

## Strategies for participating in children's play

1. Look for natural play openings. Generally, it is more natural and less disruptive to join children during exploratory play, pretend play, or games, rather than during constructive play (making or building things).

CLASS: Instructional Learning Formats, Regard for Student Perspectives

2. Join children's play on the child's level. This may mean squatting, kneeling, sitting, and occasionally even lying on the floor. This way, children are not "looking up" to you, and you are not "looking down" on children. Remain responsive to the children's cues and direction. Give yourself permission to be playful.

CLASS: Instructional Learning Formats, Regard for Student Perspectives, Positive Climate

3. Play in parallel with children. This strategy can be effective during exploratory play, as the adult plays near the child, using the same materials in the same or a similar manner. Imitate children's actions.

CLASS: Positive Climate, Regard for Student Perspectives, Language Modeling

4. Play as a partner with children. Adults function as equals and followers, entering the spirit of the play, adjusting speech and actions to the pace and theme of the play, accepting or assuming a play-related role, following rules established by the children, and taking direction from the children.

CLASS: Language Modeling, Regard for Student Perspectives, Positive Climate

5. Refer one player to another for play support and expansion, enabling children to recognize each other's strengths, regard each other as valuable resources, use their abilities for the benefit of others, and play cooperatively.

CLASS: Positive Climate, Quality of Feedback, Language Modeling

6. Suggest new ideas within ongoing play situations. Adults may also wish to challenge young children's thinking and reasoning to expand the breadth of their play and, consequently, their understanding. When offering new ideas, remember to offer suggestions within the play theme, to address the "role person" rather than the child, and to respect the children's reaction to your idea.

CLASS: Concept Development, Instructional Learning Formats, Regard for Student Perspectives