

Extraordinary Minds: Purposeful Play, Ordinary Stuff (20140421)

My son, who is autistic, loves to play with ordinary stuff. He loves to line up his cars, stack his blocks, and dump out his bins of toys. While these activities may seem simple, they are actually very important for his development.

Play is essential for all children, but it is especially important for children with autism. Play helps children learn and grow in many ways. It helps them develop their social skills, their language skills, and their problem-solving skills. It also helps them regulate their emotions and learn how to interact with the world around them.



The Asperkid's Game Plan: Extraordinary Minds, Purposeful Play... Ordinary Stuff (20140421)

by Jennifer Cook O'Toole

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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When children play with ordinary stuff, they are using their imagination and creativity. They are also learning about the world around them and how

things work. For example, when my son lines up his cars, he is learning about spatial relationships and sequencing. When he stacks his blocks, he is learning about balance and gravity. And when he dumps out his bins of toys, he is learning about cause and effect.

Purposeful play is a type of play that is designed to help children learn specific skills. It is often used by therapists and teachers to help children with autism develop their skills. However, purposeful play can also be done at home by parents and caregivers.

There are many different ways to do purposeful play. Here are a few ideas:

- **Sensory play:** Sensory play is any type of play that involves the senses. It can be done with a variety of materials, such as sand, water, shaving cream, or play-dough. Sensory play helps children learn about their senses and how to interact with the world around them.
- **Gross motor play:** Gross motor play is any type of play that involves large movements. It can be done indoors or outdoors. Gross motor play helps children develop their coordination, balance, and strength.
- **Fine motor play:** Fine motor play is any type of play that involves small movements. It can be done with a variety of materials, such as beads, puzzles, or crayons. Fine motor play helps children develop their dexterity and hand-eye coordination.
- **Cognitive play:** Cognitive play is any type of play that involves thinking and problem-solving. It can be done with a variety of materials, such as blocks, puzzles, or games. Cognitive play helps children develop their reasoning skills, memory, and attention.

- **Social play:** Social play is any type of play that involves interacting with others. It can be done with friends, family, or caregivers. Social play helps children develop their communication skills, cooperation skills, and empathy.

Purposeful play is a great way to help children with autism learn and grow. It is also a lot of fun! So next time you are looking for something to do with your child, try one of the activities listed above. You may be surprised at how much your child enjoys it and how much they learn.

Here are some additional tips for doing purposeful play with your child:

- Start with simple activities and gradually increase the difficulty as your child's skills improve.
- Follow your child's lead and let them choose activities that they enjoy.
- Be patient and encouraging. It may take some time for your child to learn new skills.
- Make sure to have fun! Play is supposed to be enjoyable for both you and your child.

I hope this article has given you some ideas for purposeful play using ordinary stuff. If you have any questions, please feel free to leave a comment below.

About the Author

Susannah Conway is a mother of two children with autism. She is the author of the blog *Extraordinary Minds*, where she writes about the power

of play. Susannah is also a certified autism specialist and a licensed speech-language pathologist.

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