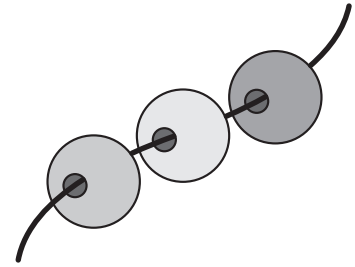


Tips for Interacting With Your Child

Young children are constantly learning — everything is new to them. Here are some adult-child interaction strategies that will help foster children’s active learning and development.



- **Join children in their play.** Get on the floor with children, join them at a table or in the sandbox, play games with them — become engaged in what they are doing! Note that to get on an infant’s or a toddler’s level, you may need to be lying on your stomach.
- **Imitate what the children are doing; that is, play with the same materials in the same way as the children.** For example, an adult gives Emma a portion of play dough to explore. Emma squeezes the dough with both hands. The adult also squeezes the dough with both hands.
- **Make observations and comments about what you see the children doing.** While watching Emma squeeze the play dough, the adult comments, “You’re squeezing the dough with both hands.”
- **Ask open-ended questions, but ask them sparingly.** Open-ended questions encourage children to try out ideas, think, and talk, because these types of questions cannot be answered by a simple yes or no or a single-word response. Avoid questions that can be considered wrong or right. For example, instead of asking “What color is this ball?” ask “How could you make this ball move?” or “I wonder what you will do with this ball.” Questions can help get a conversation going, but it is more important not to overwhelm a child with too many questions.
- **Follow children’s pace and interests.** As you play with your children, follow their lead. For example, Holden was using farm animals and a barn. He made animal noises as he put the animals in the barn. He closed the barn doors and said, “All gone?” His dad sat next to him and commented, “Hmm, the animals were just here but now I can’t see them! Where did they go?” Holden opened the doors and laughed.