

The Developmental Sequence of Play Behaviors

BEHAVIORS	EXAMPLES
Pays attention to and watches toy for 15 seconds.	Follows moving object.
Pays attention to and turns to sound of toy out of sight.	Quiets, moves head to side to locate sound source.
Explores toys with mouth or tongue for sensory pleasure.	Sucks on pegs; mouths toys using tongue to explore.
Manipulates toys (waves, bangs, turns) for physical effects.	Grasps toys then shakes, waves, bangs.
Manipulates toys (squeezes, spins, pushes) for sensory effects.	Squeezes sound toy; spins truck wheels; pushes car.
Bangs together any objects held in each hand.	Bangs object to object; pot lid to spoon.
Grasps toys and examines.	Looks at image in mirror; turns hourglass and watches action; picks up doll and inspects face.
Places toys near other toys.	Places ring on or next to doll.
Acts on toy while making appropriate sound or word.	Pushes truck and says "un-un"; knocks down blocks and says "boom."
Places unrelated object in another object.	Places block in container; truck in box; peg in cup.
Uses toys with appropriate actions.	Hugs, walks, kisses doll, points to eyes; sniffs flower; pulls See 'N Say and listens to sound; turns book pages while looking at pictures.
Places objects near or in another object or body part to show relationship.	Touches cup or spoon to mouth; brush to hair; places peg near board (correct placements not necessary).
Combines unlike but related objects together.	Places spoon in cup; peg in pegboard; man on truck; doll on bed; receiver on phone.
Acts on self several times or in two or three ways.	Repeats single acts several times or engages in two or three acts to self: necklace on self, glasses on face; drinks from cup; brushes hair.
Places object near doll or person to show relationship.	Pushes near or touches cookie to cup, toy to adult, doll or child, but may not act on person or doll; brushes doll's hair with non-bristle end; places baby bottle to doll but not on mouth.

The Developmental Sequence of Play Behaviors ... (continued)

BEHAVIORS	EXAMPLES
Places object near adult and observes adult's use of object.	Pushes cookie or cup to adult's mouth then waits and watches for adult to pretend to eat or drink; gives book to adult then observes adult open book.
Places three to four objects in related group.	Groups or stacks blocks, rings, pegs, doll accessories, trucks and cars to show difference from other objects.
Initiates movement or sound to adult, observes adult's response, then imitates adult or responds appropriately to keep conversation going.	Initiates a movement or sound that peer or parent copies or responds to appropriately, then child responds with imitation or another turn to keep exchange active. Child says "Hello." Adult says, "Are you talking to Mommy?" Child says, "Hi Mommy."
Single act on doll.	Talks or babbles to doll; feeds; gives drink.
Same actions with two objects or to two people.	Pours into two cups; combs own hair then doll's hair; hugs doll then hugs adult.
Related action series to self.	Performs two related actions in sequence with objects; while pouring from pot to cup, child moves mouth several times to suggest drinking; brushes hair then looks in mirror.
Places toys in a disorganized manner.	Puts dishes on table in no particular arrangement; plays with toy people and accessories from a large pile but does not organize them by lining them up.
Action series involving doll or adult.	Sequence of different actions: loads blocks on truck, then pushes truck to adult; stirs in cup with spoon, then feeds doll with spoon.
Puts objects in appropriate place then acts on the combination.	Puts objects in back of truck and pushes truck; doll in driver's seat then pushes car.
Does same action in two ways, with two objects in one play scheme.	Uses spoon to feed self then uses different spoon or a fork to feed doll; puts lid on pot then puts another lid on another pot.
Purposefully completes two-step task to solve problem.	Puts coin in slot and pushes down lever for coin to enter register.
Shows size, space awareness of four related objects.	Stacks rings on stick with awareness of size; builds with blocks with smaller blocks on top.
Adds sounds to action and labels to objects, uses two-word combination appropriately.	Makes car sounds and says "car" while pushing car; makes drinking sounds and says "juice" after pretending to drink; says, "daddy's car."
Places doll in appropriate position to	Places doll on bed, covers up with blanket and pretends doll

The Developmental Sequence of Play Behaviors ... (continued)

two objects within one play scheme.
BEHAVIORS

sleeps; puts doll in chair at table then feeds doll.
EXAMPLES

Appropriate three-step series of actions in dramatic play with a theme.

Bathes, clothes, feeds doll; loads blocks on truck, empties truck; builds with blocks then uses structure.

Substitutes doll for self in play; play shows child thinks doll has senses and reacts to sensations.

Child holds mirror for doll to see; child holds telephone to doll's ear and moves doll as if doll is talking.

Uses one object for two purposes in play scheme.

Wipes doll with cloth then wraps doll in cloth; uses cup to eat from, then to drink from.

Child demonstrates two actions with substitute objects.

Child demonstrates brushing teeth and combing hair.

Places accessories in an organized manner.

Puts dishes on table in a specific, organized manner; groups toy people with accessories before starting imaginative play.

Substitutes object in single meaningful act.

Uses substitute items: paper as blanket, shoe as house, peg as bottle or spoon.

Makes doll act on self as though doll can do actions independent of child.

Places brush in doll's hand, then moves doll's arm to indicate doll can brush own hair; doll drives truck with hands on steering wheel.

Demonstrates or says plan for play before or while doing them.

Says "I am going to" or "I am making"; pretends small items are food or forms materials to represent object then uses appropriately in a pretend play.

Substitutes multiple objects in same scene.

Paper for doll blanket and shoe for doll's bath tub.

Tells play plan for assigned roles.

"I am mother... you be baby" or "I cook dinner and you watch TV."

Shows awareness of appropriate size between dolls and accessories.

Gives small doll a small cup and a small plate and gives larger doll larger items.

When asked, shows adult how to perform a simple act using a body part.

Child uses finger to represent toothbrush, hand as hairbrush or fingers to eat cereal.

Tells play plan and uses pretend props which are identified for benefit of adult.

"This is our house" (a box); "This will be my stove" (table) "and my pot" (saucer).

Solves puzzle in sequence using cash register or other toy with four to six steps.

Puts coin in slot, pushes lever so coin drops in register, pushes change button for coin to drop into tray, pushes sale button for money to drop into drawer and turns crank to open drawer.