Why is it important for my child to be active and play?

- He needs to be active to have strong bones and muscles and sleep well at night.
- He needs to do things over and over in order to learn them and do them well.
- He needs to explore, try new things and discover for himself so he can be creative and imaginative

Activities to build large muscles:
- Dancing
- Riding toys
- Pushing and pulling
- Jumping
- Throwing
- Hopping

Activities to build small muscles:
- Piling blocks
- Using a spoon
- Drawing with jumbo crayons
- Picking up small objects
- Putting toys and puzzles together
Toys to play with:
• Large and light balls
• Blocks
• Push and pull toys
• Rhythm instruments
• Ride on toys (push with feet)
• Tricycle
• Toys that look like adult tools: lawnmower, vacuum, broom, shopping cart
• Toy cars and trucks

Things at home to play with:
• Plastic or metal bowls
• Plastic measuring cups and spoons
• Pots and pans
• Wooden spoons
• Paper or plastic cups
• Oatmeal box
• Aluminum foil (make into a ball)
• Pillows
• Strainer
• Dress up clothes

Games to play:
• Dance to music
• Follow-the-leader
• Hide-and-seek
• Make believe (that you are cooking, in a band, cleaning house…)

Playing with your toddler helps him grow smarter, stronger, healthier and happier.

Developed by the California WIC Program.