Special Educational Needs Inclusion Service
Down syndrome
Parent Training- Play Skills

- Play is the way that children learn about and make sense of the world around them.
- Play is a skill that our children learn.
- It is important that we engage in play with our children.

Solitary – child will play by themselves
Spectator – Will watch other children but will not join in
Parallel – Will allow someone else to play near them but not together
Interactive – Begin to play with others. They may find it difficult to share of take turns at first but gradually move to building friendships.

Exploratory – child will explore new items, often with their mouth
Functional – Will know what an object is for, child beginning to understand that they can cause a change to occur
Symbolic/pretend – Child will make believe with objects (a stick might become a magic wand) and can take on a role.

Can you identify the headings that best describe your child’s play at home?
Remember children can move down and up through these levels at different times
Ways we can help

**Commenting** – During play, language is very important. It is a good idea to talk about what your child is going, what you are doing and what is happening. This will introduce new vocabulary and ideas to your child and help develop their play skills.

**Wonder Aloud** – Children can get confused by too many question words. It is a good idea to instead ‘wonder aloud’.

“Ohh, Teddy is going in his car, I wonder where he is going?”

This means that a child can offer a response but is not under pressure to answer. If they decide not to answer, you can model an appropriate answer for them.

“Ohh Teddy is going in his car, I wonder where he is going? I think he is going to the shop.”

**OWL** – This stands for Observe, Wait, Listen

Watch your child playing first and listen carefully. You will be sure of what they are doing in their play before you join in.

Why don’t you try these strategies out at home?