

From soft toys to fantasy play: Engaging Children Through playing using the 3 P's

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Childhood development (<i>Estabrooks et al 2016 p248-249</i>)	Toys	Process	Problems	Pragmatics
0-6 months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Reflexively imitate adult facial expressions from birth ☞ Gaze intently at mother's face ☞ Prefer to look at human faces over other stimuli at 3 months ☞ Reach out for toys and grasp them by 4-6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Books and toys with geometric shapes, black and white colours ☞ Caregiver's face ☞ Mobile and activity gym with changeable or detachable objects (Black & White/bright contrasting colours) ☞ Baby Talk by AVUK 			
6-12 months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Develop cause and effect e.g. shaking a rattle deliberately to make a sound. ☞ Explore objects by touching, stroking and patting them. ☞ Peek a boo games. ☞ Develop early play schemas e.g. taking objects in and out of containers and opening and closing doors. ☞ Actions in simple play routines e.g. waving goodbye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Books with flaps to open and close ☞ Large, clear, realistic photographs of objects to encourage pointing with index finger ☞ Stacking blocks/cups/rings with different textures ☞ Balls ☞ Bubbles 			

<p>12-18 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Use real objects according to their function e.g. sweeping the floor. ☞ Acts on self e.g. pretending to drink. ☞ De-centred (15 months); begin to pretend on others ☞ Early pretend play on objects (once they already pretend on people) e.g. feeding dolly, putting teddy to sleep. ☞ Play becomes more sequenced with 3 steps around 12-15 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Prefers household/real life objects (e.g. broom, cup) ☞ Teddies and dollies ☞ Toys that move (cars, airplane) ☞ Simple puzzles ☞ Toys with a simple process – e.g. pop up pirate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Show the child how to complete more than one step with their toy (<i>e.g. First the man needs to sit down, then the train goes around and then he gets out</i>). ☞ Act out a story with toys and props e.g. play with <i>Spot</i>, providing toys for all the animals in the book. For each animal say “No no no!” till Baby is found. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Let problems happen to include nouns, verbs, descriptives <i>e.g. “uh oh, baby is all dirty! We need to get a wipe”</i>. ☞ Leave blanks for the child to fill in e.g. “<i>We need to point to flap and wait for “Knock knock knock” or “Open”</i>”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Simple turn taking and prepositions with tea parties (e.g. “<i>Tea for you and tea for me</i>”). ☞ Be explicit in talking about mental states when the child sees someone cry, laugh etc. e.g. “<i>Look that baby is sad – he wants his mummy</i>”.
<p>18-24 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Object Transformation - Substitute objects in pretend play – instead of needing a toy car, a brick can be used to represent a gas station etc. ☞ Actions on dolls and other people become increasingly sequenced – pours water into a cup, gives baby a drink, wipes its mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Blocks ☞ Dolls, teddies ☞ Cars ☞ Tea sets ☞ Toy kitchen appliances ☞ Small world play –e.g. Duplo or little people play ☞ Playdough and cutters ☞ Painting and drawing 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Sequences become less linear – the same doll has a number of actions before moving to the next. ☛ Transition from larger objects to small world play figures. ☛ Play in parallel alongside other children but not with them. 				
<p>2- 2.5 year olds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Pretend to be another agent e.g. doll or teddy – speaking and acting for them. ☛ Act out short sequences of familiar everyday activities e.g. shops. ☛ Asks for multiple repetitions of favourite stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Dolls ☛ Small world play and props ☛ Action figures ☛ Toys that relate to familiar events –e.g. shopping ☛ Arts and crafts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Relate play to the child's experiences and play out different sequences e.g. <i>"When you go to the shop, you greet the shopkeeper, say what you want, pay the money, ask for your receipt and say goodbye"</i> or Talk about all the things you might need for painting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Arts and crafts items might be lost, broken or empty. ☛ Have situations where people don't want the things they are offered e.g. <i>"Daddy does not want tea, he does not like tea, what shall we do?"</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Talk about likes and dislikes e.g. <i>"I like green, so I want to use the green pen"</i> or <i>"I don't like yellow, so I don't want the yellow paint"</i>. ☛ Ask them how they are feeling draw on characters' experiences for development of emotional vocabulary – in play and stories.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ 2.5-3 year olds ☛ Role play less familiar themes e.g. going to the doctor. ☛ Use words to describe pretend worlds or scenarios e.g. <i>"The monster in the corner is eating all the food!"</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Dolls and props ☛ Small world play and props ☛ Action figures ☛ Toys that relate to events – e.g. doctors ☛ Arts and crafts 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👤 Talk through toys – toys have increasing personalities or characters. 👤 Play sequence follows a logical order. 				
<p>3-3.5 year olds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👤 Take on themes beyond own personal experience e.g. being a fireman. 👤 Negotiates roles – “you be...I’ll be....” 👤 May have an imaginary friend who could persist until age 7. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👤 Similar to above but less reliant on props and toys and enjoys using imagination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👤 Talk about the process of explaining a game and the rules to others, checking in to see if peers have understood. 👤 The process of giving everyone a role or asking them what they would like to be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👤 Children might not want the role they are given, they might want to change the game or to play something different. 👤 Playground politics around who is first, who gets to play etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👤 Develop false belief understanding e.g. “<i>We know that there are stones in the chocolate box, because we put it in there. Daddy does not know, he did not see it, and he will think its chocolates, because there are chocolates on the box</i>”.

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