

Summer Fun: The ABC's of Play

By Lisa Hartwell, PsyD, RN

Schools out, it's time for summer! With any luck, you've found the perfect summer fun program—one that helps your children retain all the new knowledge they gained this past school year or sharpens their skills for the next.

Parents receive messages from the media and society that they should be building every skill or aptitude possible in their children from an early age, after-school, on weekends and during the summer.

But don't forget to schedule play!

Most of the children and parents I see are stressed. They feel overwhelmed or, worse, they constantly bicker or argue. Kids now have so little free time. When they do, they often fill it with television and

video games instead of engaging in active, creative play.

Free play is important for a child's development. While playing, children explore the world, practice decision-making skills, learn to work in groups, negotiate and share. And they get exercise—children who spend hours playing video games are far more likely to be overweight.

Unstructured play allows children to relax and decompress. Many experts believe the decline in free play time is partly to blame for the increases in childhood and adolescent depression, anxiety and stress. Studies link better adjustment to having breaks with time to play.

This goes for parents, too!

So schedule play this summer. Make up



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stories together, with each of you taking turns deciding what happens next. Have a tea party! Hang out at the beach or go hiking on one of Hawaii's many trails. Dig out the card games stashed in your drawers. This summer, remember that both you and your children have a serious need for play.

They Entered and They Won!

Baby Goodie Giveaway

Jo-Lynn Chong
of Kaneohe

Baggino
(\$149 value)



Chanel Gasper
of Honolulu

It's Mine! Personalized
Plush Blanket and Burp
Cloths (\$105 value)



Chantelle Anuenue
of Honolulu

Stacy's Creations
100 invitation/
announcements (\$100 value)



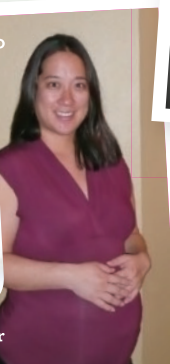
Katie Markert
of Kailua



Sweet Island
Baby Mei Tai
(\$90 value)

Mindy Fusato
of Wailuku

Go-Go Babyz
Infant Cruiser
(\$149 value)



In April, we featured a fun giveaway of baby stuff that generated many, many responses—thank you! Everything from personalized blankets, a trendy baby wrap/carrier and a baby car seat cruiser to personalized invitations and a clever, multipurpose diaper bag. The following mommies will be enjoying their new goodies very soon. Look for the next **Baby Goodie Giveaway** in next month's *Island Baby*, a supplement to *Island Family's* July '09 issue.