



Understanding
your child

Solihull Approach

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Leaflet for
parents

Let's Play: 5-11 years

This leaflet includes ideas for activities that your child might enjoy. Some of these activities you may enjoy doing together. At other times your child may prefer to play alone or with friends.

The middle years

In the middle years of childhood, play is still a very important part of a child's development. Every child is different so the pace at which their play changes will be very individual to each child. Some children will still be happy to play with toys that they have played with for a long time. Other children will start to move on to different ways of playing. You already know a lot about your child and as you watch them develop you can help them try out new experiences at a time that is right for them.

Variety of play

At this stage it is important to ensure that a wide variety of play experiences and activities are available, helping to support your child's overall development. Play provides opportunities for:

- Social development – taking turns and sharing, listening and respecting each other
- Creative development – using their imagination to invent or adapt games, chance to express their own ideas
- Physical development – using a range of skills, hand eye co-ordination, promote balance

- Intellectual development – solving problems, making decisions, understanding rules
- Emotional development – responding to other's needs, feeling a sense of achievement, building confidence to express themselves

Remember that all children have different needs and interests. Children enjoy trying out new games but they also retain their own favourites.

Suitable toys and activities

The age of the child is often taken into account when choosing suitable toys and activities but it is also important to recognise that each individual child develops at his or her own rate. Consider that what is suitable for one nine year old may not be appropriate for another child of the same age.

Consider agreeing a time limit on how much TV viewing and computer games are allowed each day and whether your child will be allowed a TV in their own bedroom. Unlimited viewing may result in your child missing out on much needed sleep.

Try to set aside regular time to spend with your child, maybe sharing and enjoying an activity together or having a chat about their individual interests. This will help them to feel valued as individuals and also provide a chance to listen to any concerns they may have.

5–7 years*

In this age group encourage your child to have a go themselves as they may still be inclined to ask adults to do things for them. They will still need some adult support and guidance. Give children plenty of praise for effort and not just reward for achievements.

8–11 years*

Children in this age range are now becoming far more independent, often preferring to play with friends alone rather than with any adult involvement but remember that at times they will still want to play with a parent or seek help and support from parents.

Friendships are now far more important and they prefer to play in tighter friendship groups. At this age children are also becoming far more competitive.

* Age group guidance only

Involve older children in the planning and decision making of what and how they wish to play, rather than making decisions for them.

Many older children are now involved in playing in a much wider variety of settings not just within their own home.

This may include trips to: friend's houses, local park, cinema, bowling, skating rink, museums, swimming pool. Often they become involved with more organised activity groups: after school, Brownies, Cubs and sporting teams.

It is important that parents decide the level of supervision required for their individual child, dependent on the age of the child and the activity chosen.

Play Tips

Between the ages of 5–11 years

- ✓ Art and craft activities: drawing, junk modelling, clay modelling
- ✓ Outdoor activities: cycling, roller skating, skateboarding, obstacle courses, bouncy castle
- ✓ Treasure hunts
- ✓ Making music – singing and learning to play musical instruments
- ✓ Board games, party games, Pictionary and charades
- ✓ Puzzles and card games
- ✓ Collecting the latest 'craze'
- ✓ Construction play – Lego, Meccano
- ✓ Exploring science – magnetic sets
- ✓ Imaginative play – performing their own shows, dancing, karaoke, costumes
- ✓ Cooking with family
- ✓ Reading for fun: favourite comics and books

Play Tips

Between the ages of 5–11 years

- ✓ Sporting activities: with friends and also learning to play as part of a wider team football, rounders, netball
- ✓ Computer games
- ✓ Watching TV and favourite videos

Solihull Approach 'Understanding your child'

'Children learn through play'

www.SolihullApproachParenting.com

Solihull Approach is part of the government's CANparent (Classes and Advice Network) parenting voucher scheme.