

Play is the key way children learn about themselves, others and the world they live in. It is essential to their learning, development, health, and physical, mental and social well-being – and it's FUN! Play provides the building blocks to be ready for school.



## Doll Play

Doll play allows your child to act out situations that are new or troubling to them. It allows them to work through strong feelings in a safe way. They may do or say things to dolls they wouldn't with family. This all helps their social and emotional development.

### Did you know?

Doll play is important in helping children learn how to grow up – miniaturizing the world to their size helps them make sense of it, control it, and learn the different roles people play.

### Add language

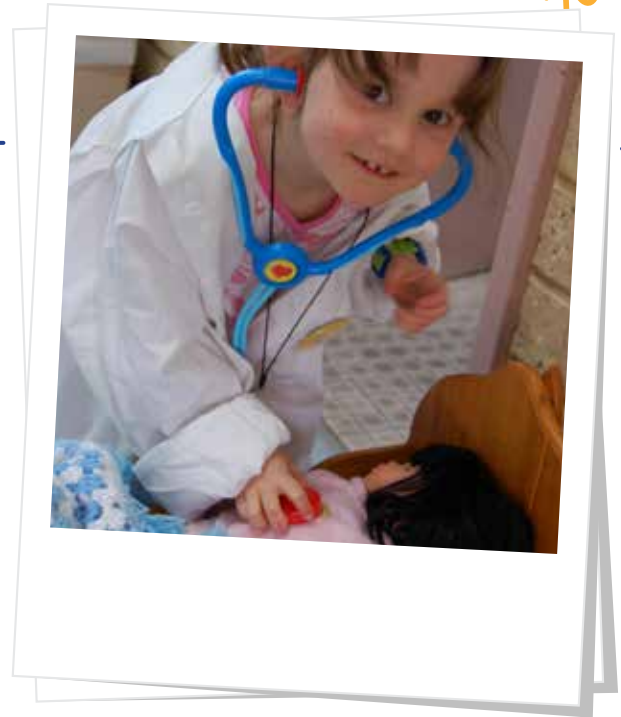
When you are included in the play, follow your child's lead and keep the conversation going. Make comments and ask occasional questions that encourage thinking and reasoning e.g. "Baby's plate is empty", "What would happen if ...", or "What else could we use".

Include some more complex language such as emotion words e.g. "He's frustrated because he can't reach".

Adding dolls or people/characters to other play materials e.g. vehicle play increases the likelihood of talking during play.

### Other development

Children acting out real or fantasy roles that go beyond simple recreating domestic routines, is important to developing planning, thinking and reasoning skills.



New ideas can be introduced by including fantasy characters, superheroes, or community workers such as doctors, firefighters, bus drivers etc.

Having paper and things to write with encourages "writing" of notes, messages, lists etc as part of the pretend play with dolls.

### Variations

Use dolls or action figures to act out themes from books you have shared.

- Playgroup WA has a treasure trove of play activities for babies, toddlers and 3-5 year olds, for home and playgroup. These play activities cover a balanced diet of play across sensory, movement, language and thinking skill areas.

You can find them at [www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas](http://www.playgroupwa.com.au/playideas) or visit [www.facebook.com/playgroupwa](https://www.facebook.com/playgroupwa)