Keeping Toys Simple

When you choose toys for your children, ask yourself these questions:

- ➢ Will my child's hands and/or body be active and busy with this toy?
- ➢ Can my child use this toy to plan, pretend, create and play with other children?
- ➢ Can this toy be used for more than one activity?
- ➢ Will my child be more active and creative than the toy itself?

Active play develops children's brains and social skills in an efficient, complex, and amazing way. Nothing can take its place.

Electronic games, TV programs and videos do not give children enough opportunity for active, social, and creative play. They are fine as an occasional activity but do not offer nearly the same benefits as games where children play together and create the fun themselves.

Inexpensive Toys that Teach:

- ♦ Play dough with tools that roll, poke, & cut
- ♦ Water with plastic cups, sponges & soap
- ♦ Cardboard boxes big enough to get into
- ♦ Crayons, paper, scissors, & tape
- ♦ Dress-up clothes and stuffed animals
- ♦ Balls of all sizes
- ♦ Blocks with trucks and dolls
- ♦ Blanket fort and flashlights
- ♦ And most important…an adult to explain, encourage, protect, and know when it's time to read a story, and go to bed!

Recipe for a Big Batch of Play Dough

3 Tbsp oil
Some drops of food coloring
2 ½ cups flour
½ cup salt
1 Tbsp alum (look in spice aisle)
1 ½ cups boiling water

Put the food coloring into the oil. Add the boiling water and stir in all the rest quickly. Stir well and let cool before using. Keep in a covered container. Add drops of oil later if it dries out.

More Resources:

ZERO TO THREE, Pointers for Parents:
Play to Learn. www.zertothree.org/play

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Dane County