

Development of Play

Age	Type of Play	Explanation	Level of Play	Explanation	Suggestions
0-2years	Solitary Play	Child plays alone. Limited interaction with other children.	Exploratory 0-18 months	Shakes, mouths, bangs and turns over toys and other objects.	Encourage your child to hear, see, touch, move, taste and smell objects and foods that are commonly found in your home.
			Functional 18-24 months	Uses objects the way they were meant to be used (eg. Rolls a ball, stacks blocks, listens to a toy phone).	Show your child how to use objects, see if they will copy you. If not, give them hand over hand assistance.
2-2 ½ years	Spectator	Observe other children playing around them but will not play with them.	Creative-Symbol 2-3 years	Begins to use symbols in play (eg. Pretend a box is a train).	Provide your child dolls, cars, trucks, puppets, dress-up clothes. Create opportunities to play with other children.
2 ½ - 3 years	Parallel	Plays alongside others but will not play together with them.	Creative-Symbol		
3-4 years	Associate	Starts to interact with others in their play and there may be fleeting co-operation between in play. Develops friendships and the preferences for playing with some but not all other children. Play is normally in mixed gender groups.	Pretend Play	Plays with imaginary friends or animals or pretends to be someone else.	Read stories to your child often. Be sure your child has dolls, puppets, dress-up clothes, doctor kits, etc.
4 + years	Co-operative Play	Plays together with shared aims of play with others. Play may be quite difficult and he's supportive of other children in his play. As he reaches primary school age, play is normally in same gender groups.	Sequenced Pretend Play	Acts out sequences either observed in their environment or through books and T.V. (eg. Household routines of preparing a meal, school, doctor).	Reinforce the sequence or order of events with your child by talking about them.