

Object Play

Creating a play environment where children are encouraged to pick up, explore and manipulate objects results in endless learning opportunities. You don't need to buy lots of toys – the simplest materials are best for open-ended play. Here are some ideas:

- **Make a sand, water or light table.** It's as easy as filling a large plastic container (or even an inflatable swimming pool) with the material of your choice, and adding some plastic shovels, small cars or dolls. You can make a simple light box by placing white Christmas lights in a large, clear plastic container. Coloured agate, glass beads and feathers are some good items to play with on the box.
- **Make a magnetic board with your child.** Find objects from around the house, such as gems, Popsicle sticks, and jar lids. Glue magnets on the back, and let your child take the lead in creating different works of art.
- **Build with blocks.** Whether they're the store-bought kind or simply milk cartons covered with construction paper or coloured by your child, blocks are great for object play. Dexterity, fine motor control and patience are just some of the skills learned by building. Your child also illustrates willingness to practice something over and over again – because inevitably, the stack of blocks is sure to fall!

From: <http://playathomemom3.blogspot.com/>

From: *The Wonder Years*, American Academy of Pediatrics, Tanya Remer Altmann, MD, FAAP, Editor in Chief. 2006. www.bantamdell.com

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