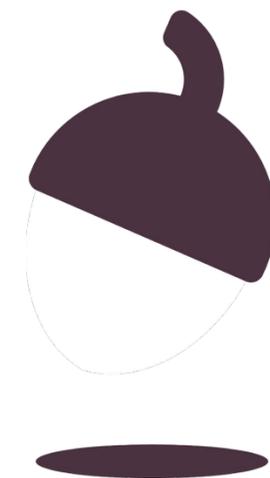


Speech and Language Therapy

Pretend Play

Lesson number 5 of 14 on Interaction and Communication

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NATIONAL
ACADEMY



Pretend Play

In pretend play, children learn to use one object to stand for another.

For example pretending a fork is a hairbrush, or a towel is a cape.

This type of symbolic understanding is needed for language, as our words are symbols.



Developing Pretend Play - Top Tips!

Stop, Look and Listen - Observe how the child playing with objects.

Follow the child's lead - Copy their play.

Build on what they have done or said by labelling and commenting on it, and add something to their actions and ideas.

Extend play by adding on sequences when acting out situations using

Introduce new ideas by linking some familiar pretend actions together. For example, if a child enjoys pretending with vehicles, you could introduce a less familiar idea by having the cars break down and taking them to the mechanic. Or if a child enjoys doll play, you could introduce the idea of a fairy coming to visit the doll.



Extending Pretend Play

Expose your child to **new experiences**.

Every time you go somewhere new with your child, this becomes a new opportunity for pretend play and role play.

A trip to the zoo can spark a whole new play theme for your child. A trip to the doctors could be a new role to play out.

Books also allow you to **introduce imaginary themes** to your child which can be incorporated into pretend play and role play.



Activity Ideas

You could create a pretend play box at home. Items you may wish to include:

- Empty containers or large boxes.
- Old clothes, shoes, hats, bags, jewellery, blankets.
- Plastic or play cooking utensils, cups, plates and cutlery.
- Soft toys and dolls.
- Notepad and crayons, blackboard and chalk.



Getting the most out of Play Time!

Stop, Look, Listen

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

Observe silently, watching to see what the child does with objects.

Wait

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

Wait 1 ½ -2 times your usual waiting time.

To give your child time to come up with their own play ideas wait without speaking, suggesting or instructing. Look interested though.

Respond

Respond by showing interest in whatever the child initiates.

Avoid questions or instructions though.

Join in

Find a way to join in **playfully**. Try and **copy** whatever the child does with the object. **Build** on what they do by commenting on it and adding something to their play. Don't change the focus or direct the play in another way. Then **wait, observe** copy again to start building turns.



Pretend Play Time Diary

Date:

We learnt about

When my adult

I...

Insert picture

