginative. In this newsletter, you will find activities that will encourage independent play.

ACTIVITIES

INFANTS (3 – 18 MONTHS)

I CAN DO IT

Infants can play by themselves for about 5 minutes for a six-month-old, 15 minutes for a 12 month old, 15-20 minutes for an 18 month old.

MATERIALS:

- New toy

DIRECTIONS:

- Give your child a new toy.
- Let your child explore it by themselves using all of their senses.
- Allowing them to play by themselves provides an opportunity to practice independent play.

[Click here](#) for more activities.

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

LITTLE CHEFS

MATERIALS:

- Kitchen materials. For example: pots, pans, utensils etc.
- Aprons, chef's hats (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

- While cooking a meal, set up a cooking station for your child next to you.
- You and your child may choose to wear an apron, or even a chef's hat.
- Give your child kitchen materials, and encourage them to "cook" alongside you. For example: your child may stir in the pot, etc.
- You may give your child some real vegetables, fruits, pasta, etc. to "cook".
- Once your meals are complete, taste them together.

[Click here](#) for more activities.

PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

WHAT IS HIDING IN THE GRASS?

MATERIALS:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Stickers (optional)
- Pictures from magazines
- Glue

DIRECTIONS:

- Find any picture from a magazine or draw a picture of something your child likes, and add some colourful stickers to it.
- Cut a sheet of construction paper to cover the entire picture, and create vertical strips to resemble grass.
- Glue the edge of your construction paper to the bottom of the picture.
- Give the scissors and the picture covered with construction paper (grass) to your child. Let them cut the grass and see what is hiding behind it.

[Click here](#) to read "In the Tall, Tall Grass" by Denise Fleming.

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

DAY AT THE ZOO

MATERIALS:

- Stuffed animals
- Chairs, boxes, or baskets

DIRECTIONS:

- Collect all the stuffed animals you have and create a zoo.
- You can use chairs, baskets, or boxes as cages for your animals.
- Using the boxes, you can create a ticket booth at the entrance of your zoo.

[Click here](#) for more activities.

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

T-SHIRT TOTE

MATERIALS:

- An old cotton T-shirt
- Scissors
- Pen

DIRECTIONS:

- Lay the T-shirt on a flat surface and outline the cut out for the neckline.
- Cut off the neck and sleeves. Cut through both layers of fabric at the same time.
- Cut 1-inch-wide, 4-inch-long strips of fringe into the bottom of the T-shirt, or long enough for you to tie 4 double knots.
- Flip up one layer of the fringe so you can see the corresponding pair below.
- Starting at the edge, tie 2 over-hand knots in the fringe. Pull tight so the fabric stretches. Continue for all of the fringe pairs.
- Starting at the edge again, tie the two adjacent knots together by tying another double knot using the fringe pair to the left and one strip of the fringe pair to the right. Remember to pull tight.
- Now turn the T-shirt inside out and your tote is ready to use.

[Click here](#) for more activities.



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

A TIP FOR TODAY

- Sit silently beside your child as they play instead of joining in.
- Make sure that your child's play area is inviting, comfortable and safe.
- Put some toys away for a few weeks. The toys will seem new to your child when they are reintroduced.
- Help them get started by giving them an idea, setting up a station or activity, and making sure they have some resources to start with.
- Encourage your child to take some time to quietly look at and read their books.