

# The Family That Plays Together

## The Definition of Play

### Play is...

**Done Without Purpose:** No reason other than to have fun

**Done Freely:** No one forces you to do something against your will

**Engaging:** You have to be an active participant

**Fun:** No further explanation necessary



## The Value of Play

Play is an important part of child development. As Fred Rogers said, "Play is a child's job." Play is where our children learn most of the basic skills that will help them through life.

Through play children learn such skills as

- **Communication**
- **Cooperation**
- **Following Rules**
- **Developing Strategy**
- **Negotiation**
- **Problem Solving.**



Hey, an adult can stand to get a refresher course in all of these skills, too.

## The Power of Laughter

One of the other benefits of play is that it usually brings about laughter.

**Health Benefits:** There are many studies touting the health benefits of Laughter.

The University of Maryland Medical Center showed that people who laugh decrease their chances of heart disease.



Laughter increases oxygenation of the cells which has been shown to destroy cancer and increase mental clarity.

Laughter increases levels of serotonin which, among other benefits, helps promote better moods and feelings.

Laughter increases interleukins that boost the immune system.

Laughter works the abdominal muscles promoting better core conditioning, strengthening the body as a whole.

In short, Laughter relieves stress, lowers blood pressure, increases our conditioning and mental functioning.

Laughter truly is the Best Medicine!

**Relationship Benefits:** Laughter also helps relationships.

The more you and your partner laugh together, the less you will argue.



Laughing together creates a shared bond that brings two people closer together.

Laughter breaks down inhibitions and helps people feel more comfortable with each other.

The best speakers know that cracking a joke or two to get the audience laughing is the quickest way to win them over.

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## The Power of Smiles

Like laughter, smiles are also beneficial.

Smiles are attractive. When someone smiles it immediately grabs your attention. You want to see what they are smiling about. We are attracted to smiles, to people who smile, to things that make us smile. When we smile we attract people to us.



Smiles lead to better communication. A person who smiles is more approachable, more engaged in the conversation, and more receptive to listening. Smiles are less defensive of a posture and more open-minded.

Smiles are also proven to be good for marriage. Dr. Dacher Keltner of the University of California found that researchers were able to predict the future success of 21-yr-old women just by looking at their photos. Women who smiled more were more likely to be married by 27 and have satisfying marriages 30 years later.



According to the British Dental Health Foundation, a smile gives the same level of stimulation as eating 2,000 chocolate bars. Now that is serious power!

## The Benefits of Play to Marriage

**Better Health:** Play leads to laughter and laughter leads to better health. The healthier you are, the longer you live, the longer your marriage lasts.

**Better Communication:** Play teaches communication skills, which leads to better communication. Play also leads to smiles which makes communication better.

**Shared Experiences:** Relationship experts have always known that the strength of a marriage comes in the bonds that a couple builds along the way. Playing together creates shared experiences and shared memories that help create these bonds.



**Role Model for Children:** Playing together is a healthy role model for children that teaches them the importance of having play in their lives and in their relationships, which will lead to generations of healthier people and healthier marriages.

## Play Time - Action Steps

**Make Play a Priority** in your life by scheduling a time for it daily, weekly or monthly.

**Change it up Regularly** Switch from board games to physical activities to unstructured play time. Keep it interesting by trying lots of different activities



**Be Spontaneous** Life is not as serious as we make it out to be. Most things can wait for a little play time.

Look for ways to play even in the mundane tasks like housecleaning or laundry.

**Have Adult Play Time and Family Play Time** You do not have to include your kids in all of your play. Get a group of friends for a card or game night. Join a low competitive sports team. Fill your free time with play!



**The Family that Plays Together Stays Together!**