

# Pretend Play

What is Pretend Play? Pretend play has many names. Some of these names are imaginative play, creative play, make-believe play, fantasy play.



Examples of pretend play are: being superheroes, playing 'mummies and daddies,' playing shopping, dress-ups, playing flying to the moon, tea-parties, playing trucks in the sandpit, and playing with dolls and teddies to name a few.

Pretend play begins anytime from 11 months to 18 months (in typically developing children)



When children are playing pretend, they are playing 'as if' something or someone is real. They are creating a situation where there is more going on than what is literally happening. For example, a child might be placing a cup to the doll's mouth and then lay the doll in a bed - but to the child, the doll is alive and really drinking (and it might even burp), and when the doll is put in the bed, the doll is really sleeping – and so the child will have to wait until the doll wakes up.

Pretend play is a thinking skill. To pretend in play, children have to understand the meaning of what is happening. In order to do this, there are three thinking abilities used very often in pretending. These are:

- Children use objects and pretend they are something else (for example, the box is a bed),
- Children attribute properties to objects (for example, the tea is 'hot' or the teddy is 'sleeping' or the truck is 'fast'); and
- Children refer to invisible objects (for example, there is a door in a specific space or a dog near the doll (but the dog is invisible)).



Pretend play also involves:

- Playing with an object as if that object is alive. For example, to the child, the teddy is a living, breathing being. The teddy can talk to them, and it listens; it has a life of its own.
- Playing out a character in role play. For example, a child might pretend they are delivering the post, selling food at a shop, being a mother, being a policeman, or being a doctor. To do this, children are learning what those particular people would say and do.

Source: [www.karenstagnitti.com](http://www.karenstagnitti.com)