

# Imagination Fascination

- 1) Discuss the importance of imaginative play
- 2) Learn easy ways to engage in imaginative play.

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## Play Defined:

- To occupy oneself in amusement, sport, or other recreation.
- To take part in a game.
- To engage in an activity for enjoyment or recreation.

## Imagination Defined:

- The ability to form mental images, sensations and concepts, in a moment when they are not perceived through sight, hearing or other senses.
- Imagination helps provide meaning to experience and understanding to knowledge; it is a fundamental facility through which people make sense of the world and it also plays a key role in the learning process.

## Learning Through Play

- Most child development experts agree that play is the foundation of intellectual exploration. It's how children learn how to learn.
- Abilities essential for academic success and eventually productivity in the workforce such as problem solving, reasoning, and literacy, all develop through various kinds of play, as do social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Play is one of the most powerful vehicles children have for trying out and mastering new skills, concepts, and experiences.
- Play helps children develop the knowledge they need to face the challenges they encounter in life

## Imaginative Play Defined:

- Creating fantasy
- Imaging different realities
- Transporting ones self to pretend worlds other than the one we live in.
- Pretending
- Role playing or mimicking roles

## When?

- Encouraging children towards creative imagination starts as early as the infant to toddler years. Fostering creative play in infants and toddlers leads to successful imaginative play at around age three or four.
- From birth we should begin offering opportunities to children to engage in imaginative play.
- Purposefully plan to have no plan!

## Why?

- Toys have become the focus of play where things are controlled
- Pretend play allows a child to be in control
- The Child becomes the inventor

## Why?

### Cognitive Development

- Focus & Concentrate
- Simple Problem Solving
- Discover Math & Science
- Learn About Adult Roles

## Why?

### Social & Emotional Development

- Develop Friendships
- Take Turns & Share
- Listen to Others
- Communicate
- Explore & Express Feelings
- Build Self Esteem

## Why?

### Physical Development

- Fine & Gross Motor Skills
- Coordination
- Eye-Hand Coordination
- Flexibility

## Why?

### Creativity

- Explore possibilities
- Add to and change environment in their own way
- Think divergently
- Make connections between previous experiences
- Test and evaluate their skills
- Develop curiosity

## Why?

### Ready for School

- Enhance memory
- Develop longer attention spans
- Represent objects & ideas symbolically
- Learn to focus/concentrate
- Develop self-direction
- Practice decision making

## Why? Language & Literacy

- Practice Conversations
- Use Situation-Specific Language
- Increase Vocabulary

## A Toy Story

- Many changes in childhood playtime
- Busy lives = less free time
- Safety and economic
- Changes in toys

## How?

- The question is not only how to encourage a child's imagination, but how to make sure not to discourage it.

## How?

- Open-ended toys
- Open-ended activities
- Modeling Make Believe
- Include in Daily Activities

## Ways To Encourage Imagination

- Have an well stocked dress-up area. Purses, wallets, hats, costume jewelry, Halloween costumes, etc.)
- Don't be stingy with crayons, watercolors, play dough, construction paper and glue.
- Pretend you are characters in a story book you just read.
- Provide blankets and sheets for building tents and other imaginative games.
- Encourage your child to build with construction toys and other toys, that give your child props to create their own world.

## Ways To Encourage Imagination

- Make up songs and stories together. Take turns. You say one line or sentence and she says the next.
- Spend as much time as possible in nature.
- Get on that imaginary boat, go fishing, be the Daddy in the pretend family. Be sure to let your child take the lead.
- Allow children to daydream.
- Help your child bring his own experiences into his play.
- Choose new toys carefully. Toys that can be used in many ways usually promote the most valuable play.
- Carefully expose children under 2 to screen media (TV, movies, computer)

- **Creating a quality play environment.**
- Household items
- Other Common Items
- **Toddlers and young preschoolers learn by mimicking the behaviors that they see around them.**
- **Enrich everyday activities by encouraging your toddler to use their imagination.**

## Imagination Fostering Toys

- Dolls
- Phones
- Small play structures
- Blocks
- Farm/Doll house
- Kitchen/Workshop
- Transportation

## Infants & Toddlers

- Peek-a-boo
- Pillow Mountains
- Hula Hoops
- Hide and Seek Objects
- Pudding Paint
- Reading Books
- Puppets

## Preschoolers

- Trip to the Zoo
- Magic Carpet
- Hula Hoop Journeys
- Train Ride
- Reading Stories
- Acting Out Stories
- Elevator Ride
- Dress up
- Boxes
- Carpet Square/Rug
- Playdough
- Books
- Suit Case - Knapsack

## More Versatile Props

- Blankets
- Computer keyboard
- Play cash register
- Play money
- Purses and wallets
- Eye glasses without lenses or sunglasses
- Steering Wheel

Imagination grows by exercise, and contrary to common belief, is more powerful in the mature than in the young.

*W. Somerset Maugham*