

Can you have “play goals” for another person?

Before you answer that question, ask yourself: “What is your goal?”

That is, ask yourself honestly, when “playing” with your learner or loved one are you focused on:

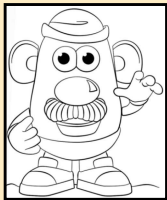
facilitating development?

OR

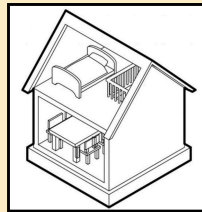
empowering engagement in activities that facilitate joy?

Using toys and recreational activities as a medium for teaching and / or scaffolding a range of skills and abilities.

For Example:



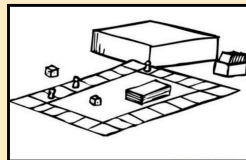
Mr. Potato Head to encourage grasp strength and visual motor skills



Doll House to scaffold language development and representational play



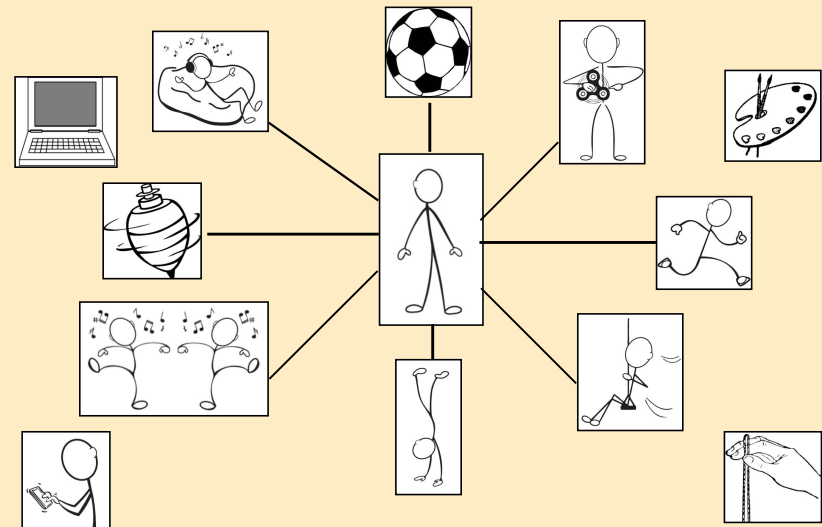
Balls to facilitate gross motor and visual motor coordination and reciprocity



Board games to provide opportunities to learn turn taking and cooperation

Activities introduced to facilitate development may become play, but, often they do not initially meet the criteria for play and may never.

Facilitating active engagement in an experience that is freely chosen, intrinsically motivated, self-directed, restorative, and joyful - no matter how different it looks to you!



Activities that are freely chosen, intrinsically motivated, self-directed, restorative, and joyful are **PLAY** (Lester & Russell, 2010). There is no right way to play.

Play is immersive. Play is exploration. Play is individualized. Play is restorative. Play is regulating. Play is fun. Play is functional.

Facilitating development and *authentic* play should not be confused when writing goals. We can have goals around development, but the only true “play goal” we can have for another person is really a goal for us, as their partners, to ensure the person’s access to opportunities and resources to engage in whatever activities they consider PLAY!