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at **UWA EARLY HEAD STAR'**

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Hello EHS families,

As we continue to face social distancing, self-quarantine, school and work closings as a result of COVID-19, it's possible to feel stressed not only about health issues, but also with the reality of continuing to be at home for many days with energetic little ones. As we began to open up our communities, it is still important to plan activities while at home. By planning early and having some activities and experiences ready, you can feel less stressed and more prepared. Play promotes healthy development, even when you're at home. We hope that you stay safe and continue health and safety practices. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your Center Director and I will continue to be a resource to them.

Deidra Lewis, Health Specialist

Below are some tips and activities to do and continue while at home:

START WITH A TOY ROTATION

If you have a variety of toys, try a toy rotation. Pick a few toys to leave out for your child to play with and put the rest away out of sight. After a week or so, switch out the toys they've been using for the ones stored away, and it will feel like new toys.

We know that their toys will only entertain for so long and then boredom can set in. Boredom for infants and toddlers may not look the same as it does for us. Signs your little one is bored:

- Fussing or whining
- Struggling to focus or engage in play
- Becoming more aggressive

PARENT-CHILD PLAY IDEAS

As you look for activities to do with your child, consider offering different types of play to meet their needs and keep the fun going. Independent play (when children play by themselves with you nearby) is also an important type of play and parents shouldn't feel guilty about giving their babies and toddlers a chance to play on their own.

Here are some different ideas for play that you can try with your young child:

Outside time: Getting outside will probably be refreshing and a great change of scenery for all of you. In order to maintain social distancing play dates are not recommendable at this time. Avoid touching playground equipment. Instead, run, roll down hills, jump like kangaroos, or lie back and look at the clouds. Ensure that handwashing takes place after returning home from any outdoor play.

For infants:

- Bring their stroller outside for a walk or a story.
- Lay a blanket on the grass for tummy time.
- Enjoy bubbles, listen to music and sing together, talk about what you see outside.
- Park the stroller or hold your baby so they can watch an older sibling or other children play.
- For toddlers:
 - Play 'I spy' (keep it simple, "I spy something blue", "I spy something that moves").
 - Collect rocks or leaves, then sort them by size, color, and shape.
 - Kick, roll, or toss a ball back and forth.
 - Dig in the dirt (don't forget buckets, bowls, measuring cups, spoons, gardening tools, or whatever you have).
 - Play with sidewalk chalk: draw pictures, trace one another's outline, and more.
 - Paint with water. Fill a cup with water and give your child a brush to "paint" the sidewalk, door, etc.
 - Blow bubbles.
 - Play "I'm going to catch you."
 - Pretend to be the different animals you might see in your neighborhood: Birds, squirrels, rabbits, deer, etc.
 - Most play that happens inside the house can also happen outside, so if the weather allows, bring some blocks outside, read together outdoors, color, or paint a cardboard box in the yard.

Quiet Play: You and your child/children will also need some quiet time each day. This is great for relaxing, recharging, and maybe even allowing you to get some work done.

- Read together or independently (toddlers can flip through books and talk about what they see in the illustrations).
- Coloring
- Puzzles
- Block building
- Sorting objects
- Pretend play with stuffed animals, dolls, trains, cars, or kitchen items for "playing house"
- Stickers on paper are a good option. You can draw large shapes, letters, or numbers on paper and your child can line the shape with stickers.
- Remember that one of the most favorite types of play for children is helping you with real work. Think about whether your toddler can help with meal preparation, setting the table, sorting or putting away laundry, cleaning up (for example, putting shoes in the closet) or putting new toilet paper rolls in a basket in the bathroom. These tasks may take a bit longer with our toddlers, but it's fun for them and also teaches the value of cooperation.