



ready at five

Playing Creatively

Being creative is more than drawing or painting, it is also about Dramatic Play. Make-believe or fantasy play allows children to use their imagination and pretend to be someone else, somewhere else, or doing something else. A "script" is not needed – only imagination. The possibilities are endless! To inspire your child's creative play, try these activities:

INFANT:

- Be silly with your baby: make different faces (happy, sad, mad) or play peek-a-boo.
- Use different voices when talking with or singing to your infant.

TODDLER:

- Just Play! Get involved in your child's pretend fantasy world; let your child lead the play – it should be based on her interests and ideas, not yours. Whatever you play, be sure to take an active role in it.
- Provide your child with large blocks of unscheduled time throughout the day to engage in spontaneous, self-directed play.
- Role-play family happenings or everyday activities with your child. Pretend to visit the doctor, grocery store or bank; make dinner or bake a cake; or care for a baby.
- Be Superheroes! Ask your child: "If you could be a superhero, what power would you have? What would you do? What would your name be?" Describe the superhero that you would like to be. Together, pretend to save the universe! For inspiration, read: *SuperHero ABC* by Bob McCleod.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Take an imaginary trip. Say to your child, "Let's pretend that we are going to take a trip to a fantasy forest." Have your child close her eyes. Ask: "What do you see in the forest? What do you hear? Can you smell anything?" Have your child open her eyes. Pretend that you and your child are in the forest . . . what will you do?
- Play "Action Charades." Briefly pretend to be doing an activity. For example, mowing the grass, vacuuming, playing a guitar, fishing, or playing baseball. Ask your child to guess what you are doing. Repeat the game, changing roles each time.
- Make up a story with your child. Start a simple story about one character. Use different voices and movements to help tell the story and engage your child. Part way through the story, stop and have your child add to it. Urge your child to try "acting out" the story – using motion and voices – as she says the words. Switch between storyteller and listener until you both feel the story is complete.
- Encourage your child to give a performance – a play, puppet show, or talent show – for your family at home. Have her cut out construction paper tickets and posters to advertise the event. Encourage family members to get dressed for the occasion. At show time, take your seat and get ready for a great time!

Book Suggestion

Little by Little. Amber Stewart & Layn Marlow. Orchard Books, 2008.