

# Imagination

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Pretend play is an important part of a child's development. Collect household objects that can be used with dolls, stuffed animals, action figures, etc. Fill a box or bag with items and keep it handy with other toys.

## Basic Household Objects

|                |                                 |                    |              |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Cup            | Spoon                           | Bowl               | Comb         |
| Pitcher        | Baby bottle                     | Dull plastic knife | Plastic fork |
| Pretend food   | Vehicles for doll               | Washcloth          | Toothbrush   |
| Hairbrush      | Doll clothes                    | Blanket            |              |
| Doll furniture | Bubbles for pretend bubble bath |                    |              |

## Imaginative Play Activities

- Pretend to pour juice, give the doll a drink, feed the doll, wipe its mouth.
- Pretend to spill juice, wipe it up, wash the dishes, put dishes away.
- Pretend to give the baby a bath, brush baby's teeth and hair, put baby to bed, cover baby up, rock baby to sleep. Give baby a ride in a car or stroller.

We recommend that actions be done with corresponding sounds or words! Make up sounds to go with actions. Model single words and very short phrases to go with the action. Many children will imitate sounds before they start imitating words. Here are some sounds and words to use during pretend play:

### Action

Pour juice  
Drink juice  
Pretend to spill  
Feed doll  
Pretend to cut  
Stir food  
Wash baby  
Blow bubbles  
Brush hair  
Brush teeth  
Cover baby  
Rock baby  
Push car  
Push stroller

### Sound

Pssshhh  
Slurp  
Splash  
Num-num-num  
Kih-kih-kih  
Tih-tih-tih  
Wshhh  
Blow  
Sh-sh-sh  
Ch-ch-ch  
Shhh  
La-la  
Brrrrm  
Rrrrr

### Words

Pour, More  
Drink, Yum  
Uh-oh, Oh no  
Eat, All done  
Cut  
Stir it up  
Wash  
Pop, Bubbles, Up  
Pretty  
Say ahh, Say eee  
Night night  
Rock rock  
Go-go, Stop, Out  
In, Bye-bye



# Puzzle Play

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Puzzles are excellent toys for learning vocabulary, developing fine motor skills, turn-taking, joint attention, task completion, and interacting with others. The best puzzles for toddlers are sturdy, simple wooden or plastic puzzles with knobs on the pieces and five to ten pieces. Practice lots of fun language activities with puzzles. Try these:

- Empty the puzzle pieces, and keep the pieces away from the child.
- Hold one piece at a time by your face and name it. Then give it to your child. Point to where it goes. You may need to use hand-over-hand to help. Words to use: *"Turn, turn, turn," "No, no fit," "Yes, in," "Where go?"*
- Hold up two pieces and ask your child to make a choice. *"Do you want the horse or the cat?"* Your child may reach for one, just look at one, or try to say one. Whatever the response, reinforce by handing him/her the piece and say the word.
- Use puzzle pieces to practice turn-taking. Empty the pieces into a bag. Take turns picking one and labeling the turns *"My turn"* and *"Your turn."* Use the sign for *"mine"* (pat your chest) every time you say, *"My turn."* Occasionally ask, *"Whose turn is it?"* If your child even attempts a verbalization, say *"Good job! You said 'Mine.'"* If your child remains silent, help him/her pat his/her chest while you say *"My turn"* and then hand over the puzzle piece.
- Use puzzles to practice yes/no questions. *"Does the piece go here?" "No!" "Does it go here?" "Yes!" "Do you want another piece?" "May I have one?"*
- If the puzzle pieces are people or animals, use the piece to practice naming and action words. As you give each piece to your child, make the piece *"walk-walk-walk"* to the puzzle. Try *run, hop, jump, ride, etc.*, or ask your child what animal it is.