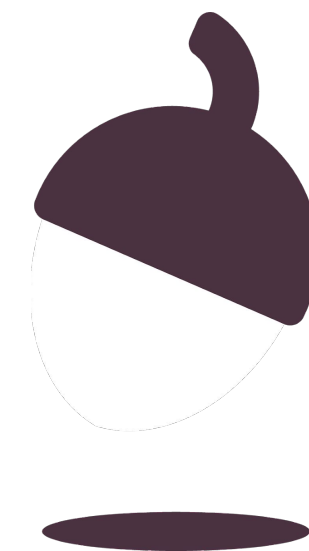


Speech and Language Therapy

# Object Play

## Lesson number 3 of 14 on Interaction and Communication

Emma Jones



**OAK**  
NATIONAL  
ACADEMY

# Object Play

Object play is sometimes known as exploratory play. This is because it is the stage of play where children learn to explore.

Through exploratory or object play, children learn about objects.



# Object Permanence

One of the first things a child needs to learn when they are exploring an object is that if they drop something, it will still be there even if it is temporarily out of sight.

This is called object permanence.

This is essential for language development because it represents the first stage of the child forming an internal picture or representation of the object in their mind.



# Games to promote object permanence


**Peek a boo**

**I can see you**

**Where's it gone?** - place a favourite toy in front of the child, gain their attention by saying their name, then cover the toy in a piece of light fabric so they can still see the outline. Say 'Where's it gone?'.  


**Pop up toys**

**Cause/effect** button toys (i.e. animal noises or colourful object movement)

**Feel it** - Place a favourite toy in a pillow case. Encourage the child to feel the toy from the outside without seeing it. Before the child loses interest remove the toy with lots of surprise and enthusiasm.  




# Object Play and Language

Object permanence means that more information (concepts) about that object can then be stored with this internal picture of the object. For example...

**What do you do with it?**  
**What don't you do with it?**  
**What does it feel like?**  
**What does it smell like?**  
**What does it taste like?**  
**What does it sound like?**

**How do you hold it/move it?**  
**What happens when I drop/shake it?**  
**When do you use it?**  
**What does it go with?**  
**What word represents it?**



# Activity 1 - Object Play 1 (Hair brush)

## What you will need

The child's favourite toys

A hair brush (other objects can be used)

## What to do

1. Remove all distractions
2. Allow the pupil to initiate the play with their favourite toys
3. Introduce the object by placing it near or in front of the child
4. Stop and wait for the child's to take the object/organise a response
5. Observe the child's response to the object
6. If the pupil doesn't respond to the object, try prompting their attention by tapping it and drawing in interest with your voice.
7. Stop when the child appears to lose interest or gets tired.



# Encouraging Functional Object Play

**Observe** the child playing with objects.

Model how to explore the object.

**Show** the child how to use them.

Play hide and seek games with the objects to increase their **familiarity**.

If the child **does not show an understanding** of an everyday object:

- Introduce matching objects in **real life situations** (e.g. give the child a spare plastic cup as they are having a drink, or a spare brush as they are having their hair brushed).
- Show the child how to **use the object in real life**.
- Later, hand objects to the child just after a real life situation (e.g. a spare shoe after they have dressed). Then widen the time delay between the real situation and play.



# Suggestions for everyday objects to introduce in play

Find a variety of everyday objects that you and your child use. Use these to pretend to carry out the appropriate action with your child i.e. brush your hair, drink from the cup. Encourage your child to copy you.

Hair brush

Doll/Teddy

Balls

Plastic cup/plate/bowl

Plastic spoon/fork/knife

Plastic bottle

Spare clothes e.g. shoes, gloves, hats,  
sunglasses

Toothbrush/flannel

Sticks

Mirror

Wind up toys

Blanket

Empty box

Construction bricks

Stacking cups

Toy cars





# Getting the most out of Play Time!

## Stop, Look, Listen

What are they **focused** on, **interested** in and/or **telling** you?

(With their facial expression, body and nonverbal communication)

## Wait

**Wait** for any **lead** from the child.

Wait 1 ½ -2 times your usual waiting time.

**Listen** to messages your child is trying to convey (With their facial expression, body and nonverbal communication)

## Respond

**Respond** to any messages your child is trying to make (e.g. I like / I want / I don't like this).

Follow the child's lead.

## Join in

Get down to the child's level, face-to-face and find a way to **playfully join in**.

Introduce new objects and model exploring.

Try and **copy** whatever the child does with the toy. Then **wait, observe** copy again to start building turns.



# Recording and Reflecting on Object Play

Use this sheet to record and reflect on your child’s object play when you are modelling how to explore. .

In one sentence, what have you noticed this week?

When I.....

my child.....

Date	Activity	Comments



# Object Play Time Diary

Date:

We learnt about

When my adult

I...

Insert picture

