

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



Fun with things that go

Playing with cars and trucks on different levels and surfaces can be great for talking about, and experimenting with, cause & effect, gravity, speed and angles.

Did you know?

Having time to explore and experiment with different types of vehicles, comparing their speed and movement in different situations helps your child to discover and build important science, technology, engineering and maths knowledge.

Add language

Talk about how the vehicles go over/under, down/up, fast/slow and experiment to see which one goes the furthest or fastest. This encourages concept development as well as language! Make comments and ask occasional questions that encourage thinking and reasoning e.g. "That seemed to go slower over the grass" "I wonder what would happen if ..."

Other development

Children learn and problem solve when allowed to explore at their own pace. Vehicle play may hold your child's attention for a long time. This gives them the time for learning, testing and problem solving. When children crawl across the floor while pushing a toy vehicle, they are developing their arm and shoulder strength and stability.



They are also developing the muscles in their hands. This is all important for being able to write at school.

Designing roads or ramps for vehicles, constructing a box car or paper plane all encourage imagination and creativity. They also develop prediction, planning and fine motor skills.

Variations

Toy vehicles can be played with in many ways. Try having a 'car wash' day. 'Drive' your toy vehicles on different surfaces e.g. sand, rice, or shaving cream for a unique sensory experience. Include toy people, characters or animals with your vehicle play. This tends to inspire more imaginative and make-believe play. Both boys and girls talk more when there are toy people included in vehicle play.

- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa