



# LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

It is through play that young children learn about and make sense of the world. They experiment with being a Mum or Dad as they act out what they have observed in daily life, e.g. feeding the baby and going to the shops. **As children play they develop their cognitive and motor skills, increase their communication and social ability and above all have fun.**

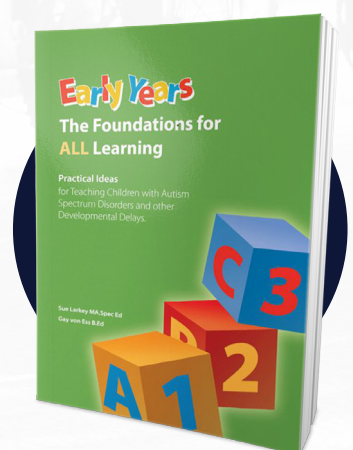
Play for young children with autism is frequently centered on repetitive actions, e.g. spinning car wheels rather than pushing the car, lining blocks up rather than building towers. They don't seem to know how to do what comes instinctively to other children. **A young child with autism needs to be taught how to play step by step.** Be dramatic as you play with your child in order to attract and maintain their attention. **Add to the richness of the play by making noises**, e.g. ball going down (wheee) doll crying (waa), car horn (beep, beep).

Play alongside your child with the same or similar materials. It is important that you are flexible – if your child does not copy you, copy them. Remember that initially you are endeavouring to form a connection with your child the actual substance of the play is not important.



Start with simple **cause and effect toys** that give lots of feedback for little effort on the child's part. Ball races and musical toys are excellent starting points. Some children also respond to pop-up toys, though other children are frightened by these due to their unpredictable nature – just when is the toy going to pop up?

**Take turns** with your child as you play. In addition to being important socially turn taking is critical for the development of appropriate communication. Turn taking can be promoted initially with toys like ball races where turns are short and the child has something to watch even when it is not their turn. Pushing the toy towards your child when it is their turn, and pulling it over to yourself when it is your turn, helps to make it clearer to the child whose turn it is.



Early Years: The Foundations for All Learning by Sue Larkey and Gay von Ess

# FOR SUCCESSFUL PLAY SKILLS TO DEVELOP THE ADULT NEEDS TO:



## DEMONSTRATE

**Model little play sequences for the child.** Some children need to have each part of a play sequence taught individually; e.g. doll in bath, wash doll, dry doll one day; feed doll and put in bed on another day. Then the two parts can be combined to make a longer play sequence.

Once a child has two or three parts of a play sequence you should model combining them in different orders so that your child does not become too rigid and inflexible in his/her play; e.g. bath, dinner, bed or dinner, bath, bed with a doll.



## JOIN THE CHILD AT PLAY

**Your child is more likely to attend and respond to you if you are doing something he is interested in** rather than playing with something totally different. Once you have your child's interest you can make small changes in the play and hopefully your child will imitate you.



## COMMENT

**Describe what is happening as you and your child play.** Initially your comments should be short and help your child focus on his play. Model appropriate language for your child as you play together.

## VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR PLAY

**To help children who are unable to play instinctively make photographic play sequence books;** e.g. bus, doll on bus, drive bus. Most children love to 'read' books that feature their own toys and a book provides the child with a permanent record of the play activity.

Discard your inhibitions when you play with your child and have fun!



The Teach Me to Play CD contains over 40 photo play schedules which allows a visual schedule of play for children to follow.

## WAYS TO USE PLAY SCHEDULES

- ✓ Make little books the children can refer to over and over.
- ✓ Take photos of them doing the activity to share with family and friends.
- ✓ We often find all children love these schedules and it encourages inclusion with siblings and creates new friends.



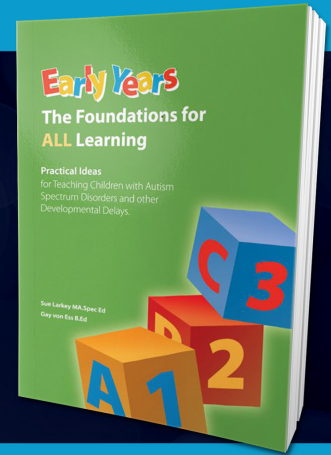
# WONDERFUL RESOURCES FOR TEACHING PLAY

## THE EARLY YEARS: THE FOUNDATIONS FOR ALL LEARNING

By Sue Larkey and Gay von Ess

This book is full of practical ideas to give children with ASD and other developmental delays the KEYS to learning. Teaching to play, write, draw, imitate etc. Toilet training, community access, etc. To sit, ask for help, wait, play, attention to task, sing songs, etc. Great easy to photocopy programmes.

- CODE B04 \$39.95 (PLUS P & H)



## TEACH ME TO PLAY CD

By Sue Larkey and Heather Durrant



Over 40 play schedules to use immediately. Load into your computer, choose, print, play! Encourages children with ASD to play! Over 300 pictures let you create your own play schedules and variations!

- CODE C04 \$25.00 (PLUS P & H)

## EARLY CHILDHOOD COURSE



### WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

- Understanding Different Learning Styles
- Talking to Families/Carers about Diagnosis
- How to use Different Ways of Teaching
- How to help children develop - communication (verbal & non verbal)
- Stages of Play How to create an inclusive play program
- Meltdowns & Tantrums
- 3 Steps to Positive Behaviour Support

**ENROLL NOW**