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Family & Relationships

Everyday Play: Fun Games to Develop the Fine Motor Skills Your Child Needs for School
Christy Isbell
Gryphon House
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No batteries required! Parents wishing to occupy their toddlers with creative learning activities will find *Everyday Play: Fun Games to Develop the Fine Motor Skills Your Child Needs for School* by Christy Isbell a useful resource. Dr. Isbell, an experienced pediatric occupational therapist and parent, invites parents of three-, four- and five-year-olds to "… join in your child's everyday play…" and gives them ninety-one activities grouped by age appropriateness to accomplish that.

Everyday Play is more than a menu of activities. Using language void of jargon, the author explains what fine motor skills are and how they relate to learning to manipulate objects so that a child will gain independence in daily routines like tying shoes and learning to write. She supplies a list of low-cost materials that might even be gleaned from the recycling bin and emphasizes the process of learning over the product. Isbell focuses on fitting the activity and materials to the child's developmental stage, along the way assuring parents that children progress at different rates. To this end, she has included a section on "Frequently Asked Questions" and a "Glossary of Terms." The glossary demystifies expressions like "reciprocal hand skills" for parents facing their first parent-teacher meeting.

The chapters focused on activities are logically organized. Each is centered on an age group and begins with a brief summary of what that child is generally capable of doing and may be interested in learning. Each activity is presented on a different page with the purpose clearly identified. The necessary supplies and a bulleted list of "What to do" follow. Many of the activities include an extension or variation called "More Fun!" Few illustrations complement the text.

Although Dr. Isbell aims her book at parents, it may be more appropriately aimed at independent day care providers and pre-school teachers. Each activity requires preparation and planning time that working couples may not have. Families living in small spaces will find

“Making Room for Fine Motor Fun” challenging. However, more spontaneous activities like “Simon Says,” only requiring the attention of an adult, are also included.

Christy Isbell has written four other books focused on child development, including *Sensory Integration: A Guide for Preschool Teachers and Mighty Fine Motor Fun!*

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