

ReadNPlay for a Bright Future

by Karen E. Schetzina, MD, MPH, CLC, FAAP

Reading and playing help children develop. They can also be fun ways to help children learn healthy habits. Doctors and teachers worked together to create ReadNPlay for a Bright Future.

The program focuses on four ideas:
Play More: Shut off computer screens
Play Together: Be Active as a Family
Play Safely
Fuel to Play: Eat Healthy



Materials include books, posters, activities, and squishy books for caregivers and children. My Baby Book offers tips to parents for the child's first two years of life. A Healthy Active Living booklet offers tips for the whole family. These books will soon be made into a free mobile app. Posters were made to remind caregivers of the tips.

ReadNPlay's Squirrel, Owl, and Raccoon are also in three children's books. The books are A Rainy Day Adventure, A Harvest Day Adventure, and A Safety Hero Adventure. Each book tells a story for children. They have tips about using TV less, eating healthy, playing together, and staying safe. These books are available in English and Spanish.

We know the best ways to get a child ready for school is to talk to and read with a child. Caregivers can help children get ready for school by using a lot words and sharing story books with them. Research has shown that the more words a child is exposed to, the better the educational outcomes they achieve. To help, ReadNPlay has made fun activities for parents to use with books. The materials come in a backpack and help adults pay attention to the words they use when talking to a child. The children's books are also made into 'squishy books'. Squishy books are made out of freezer bags and filled with 'squishy' liquids and small toys and characters from the book. Children can squeeze pages and feel the toys inside the liquid. This provides another way for children to interact with the characters in the books.

ReadNPlay was developed and is being used in Northeast Tennessee. Caregivers, families and children have rated the books and activities highly as fun tools to help raise healthy children. Current efforts are being made to promote the use of ReadNPlay materials to other doctors' offices and child care centers throughout Tennessee.

ReadNPlay was created by ETSU and partners. Support has come from the AAP, MetLife Foundation, and the Tennessee Department of Health.

Resources:

ReadNPlay for a bright future activities www.readnplay.org

ReadNPlay for a bright future on Facebook www.facebook.com/ReadNPlay



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The Gold Sneaker newsletter is expected to be published twice per year.

Gold Sneaker recognized facilities, as well as health educators and county health directors, are invited to contribute suggestions for topics, interesting stories, lessons learned or resources from which Gold Sneaker facilities may benefit.

Technical assistance is also available:

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