

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.



Animals - Pretend & Play

Children's worlds are filled with animals, both living and represented (in pictures, stories, characters and toys). This makes animals a popular play theme for toddlers.

Did you know?

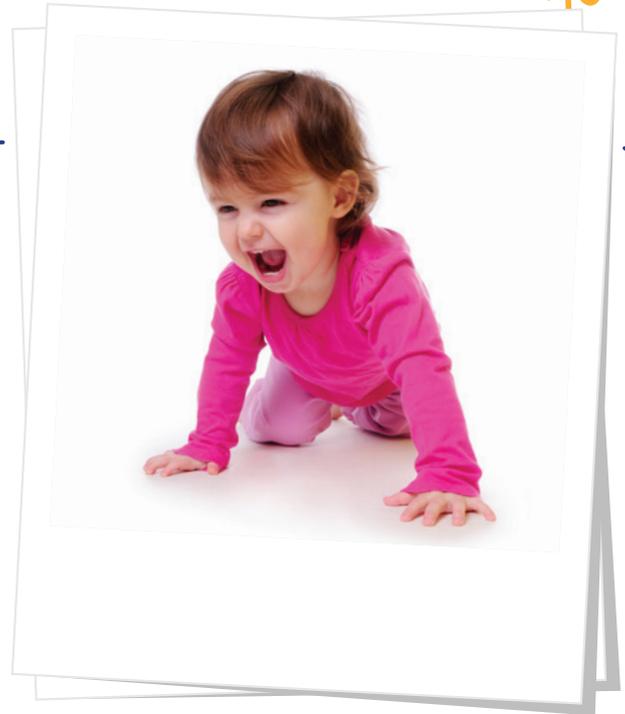
Pretending to be an animal by moving or walking like one helps develop body awareness, gross motor skills and can help with self-regulation (the ability to manage feelings, behavior and energy levels).

Early science and maths

Ask your toddler to match animals e.g. "Find one like this". Talk about the size, colour and body parts on toy animals. This all helps to build the language and concepts your toddler will need for maths and science.

Other development

Pretending to be animals can help with motor development, balance and awareness of their body in space e.g. stomping like an elephant, jumping like a frog, slithering like a snake etc.



Using toy animals to make farms or zoos and acting out simple play actions helps toddlers practice their fine motor skills as well as developing their imagination and creativity.

Variations

A sand or water tray is great for creating settings for different animals.

- 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 or visit www.facebook.com/playgroupwa

