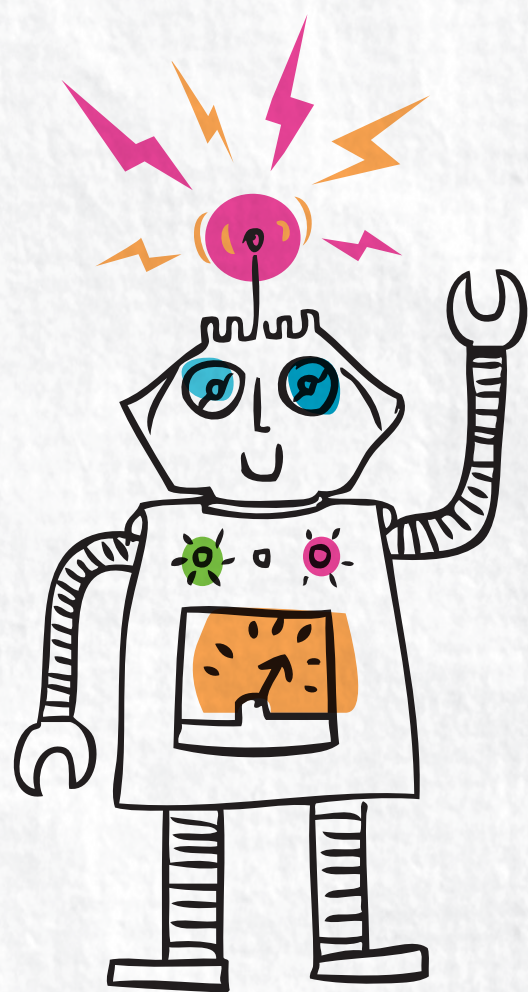


I IS FOR INDEPENDENT PLAY

There are big benefits to independent play, which exercises imagination, creativity, persistence, patience, problem-solving skills, and much more. Here's how to get started with your kids!



Put the light-up noise-makers away.

The best choices for independent play are things that kids can explore in lots of different ways.



Try these instead:

Blocks, figurines, dolls and stuffed animals, cardboard or plastic storage boxes, balls, baskets, toy vehicles, or art materials.



Make sure the toys are right for their age and stage of development.

If they're too challenging (a little challenge is OK), kids will need lots of help.



Create a kid-safe play space.

It's not fun to play when there are lots of rules!

When it's time to play:



Begin by playing together before moving to independence, giving them 15-20 minutes of your full attention first.



Let your kids know what's going on: "Now it's your playtime! I'll be right over here, and you can tell me all about it when you are done."



Stay close by so they can see you – which will help your kids feel safe and secure. When they glance up and can visually check in, it allows kids to focus their energy on play.



Avoid commenting on their play so they don't lose focus.



Manage your expectations. Remember that at 2, their attention span is about 5-6 minutes, at 3 they're up to about 8 minutes, and at 4 they can pay attention for about 10 minutes.



Add independent play time to your everyday routine!

