

Stages of Pretend Play – Stagnitti, 2001

Age	Play Themes	Objects	Sequence	Social	Role Play	Doll/Teddy
18 mths	Related to child's body – eg. sleeping eating	Functional Representational eg spoon in cup	1 action	Imitate a pretend action eg. giving a drink	Simple actions child has seen before	1 action eg. hugs doll
20 mths	Reflect daily activities in home eg. feeding doll	Similar object Pretend with it eg. paper for blanket	2 to 3 Sometimes mixed up order, not logical	Imitate Object substitution	Simple actions child has seen before	May place doll in chair or relate several actions to doll or a truck
2 years	Reflect daily life in and out of home eg. fixing car, shopping	Create something else out of objects eg. box as table or car	Logical, simple, sequential	Ask for objects needed . Plays alongside others	Imitates others	Dolls can do things (i.e. don't have to do action for doll or truck – they can pretend it)
2 ½ years	Less frequently experienced themes eg doctors	Uses same inanimate object for 2 or more functions eg. box is car and bed	Detailed & logical – no planned story-line	Imitates another child. Plays beside other children.	May role play someone else, but only briefly	Child wakes doll. Can use an abstract doll of wood or plastic.
3 years	Expands beyond present experience eg. TV, books, rescuing people, fire fighters	Uses blocks to build a wall. Inanimate objects are used for many functions	Multiple play actions in logical sequence	Beside others – plays same activity but little negotiation.	Fluid – may be self or in role	Doll very active. Dolls house fully utilised.
3 ½ years	Expansion beyond present experience continuing	Body parts used as objects. Eg. finger is gun. Imaginary objects start to be referred to in play	Play strategy – go to find what they want to play with	Beside others	Fluid – may be self or in a role	Doll is very active. Doll's house fully utilised. Characteristics begin to be attributed to doll.
4 years	Sub plots in themes eg. sick baby and Dr has to come. Home corner play	Object with a distinct function can be used in substitution eg. a hat or shoe for a boat	Planned storyline with complex sequences & subplots	Co-operates and negotiates during play. May argue.	Several roles Can change character within play	Doll has characteristics eg. naughty
5 years	Fantasy. Things they have never seen are possible. pirates, outer space.	May use language alone to describe an object & its function. Imaginary objects used fluently.	Organised , complex and preplanned	Play is well organised & negotiated. Involves cooperation, and sometimes argument	Same role throughout play session – rules	Doll has character of its own. Child uses language to talk about the doll's activities

