



Principles for Developing Alternative Activities to Television

“Play is the work of children” Jean Piaget

- Children can and should **generate their own play**. You do not have to entertain them all the time.
- It is **okay for children to be bored**. It is a natural process of learning to be self-directed and resourceful. If they're bored, it's not your fault.
- Cultivate **“benign neglect.”** Give children space and time to find their own activities.
- You do need to **provide the materials** they need to stimulate play.
- Materials should be basic. The more basic the more likely that the child can use it for multiple purposes. Examples: balls, rope, pail and shovel, deck of cards, crayons, paper etc.
- A child absorbed in an activity of their own making can be quiet and provide parents with free time.
- **Sleep** is essential, for both the children and the parents. Make sure children are getting enough sleep. (Some experts suggest that children ages 2-3 years old should get 14-16 hours of sleep, children 3-5 years old should get 11-14 hours of sleep, while children ages 7-11 years old need 10 hours.)
- **Expect messiness**. Expect children to clean up their mess.
- **Two children** playing together are **easier** to manage than one alone.
- Encourage your children to play in **multi-age groups**. Young children need to learn from older children. Older children enjoy teaching, showing off, and leading younger children.
- Look for **playmates** for your children on your block and **in your neighborhood**. Look for older retired people who like children—developing a visiting relationship could bring pleasure to both people.

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