

From soft-toys to fantasy – a look at play through different stages & ages



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OUTCOMES

1. To understand the latest research of how children in 2017 play and to be able to describe common challenges that can be a barrier to a child's play development.
2. To be confident and equipped to choose the most appropriate toys and activities that will be enticing for children in 2017 and will be suitable to work within their current zone of proximal development.
3. To be equipped with a range of practical ideas and strategies to facilitate the development of joint attention, vocabulary, conversation, social interaction, imagination and theory of mind whilst playing.

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Play: then and now

What was your favourite toy/game growing up?

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Play then and now



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Electronic vs non-electronic (Zosh, J. et al 2015)



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The image shows two toys side-by-side. On the left is a yellow electronic toy with a smiling face, a purple top, and several colorful blocks (green, blue, red, purple) scattered around it. On the right is a red bucket with a yellow lid and a blue handle, also surrounded by colorful blocks (yellow, blue, green, red).

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Electronic/digital toys vs traditional toys

- Less peer support
- Less guidance and more reactive input from adults
- Lower quality of language
- Repetitive language used by parents
- Less opportunity for joint thinking and problem solving
- Less pretend play
- Lack of higher level language and thinking skills
- Less engagement and imagination
- Easily bored and distracted

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Guided play

	Adult initiated	Child-initiated
Adult-directed	Instruction	Co-opted play
Child-directed	Guided play	Free play

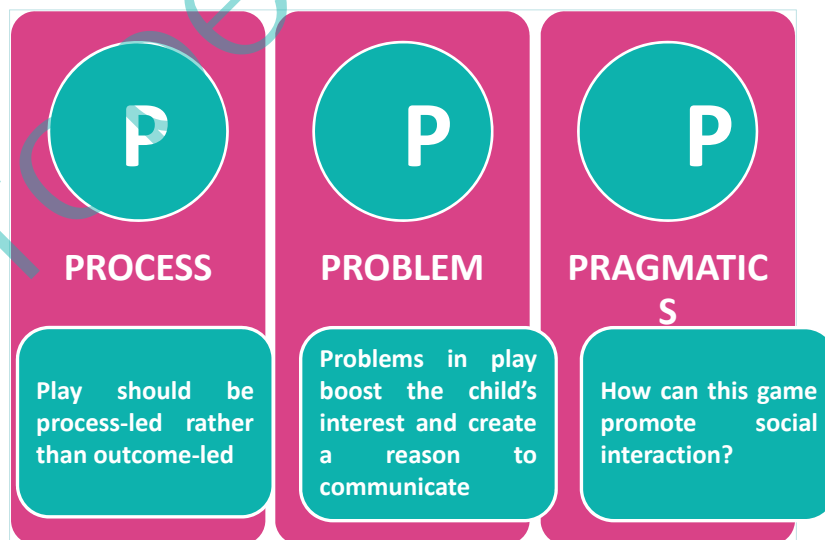
Weisberg et al 2015

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Guided play

- Research around the benefits of guided play (Weisberg, et al. 2015; 2016; Zosh, et al. 2015; Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, 2011)
- Benefits in vocabulary acquisition, pre-literacy & numeracy
- Easier to transfer and generalise new skills
- Increased use of spatial language

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<p>P</p> <p>PROCESS</p> <p>Play should be process-led rather than outcome-led</p>	<p>P</p> <p>PROBLEM</p> <p>Problems in play spike the child's interest and create a reason to communicate</p>	<p>P</p> <p>PRAGMATIC</p> <p>How can this game promote social interaction?</p>
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<p>P</p> <p>PROBLEM</p> <p>Problems in play boost the child's interest and create a reason to communicate</p>	<p>P</p> <p>PROCESS</p> <p>Play should be process-led rather than outcome-led</p>	<p>P</p> <p>PRAGMATIC</p> <p>The language used in play needs to be appropriate for the game being played</p>
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P
PRAGMATIC
S

How can the toy be used to promote social interaction?

P
PROCESS

Play should be process-led rather than outcome-led

P
PROBLEM

Problems in play spike the child's interest and create a reason to communicate

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0 – 6 months (Machver-Lux, Lim, Rohades, Robertson, Quayle and Hönick, 2016)


- Reflexive imitation of facial expressions
- Preference for human faces
- Reach out for toys & grasps them by 4-6 months



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0 – 6 months



Process

Problem

Pragmatics

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0 – 6 months



Process

Problem

Pragmatics

"do you want your roar?"
"let's put it on"
"we make it go round and around and around"

"oh dear! It stopped!"
"let's make it swing, swing"

Comment about your child's 'desire' for their toy
Engage in vocal turn taking by pausing allowing for your child to have their say

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Video

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7 – 12 months

- Cause & effect
- Search for partially/hidden objects
- Early play schemas
- Early pretend play using a baby-photograph book
- Relates objects to one another
- Actions in simple play routines




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7 – 12 months



Process

Problem

Pragmatics

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7 – 12 months



Process

Problem

Pragmatics

“let’s push” --- “there it is!”
“bye bye” – “it’s gone!”

“uh oh! It’s gone!”
“where’s that monkey oo oo oo?”

Allow the child time to explore the toy and use relevant comments e.g. “oh it’s stuck”
Encourage actions through words “wave bye bye”

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Video

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18 – 24 months


- Object transformation
- 3+ step sequences in doll play
- Sequence become less linear
- Transition from larger objects to small-world figures
- Parallel play alongside other children



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18 – 24 months



Process

Problem

Pragmatics

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18 – 24 months



Process

"First we wear the apron, then get some water, then we open the paint!"

"First we dip in water, then swish the paint, then we paint!"

Problem

"Oh dear! The brush is dry" – "you need to dip it in water"

"oh no I got paint on my hands" – "let's go wash our hands"

Pragmatics

Talk about the purpose behind painting – *"let's make a card for grandma"*

Reverse roles and get the child to explain the process to someone who was not in the room before

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30 – 36 months

- Role-play less familiar themes
- Use words to describe pretend worlds or scenarios
- Talk through toys
- Play sequence follows a logical order



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30 – 36 months



Process


Problem

Pragmatics

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30 – 36 months



P

Process

Decide on a script
Assign roles
Extend the process to include more steps: *“first knock on the door, then tell me what’s wrong, then I’ll check your heart and give you some medicine”*

P

Problem

Real-life problems & language – *“what’s the matter?”*
“oh no you have a very bad cut on your leg! You need a plaster”

P

Pragmatics

Assigning roles to others
Script is based around social language according to the situation e.g. *“hello! How are you?”*; *“what seems to be the problem?”*

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P

PROCESS

Play should be process-led rather than outcome-led

P

PROBLEM

Problems in play boost the child’s interest and create a reason to communicate

P

PRAGMATIC
S

How can this game promote social interaction?

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