

## Play = Social Skills

Through PLAY, your child learns to interact with peers and adults. Your child may PLAY by himself or INDEPENDENTLY. He may begin to PLAY next to others using the same toys or materials but not necessarily interacting with his peers. This is called PARALLEL PLAY. As your child gets older, he will begin to organize and coordinate his PLAY with his peers known as COOPERATIVE PLAY.

When your child PLAYS INDEPENDENTLY, he is learning to entertain himself. When your child engages in PARALLEL PLAY, he is playing side by side another child. They may learn to use each other's toys or materials or even begin talking to each other without coordinating their play. COOPERATIVE PLAY is more sophisticated. In order to be successful, your child must figure out how this type of play works. They begin to organize and create different roles and rules during their play. They need to listen to others and see another's point of view. They begin to understand the feelings and emotions of others. Thank goodness your child will have many years of childhood to develop these complex and higher level play skills that come with COOPERATIVE PLAY.

In all types of PLAY, your child is learning to explore his environment and world, figure out how things work, problem solve, show imagination and creativity, use language skills to express his ideas, and learn about himself and others. Preschool is just the beginning start of developing these social skills through PLAY! Playing by himself, playing next to others, and playing with his peers are all valuable forms of PLAY. Enjoy some time watching and observing your child's PLAY!

Resources: [Einstein Never Used Flash Cards](#) by Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and Roberta Golinkoff  
[Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice](#) - NAEYC