

## Top 10 Reasons to Encourage Play



1. Play advances many cognitive skills like learning to focus and paying attention to details.
2. Play produces an active, alert, but non-stressed frame of mind that benefits a child greatly.
3. Play opportunities help a child develop problem-solving, organizational and planning skills.
4. Play promotes both long-term and short-term memory.
5. Play stimulates language, negotiation and communication skills.
6. Play teaches a child how the world works from gravity to how things move, float or fly.
7. Play experiences allow a child to explore symbolic play, imitation and his own creativity.
8. Play allows a child to build confidence, one trip down a slide or throw of a ball at a time.
9. Play provides the feedback a child needs to develop self-knowledge and self-esteem.
10. Play is an excellent way for a child to connect to nature and to explore its many facets.

*Courtesy of Lekotek*

Visit us online at [www.wdsra.com](http://www.wdsra.com).



## WDSRA Lekotek Locations

With Lekotek, families learn purposeful play strategies and receive access to the same toys used in their monthly play sessions.

### Naperville Park District

95th Street Center, Room 217  
2244 W. 95th St.  
Naperville

### WDSRA

116 N. Schmale Rd.  
Carol Stream



WDSRA is a two-time winner of the National Gold Medal Award for excellence in community based programming and a recipient of the Illinois Distinguished Agency Award.



### Western DuPage Special Recreation Association

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# Providing the Building Blocks for Developmental Success



## Lekotek

A Network of National Affiliates



## Western DuPage Special Recreation Association

Engaging, community-based recreational programs and inclusion services for children, teens, and adults with special needs.



Serving the communities of Bloomingdale, Carol Stream, Glen Ellyn, Naperville, Roselle, Warrenville, West Chicago, Wheaton, and Winfield.

## What is Lekotek?

Founded in the early 1960's by two mothers of children with disabilities, Lekotek offers resources for purposeful play and toy-lending libraries for families with children who have special needs.

*"Lek:" means play in Swedish,  
"tek" is the Greek suffix for library.*



## Why Purposeful Play?

Play is essential to a child's development. It is how they learn about the world around them. Play allows interactions with siblings and peers, releases tension, advances cognitive development and increases exploration.

Often when a child has a delay in development it makes play more of a challenge, potentially further delaying development. Cognitive, physical, communicative or sensory limitations may block the engagement inherent to play. Typical toys and games may present challenges that remove the fun and spontaneity of play. This can increase a child's frustration and diminish future development.

Parents who can guide their children through purposeful play see their children move from struggling to succeeding.

## Certified Play Specialists

WDSRA Certified Play Specialists are trained and certified by the National Lekotek Center, Chicago.

## Lekotek—Providing the Building Blocks for Developmental Success

### Play Sessions

With Lekotek, Certified Play Specialists work with families by modeling play strategies that parents can use at home. Before the first session, an intake is completed for each child to create lesson plans and set goals specific to each child. Play Specialists can also design play sessions around goals set forth by traditional therapists, schools or family members to enhance an enriched development.

During the one hour play sessions, parents learn to capture their child's attention and engage in meaningful interactions using a variety of toys selected especially for them. Siblings and other family members are encouraged to be a part of the play sessions so that the whole family can begin to use similar strategies while building the social and emotional bonds important to family development. For ages birth to eight years old.

### Toy Library

WDSRA's Lekotek toy library is comprised of over 1,000 toys including adaptive toys, sensory, therapeutic and typical toys that boast developmental benefits. The library includes educational, commercial and specially designed toys from the United States and Europe. Toys are selected based on professional feedback from early childhood providers and therapists to gain maximum benefits for the child.



### How It Works

#### Annual Family Membership

Includes a one hour play session per month and loan of up to 5 toys per month. Play sessions are scheduled based on family and staff availability.  
*Annual Family Membership \$300 per year (\$25 per month)*

#### School Toy Lending

Special education teachers and school district staff enjoy monthly toy exchange privileges from the library for toys to be used in their classroom.  
*School Year Loan \$150.*

*For more information about the WDSRA Lekotek program or to join, contact Dayell Houzenga, Outreach Manager, at 630-681-0962 or [dayellh@wdsra.com](mailto:dayellh@wdsra.com).*

