

A PARENT'S

free play guide

PRESENTED BY



PAGE 1

An explanation of how and why our kids benefit from play

PAGE 2

6 easy things you can do at home to create a free play lifestyle at home

PAGE 3

FAQs we want you to know the answer to

WHY KIDS NEED PLAY

Play is not just fun, "killing time", or a wasted activity. Kiddos literally NEED it. There is a clear correlation between the decrease in free play and an increase in anxiety and depression.

Anxiety comes from feeling a lack of control. Play is a time when kids can control their environment and their decisions. This brings a sense of contentment and allows them to test stressful situations in a safe, pretend setting.

Depression comes from a feeling of isolation. This often stems from less and less time playing with their peers without direction from an adult. Most schools limit recess to 10-15 minutes per day. This simply is not enough time for kids to reap the benefits of play. As a result, kids feel isolated. Many kids NEVER free play with one another outside of recess until their teen years. By then they have lost precious time developing healthy social skills.



"IT'S ACTUALLY PLAY, NOT NECESSITY, THAT IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION."

- ALISON GOPNIK

Free playing with kids of different ages in an unstructured setting is highly beneficial. So many wonderful things happen all at the same time and with very little effort. Compromises are made, empathy is fine tuned, confidence is boosted, conflicts are resolved... and so much more!

There really is no other way to mimic the wonderful effects of children playing freely together. So let your children free, step away, and allow them to develop the tools they need to become happy, healthy, and successful human beings!

"KIDS ARE BORN SCIENTISTS. THEY'RE ALWAYS DOING THINGS THAT BY AND LARGE ARE DESTRUCTIVE. BUT THAT IS WHAT EXPLORATION IS."

- NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON

6 THINGS TO DO AT HOME

(THAT ALSO HAPPEN TO DOUBLE AS GOOD LIFE ADVICE)

01

Say YES! As often as possible.
To as much as possible.

02

Let kids lead the way. You'll be amazed at how creative and insightful they are when you give them the chance.

03

Encourage them to settle their own battles.

04

Turn off the screens. The whining and complaints will settle, and then magical things will happen.

05

Limit extra curricular activities. Schedule unstructured time, if necessary.

06

Don't set expectations. Try to just enjoy.

FAQ.

HOW CAN I CREATE A KID FACTORY IN MY HOME?

First, you need to see the benefits of free play. Then it is pretty simple! Fill your yard, playroom, or living room with random objects that have no specific use. Then release the kids and step away. The hardest part is what NOT to do: don't give direction, don't make corrections, don't "shhh" or step in to settle disagreements. The only time you should be involved is to cut something (if your child is not proficient with sharp objects) or if an argument is getting physical. And when all is said and done, and creations have been created, be sure you say "well done" and nothing more. If their spaceship doesn't really look like a spaceship, just know it absolutely does to them.

WHAT IF MY KIDS AREN'T HAVING FUN?

Kid Factories don't always start out sunshine and rainbows. Some kids are timid to get started, some are overwhelmed by endless choices, and some just really want to get back on their iPad or Xbox. Give it time. 9 times out of 10 they eventually find a starting point. And the magic usually takes off from there. Occasionally, they just aren't feeling it, and that's ok too. Sometimes free play is a just a lesson in trying new things.

WHO CAN FREE PLAY HELP?

It's safe to say free play benefits everyone. But there are certain kids for whom free play is especially beneficial. Examples are: kids with different learning styles (such as dyslexia, ADHD, etc.), kids who struggle socially (introverted, too extroverted, mild autism spectrum), older kids benefit SO much (it is often assumed they don't need play anymore when they so desperately do), kids with low confidence or anxiety... the list goes on but those are examples of kids who benefit most!

WHAT CAN I DO TO ADVOCATE FOR MORE PLAY IN MY COMMUNITY?

If you're like us, once you realize the need for play in children you feel the pull to do something about it! There are many ways to encourage play. You could host a Kid Factory at your local park, but that is not all! You could organize "play days" in your neighborhood where everyone turns off screens and goes outside together. You could join your local PTA and advocate for a longer recess at school. There are a million ways to make your community a more playful place, use your imagination, and don't forget to share your idea with us on Instagram: @the_kid_factory and we LOVE to see your photos - use #thekidfactory