

## ENCOURAGING THINKING THROUGH INDOOR PLAY

Play is the work of children. As adults, we often see play as leisure, but through a child's eyes, play is serious business and a rich opportunity to engage in critical and creative thinking. Indoor play provides many excellent opportunities for children get away from screens and allow their imaginations to soar.

### CHEER UP THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Ask the child to create a sign with a picture to place in a front window to bring joy and happiness to your neighbours. You can ask them to decide:

- **What colours** will best match their message and be seen from the road?
- **What words** will bring joy, happiness, or hope to others?
- **What images** would best match with the words?
- **How big** will the sign need to be? How big should the letters and pictures be?



### PLAY THE "IS IT...?" GAME

Suggest that children play this game together. You might model it for them the first time. Begin the game by asking the child to select an object in your home but keep it a secret. Others must try to figure out the secret object by asking only questions that begin with "Is it...?" For example,

- Is it bigger than a microwave?
- Is it brighter than a lemon?
- Is it heavier than a cat?

If 3 or more people are playing, the person asking questions continues as long as the answer to their "Is it...?" question is yes. If the answer is no, the turn passes to next player.

### TELL A STORY THROUGH DANCE

To encourage thoughtful movement, ask your child to create a dance that tells a story. You can use a tablet or smart phone to record their first try.

Ask the child questions to get them thinking about three ways they might add to their dance.

- 1. Body** - How can different parts of your body help tell the story?
- 2. Space** - Should you stay in one spot or use more of the room? If dancing with someone, when should they be close together or far apart?
- 3. Energy** - When should you dance quickly and when should you dance slowly?

When they're ready, record their new version. Watch each version with the child and discuss which is best and why.

### BUILD A MUSICAL BAND

Suggest that children use safe and clean materials from your recycle bin to see how many different sounds they can make. You can suggest that they:

- sort items into groups of similar sounds
- try to play a simple song using the recycled materials (e.g. Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star) or create their own song.



### INVENT AN IMAGINARY WORLD

Encourage your child to use toys they have in their home (stuffed animals, dolls, toy cars, building blocks, etc.) to create an imaginary world. You can suggest that they:

- Name their imaginary world creatively. For example, they might use their own name or the name of their friend, city or pet spelled backwards. Adding "ia" to the end makes it sound like a real place (e.g. Toronto would be "Otnorotia").
- Use the toys to act out what a day would be like in their imaginary world.

Remind the child that in their imaginary world, anything can happen. Animals can talk, people can fly – whatever they can imagine can happen. Tell the child that the world they create can be a magical place, but it must be a place where everyone would be happy to live.

