



Mind

nobody's perfect

Dad's Role in Play

Play is one of the best ways that you, as a dad, can bond with your child.

Dads tend to play with a style that is unique and different from how moms may play. Dads are more likely to make their play active and use their bodies as part of play. And this is okay! This more physical style of play is important to the development of children.

The Importance of Play

Playing is how your child learns and experiences their surroundings. You can provide lots of opportunities for your child to play with or without you. Participating in your child's play can make fun and positive memories for the both of you. Playing is a fun way to understand and bond with your child.

Different Roles for Dads During Play

When your child is playing on their own you can watch, cheer on, or play side-by-side without being directly involved. You both can be the entertainer or teacher in different circumstances. Take turns leading the play—where you each follow the other's lead.

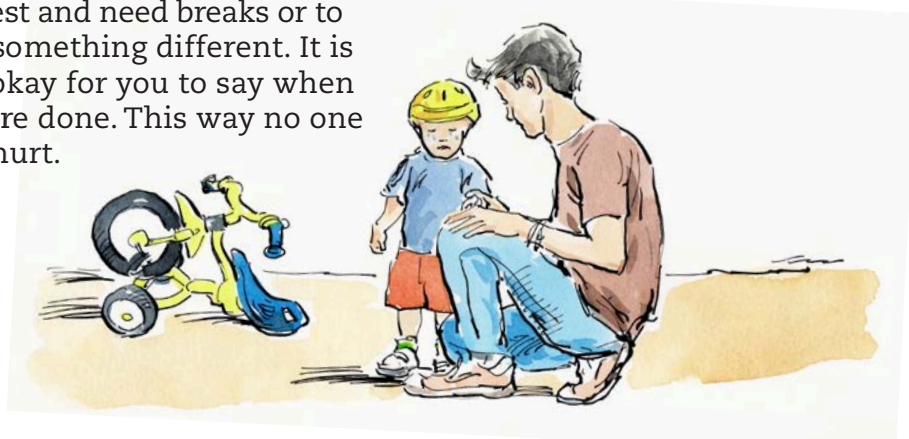
Rough and Tumble Play

Children often enjoy rough and tumble play. It is important however to recognize when your child is finished playing. For example, when your baby is feeling overwhelmed they may turn away or stop laughing. Your older child may lose interest and need breaks or to play something different. It is also okay for you to say when you are done. This way no one gets hurt.

Risky Play

Dads are more likely to allow their children to take risks. Most children enjoy testing their limits and try playing in a way that might seem unsafe. As the adult, you need to be aware of the risks and be ready to step in when play becomes dangerous. It is important to not step in too early as risky play gives your child the opportunity to test their abilities, problem-solve and take risks that help develop confidence, independence and resilience.

 **YOU are your child's favourite toy.**



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



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Fun & Easy Activities

Active Play includes: tickling, wrestling, spinning, swinging, kicking a ball, chasing, tumbling and rolling—activities that are usually high energy. The key thing is that everyone is having fun.

0–6 months

Action song: Sit on the floor with your baby lying on your legs, facing you. Sing action songs, like *The Wheels on the Bus*, *The Itsy-Bitsy Spider*, or *Head, Shoulder, Knees, and Toes*. Do the actions gently with your baby as you sing.

6–12 months

Climb a Mountain: Make a pile of pillows and other soft things your baby can crawl over. Stay close to help and keep your baby safe.

1–2 years

Humpty Dumpty. Sit your child on your knees facing you. Bounce your child up and down while saying the Humpty Dumpty rhyme. On the word “fall”, open your legs and lower your child gently to the floor and say “boom” when they reach the floor.

2–3 years

Over and Under: Lie on the floor while your child walks over you. Form a bridge using your hands and feet while your child crawls under you. Sit on the floor with your legs apart while your child jumps over them.

3–4 years

Box Car Run: Give your child a large cardboard box or laundry basket to push around the room. Suggest a doll or stuffed animal your child can put in the “car”. Encourage your child to get into the box as well and you can push them around the room.

Living Room Basketball: Sit about one metre away from your child. Hold out a large plastic laundry basket. Let your child try throwing a large, soft ball into the basket. Give your child different objects to throw (sock, paper bag full of crumpled newspaper, etc.)

5–6 years

Parachute Fun: Find a large sheet. Have your child hold one end. Raise it high, make waves, or have it fall over both of you. Add cotton balls, bean bags, or a stuffed toy and watch it bounce and jump around.

Activities adapted from: www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/BSRC_Daddy_and_Me_EN.pdf



The Public Health Agency of Canada gratefully acknowledges the collaboration and expertise of Dad Central Canada (www.dadcentral.ca) and their national network in the development of the *Nobody's Perfect* tipsheets for dads.