

Growing Together

ABA Strategies
for Family Services
Series



Anderson
Early Learning
Academy



Encouraging
Play at Home

A Whole-Child ABA Approach to Social Development

Why Play is Essential

- Play is how children explore, learn, and grow.
- It supports communication, motor skills, social-emotional development, and problem-solving.
- ABA principles such as modeling and child-led teaching help guide play in a way that's structured, supportive, and individualized.

Types of Play that Build Development

1. Functional Play

- Using toys as intended (e.g., rolling a car, stacking blocks).
- Builds understanding of cause and effect and basic motor skills.

2. Sensory Play

- Engaging with textures, sounds, and movement.
- Examples: water play, sand bins, finger painting, sensory bottles.

3. Pretend Play

- Using imagination to act out scenarios.
- Examples: playing house, using puppets, toy kitchens, dress-up.

4. Social Play

- Playing with others to build interaction skills.
- Includes turn-taking, sharing, and cooperative games.

ABA Strategies That Support Play

Modeling

- Demonstrate how to use toys or engage in play.
- Use simple language and gestures to guide your child.

Prompting and Fading

- Help your child start a play activity, then gradually reduce support.
- Encourages independence and confidence.

Reinforcement

- Use praise, tokens, or favorite items to encourage play.
- Reinforcement makes play more motivating and enjoyable.

Structured Choices

- Demonstrate how to use toys or engage in play.
- Use simple language and gestures to guide your child.

Embedding Learning in Play

- Use play to teach communication, following directions, and problem-solving.
- Example: Ask your child to request a toy or describe what they're doing.



How Parents Can Encourage Play at Home

During Daily Routines

- Turn everyday tasks into playful moments: sorting laundry, cooking, cleaning.
- Use songs and movement during transitions (e.g., clean-up time).

During Quiet Time

- Offer puzzles, coloring books, or sticker activities.
- Read stories and act them out with toys or puppets.

During Outdoor Time

- Create simple obstacle courses or scavenger hunts.
- Play catch, hopscotch, or nature exploration games.

During Social Play

- Invite siblings or peers to play simple games together.
- Practice turn-taking, sharing, and asking for help.



Tips for Success

- Follow your child's interests to keep play engaging.
- Keep activities short and positive.
- Celebrate effort and participation.
- Rotate toys to keep play fresh and exciting.
- Communicate with your child's ABA team for personalized ideas and support.





Anderson Early Learning Academy

Anderson Early Learning Academy (AELA) is a NYS approved 4410 program that provides children ages 3-5 years of age opportunities to learn in an environment that is developmentally appropriate and teaches the skills needed to be successful in kindergarten

Anderson Early Learning Academy
www.AndersonEarlyLearningAcademy.org



CONTACT US:

Dan Rounds MS Ed, SBL : Director of Early Childhood Education
DRounds@AndersonCares.org

Shanna Kangas, BCBA : AELA Preschool Coordinator
SKangas@AndersonCares.org

Meredith Wait, BCBA : AELA Behavior Analyst
MWait@AndersonCares.org