

Your Child's Job Is to Play!

By: Lee Ann Mancini



Play Time

Playtime enriches your children's social, physical, emotional, and cognitive developments and is the tool to help them understand their fears, desires, needs, wants, and much more.

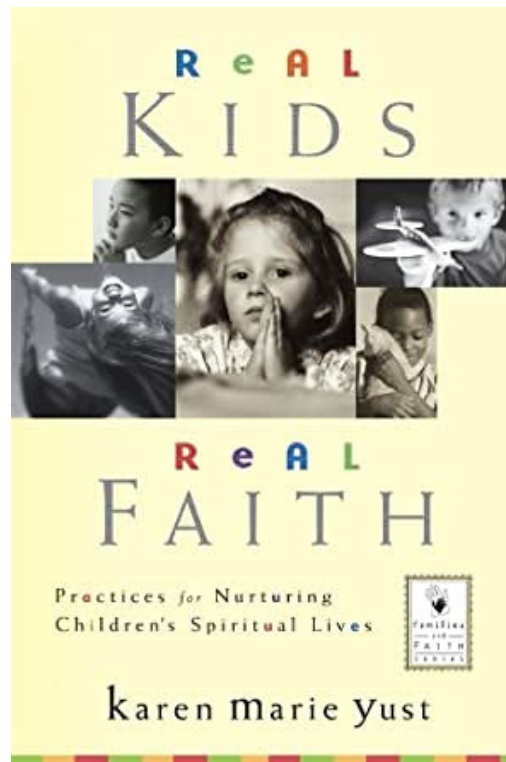
Playing is your children's job. Your job is to enrich their work environment to be conducive to learning by creating a positive and comfortable place. It is important to schedule free time and playtime and for children to know the difference between being busy and being productive.

**Jesus took time to rest, and he also took time to be productive. Make your children's playtime sacred and ensure it incorporates fun. If there is no fun, you might hear the dreaded phrase all parents despise, "I'm bored."
Remember, children learn best while having fun.**

Real Kids Real Faith

Karen Marie Yust, in her book, *Real Kids Real Faith*, highlights various tools that can create memorable teaching moments:

“An infant’s woven baby carrier can become the basket that Moses lay in among the bulrushes....A wooden dollhouse can become the setting for conducting religious services...A water basin or table, some plastic boats, a few small figures, and a leftover piece of fruit-box netting can be transformed into disciples fishing on the Sea of Galilee.”



Age Appropriate Toys

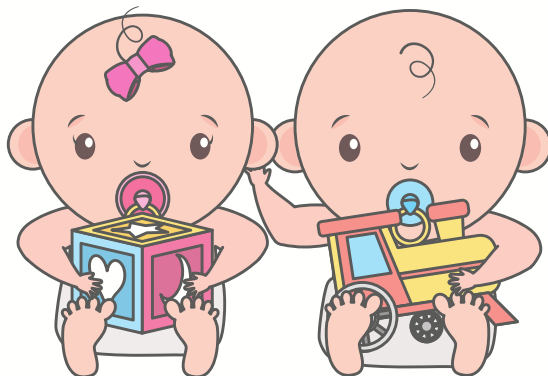
0-12 Months:

- **Brightly colored, multi-patterned toys**
 - **Rattles that have soft grip balls on one end**
 - **Colorful teething rings**
 - **Unbreakable mirrors**
- **Soft, easy-to-grab stacking blocks**
 - **Activity gyms & playmats**
 - **Jumpers**
- **Activity boards that do not have small, removable pieces**
- **Soft, washable, colorful stuffed toys with no hard pieces – eyes should be sewed or embroidered**
- **Small, stuffed fabric or soft plastic balls**



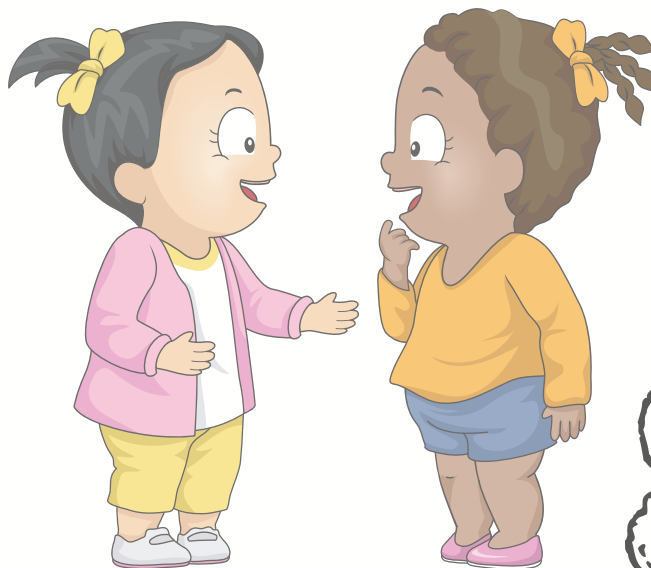
1 – 2 Years:

- Board books
- Colorful stacking rings and shape sorters
- Nesting cups or blocks with ABC's or 123's
- Push toys that help with walking – some are equipped at the bottom to hold toys
- Musical instruments like tambourines, drums, or maracas specially made for children
- Pop-up toys like jack-in-the-boxes
- Large play vehicles, such as school buses or fire engines, plus plastic people that ride in them
- Educational wood or velcro puzzle boards
- Tool kits that let kids hammer pegs or balls through the holes
- Plastic bath time toys
- Sandbox with toys



2 -3 years:

- **Board books that have press-and-play options**
- **Stuffed animals and boy/girl dolls**
- **Balls**
- **Baby riding bikes**
- **Musical instruments, such as guitars that make electronic noise or pianos that light up**
- **Pretend and make-believe play toys, such as, bulldozers, trucks, telephones, toy kitchens, doll strollers, etc.**
- **Ride-on toys and tricycles**
- **Educational wood or velcro puzzle boards**
- **Construction toys that stack or snap together**
- **Tricycle**



4 -5 years:

- **Picture books**
- **Toy action figures – Buzz Light Year or live looking baby dolls**
- **Puzzles that have cardboard pieces**
- **Dress-up costumes and clothing**
- **Art supplies and craft kits, including clay**
- **Activity tables and construction sets like Legos or Lincoln Logs**
- **Age appropriate board games like Candy Land or Hungry Hippos**
- **Electronic phonics toys**
- **Transportation toys, such as parking garages, airports, and train stations**
- **Various play balls like nerf toys**
- **Bicycles with training wheels**



6- 7 years:

- Chapter books for kids
- Craft kits and science kits with magnifying glasses and telescopes
 - Electronic games
- Construction sets, such as Legos or K'Nex
 - Barbie dolls
- More advanced board games that involve decision making and strategy such as, checkers, chess, etc.
 - Remote-controlled toys
- Various sports equipment for indoor and outdoor activities

