



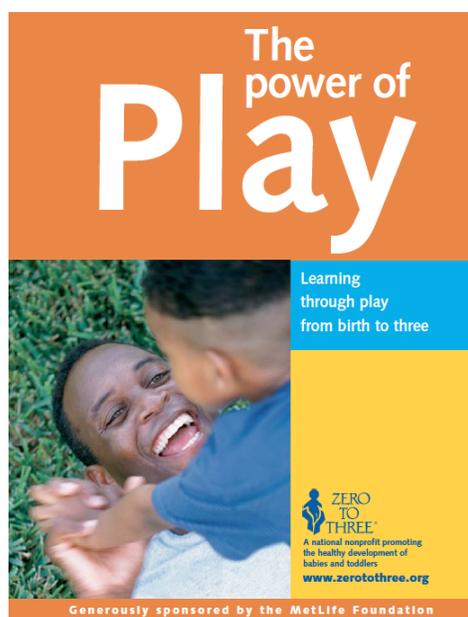
## Born to Play: Playing With Your Child

Children were born to play - it's how they learn about the world and their place in it. It's a way for them to manage stress, to let go, to feel the power and freedom of choice, to express creativity, to explore ideas, to be spontaneous. If it's not fun, if it's not enjoyable and spontaneous, it's not play!

It doesn't require fancy toys, either. Just as with so many other areas of early development, it requires **your loving attention and time** - a baby's first toy is you! Yes, babies play - beginning by back-and-forth looking, cooing, reaching, and grabbing. Babies all over the world love to grab at their parents' and caregivers' faces. Every parent has experienced the joy of hearing their baby laugh out loud when Mom or Dad makes a beep-beep sound when baby squeezes their nose. The sound of babies' laughter is what makes us search for YouTube videos of parents (and pets) making their babies break out laughing. We all laugh, too.

Play is joyful; play is fun. It's not a test or a quiz ("Where does the triangle puzzle piece go?") but instead is a chance to follow your child's lead and see what they are learning.

There are many great resources on play but we like this booklet from Zero to Three that you can download and print by clicking here: <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/play/power-of-play-learning.html>



To find a year's worth of activities for play, click here: <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/play/play-year.html>

And here is a great website by a mom about play: <http://www.playathomemomllc.com>