

支持孩子們的活動

孩子們由他們的遊戲中做探險、做發現，遊戲的本質是自由的選擇：決定做什麼、什麼時候做及與誰一起做。在多變的世界裏，孩子們必須從遊戲中學習及練習做決定的方法。

大人們可以和孩子們一起玩（與十個月大的孩子玩躲貓貓）也可以規劃孩子們的活動（教導一個足球隊）。大人們也可以不用加入孩子們的遊戲，大人們可以對他們的遊戲表示支持。這裏提供一些建議，使孩子們的活動更豐富的同時讓他們自己對限制做掌握。

規劃時間

- 在孩子們做了一整天預定的活動以後，給他們一些自由時間。他們的遊戲時間可幫助他們思考，將所學合而為一。
- 花在預定課程的時間（游泳、體操、鋼琴等）不算遊戲時間。孩子們可以學習以後在活動派得上用場的技巧，但是自由選擇中的重要元素卻不在這些課程本身裏。

給予空間

- 做好您居家的幼兒防護，使您剛學走路的孩子能自由的做探險。讓您四歲的孩子使用遊戲筆；他可以做美術設計及蓋樂高積木而不讓幼兒取得。
- 帶孩子到各種不同的遊戲空間，室內或室外。社區公園與家庭資源中心能啟發不同種遊戲。
- 在地下室放一個舊的床墊，鼓勵特殊技巧及培養完整的速度技巧。
- 遊戲很少會是整齊或乾淨的，學習去忍受不乾淨及髒亂。用報紙來保護表面、穿塑膠衣使清潔工作容易些。裝置架子使收拾玩具的過程變得簡單，使用透明的箱子，將其放置於方便孩子伸取的高度。

供給物品及器材

- 孩子們不需價格昂貴且複雜的玩具才能得到樂趣。其實孩子更會被玩具的包裝吸引，因為她的想像力能將玩具變成其它許多不同的東西。
- 有時候在遊戲裏加入一些新的變化，使遊戲的環境更豐富以及激發孩子們新的興趣。

- 變成一個“零散組件”*的收集家，將這些組件以不同的方式拼湊起來。這裏提供一些例子：一些器材像是大塊木頭或不同尺寸的箱子、一些物品像是黏土、一些道具像是小型的工具、披肩和帽子的服裝、在公園收集的一點“廢物”。這些都可以讓孩子們對遊戲有不同的設計，在製作他們自己的玩具時發現不同的方法。

提供陪伴

- 當您被邀請時，應加入孩子的遊戲，但記得讓他們帶領。您來遵守他們做的決定。
- 邀請朋友來您的家或帶您的孩子去參加遊戲隊伍。另一個四歲孩子可能會比您有更長的耐性來當一個消防人員。

給予回應

- 當您已經規劃好遊戲的場地，那麼就應該給他們機會去發展。您可能需要幫忙般重的東西或因為有不安全的顧慮重新指導遊戲的方法，但應讓孩子從自己的經驗裏去摸索。如果他們爭吵，記得，對他們來說，可能計畫出要怎麼玩比真正開始玩更為重要。
- 尊重孩子們的嘗試。讓他們自己去發現什麼可行，什麼不可行。如果大人總是為他們把事情處理好，他們學不會解決自己的問題的。
- 讓孩子們知道您覺得他們的遊戲是重要的。不要做不必要的阻斷。如果是結束的時候，給他們很多的提示。
- 由個別成功的活動經驗編織成睡前唸的床邊故事。“有一次，一位穿著紅色披肩的魔術師說了一些術語，將一些孩子通通變成了老鼠”。孩子會認得他們的遊戲，想再玩一次。

保持您活躍的嬉戲精神。激發與復甦您舊有的孩童般純真！

Betsy Mann著作與在加洲 Pacific Oaks College, Betty Jones的研討會上所做筆記。

**Simon Nicholson於1971年在Landscape Architecture書上所寫的“*How Not To Cheat Children: The Theory of Loose Parts*”。*

Supporting Children's Play

Children explore and discover their world through play, and the essence of play is free choice: deciding what to do, when and with whom to do it. In a world that is rapidly changing, children need to learn and to practise the skill of making choices while they play.

Adults can play *with* children (peek-a-boo with a ten month old) or can *organize* children's play (coaching a soccer team). They can also *support* children's play without being directly involved. Here are some suggestions for enriching youngsters' games while leaving control in their hands.

Make Time

- Give children free time after they have spent a whole day in structured activities. Their play helps them integrate what they've learned.
- Time spent at structured lessons (swimming, gymnastics, piano, etc.) is not play time. Children can learn skills they will use later in play, but the essential element of free choice is missing during the lessons themselves.

Provide Space

- Baby proof your house so that your toddler can explore freely. Use the playpen for your four year old; he can take art projects and Lego constructions there to work on them out of baby's reach.
- Take children to a variety of play spaces, both indoors and outdoors. Local parks and family resource centres will stimulate different kinds of play.
- Put an old mattress in the basement to encourage acrobatics and develop gross motor skills.
- Play is rarely neat and tidy, so learn to put up with dirt and mess. Protect surfaces with newspapers and plastic cloths to make clean-up simpler. Make storage easy with shelves and transparent boxes at children's level.

Supply Materials and Equipment

- Expensive and elaborate toys are not necessary for children to have fun. A child may in fact be more attracted by the toy's packaging because her imagination can turn it into lots of other things.
- Adding a new element from time to time enriches the play environment and stimulates new interest. Try putting a garlic press on the playdough table. Join a toy library and bring home new toys each month.

- Become a collector of "loose parts"* that can be put together in different ways. Here are some examples: equipment like big blocks or different sizes of boxes, material like homemade playdough, props like small versions of tools, costumes like capes and hats, bits of "junk" collected in the park. All these allow children to play with ideas and explore possibilities while constructing their own toys.

Offer Companions

- Join in your children's play when you are invited, but remember to let them lead. They make the decisions and you follow.
- Invite friends over or bring your children to a play group. Another four year old will probably have a longer attention span for playing fireman than you do.

Give Feedback

- Once you've set the stage for play, just stand back and let it unfold. You might be needed to lift something heavy or to redirect unsafe play, but let children work through their own conflicts. When they are arguing, remember that working out *how* to play may be more important for them than actually getting down to the game.
- Respect children's efforts. Let them discover for themselves what works and what doesn't. They can't learn to solve their own problems if an adult is always doing it for them.
- Let children know you think their play is important. Don't interrupt unnecessarily. When it's time to stop, give them lots of warning.
- Weave a particularly successful play episode into a story to tell at bedtime. "Once there were some children who were all turned into mice by a magician in a red cape who said the magic words." Children will recognize their game and play it again.

Keep your own playful spirit alive. Nurture the child in yourself!

by Betsy Mann with notes from a workshop by Betty Jones of Pacific Oaks College, California.

*Simon Nicholson wrote "How Not To Cheat Children: The Theory of Loose Parts" in *Landscape Architecture*, 1971.