



Pretend Play

When children play pretend, they are learning

— about themselves, their families, and the world around them.

— to work with others and get along with them.

— to plan as they choose what they are going to do and gather the things they need for their play.

— about feelings as they act out times they have found to be upsetting or hard to understand.

— to try out new ideas and work to solve problems.

— to think about the way others act, think, and feel.

Children begin pretend play around one year of age. You'll see them pick up a telephone and pretend to talk, hold and feed a doll, or stir pretend

CHILDREN LEARN
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food in a dish. At this young age, children need to have toys that look like the real things to be able to play.

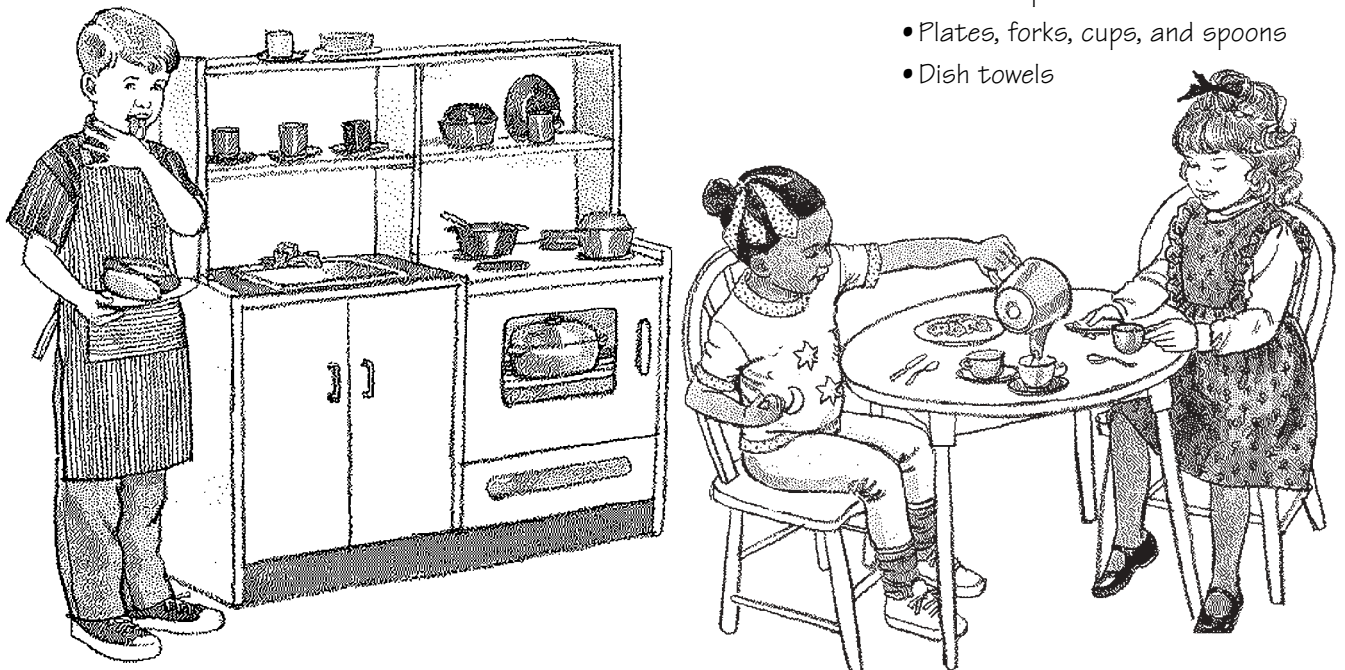
As children get older, they'll be able to use their imaginations to make one thing stand for another. You might see a child use some blocks for food or as doctor's tools.

Around ages three or four, you'll often see children begin to pretend as they play together.

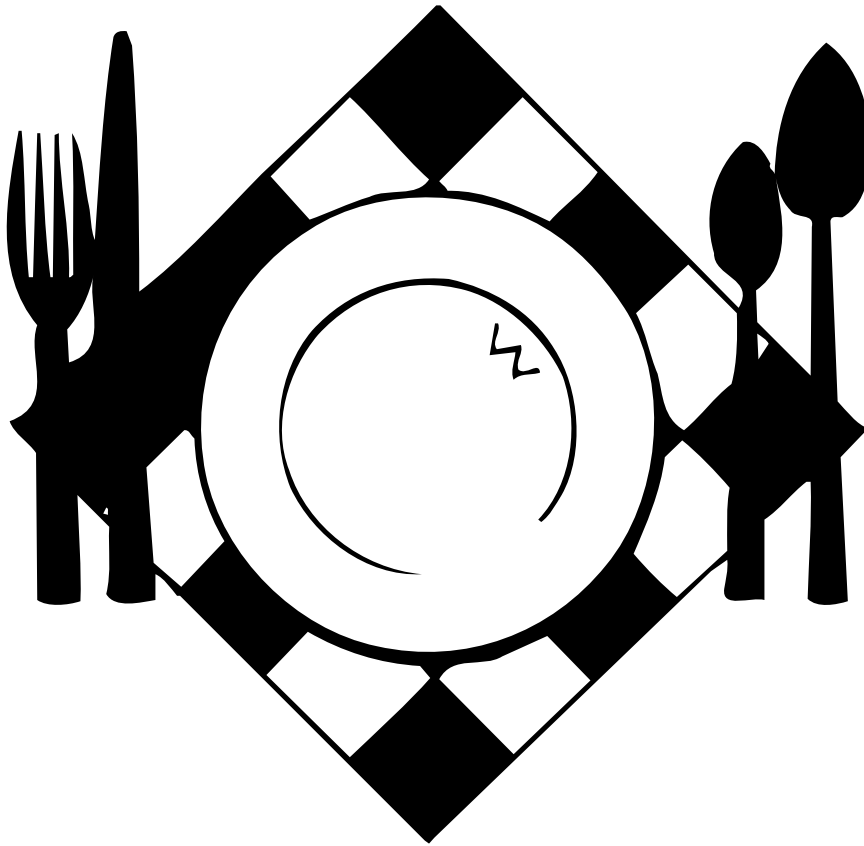
A housekeeping area is a great beginning for children to use for pretend play. Try asking parents to

donate things for the play area or watch for these things at yard sales and thrift stores.

- Dress-up shoes and boots
- Costume jewelry
- Neckties
- Scarves
- Bags of all kinds — tote bags, paper bags, suitcases, briefcases, backpacks, purses
- Wallets
- Keys
- Play money
- Male and female dolls
- Telephone (a real one that is broken is neat!)
- Blankets for dolls
- Clean, empty food containers
- Pots and pans
- Plates, forks, cups, and spoons
- Dish towels



More Ideas for Pretend Play:



RESTAURANT

Have play dishes, cups, knives, forks, and spoons or use paper plates, paper cups, and plastic knives, spoons, and forks. The children could use plastic play food or ask parents to bring old magazines for the children to cut out pictures of food to serve. Have paper to make placemats, menus, signs, and to write down orders. A cash register and play money will add to the play.

GROCERY STORE

Give the children clean, empty food containers to stock the shelves in the store. A toy cash register, shopping cart, and play money would add to the play. Don't forget

some paper shopping bags, grocery store ads from the newspaper, pencils and paper to make shopping lists, and stickers or paper and tape to put prices on the food to be sold. You might want to talk with a local grocery store to see if they will give you some food posters they are no longer using.

OFFICE

Start with a telephone and telephone book on a desk or table. An old typewriter or computer keyboard would be fun. Don't forget some paper! An adding machine or calculator, file folders and a box, plenty of paper, pens, and pencils, would be great props for this pretend play area.

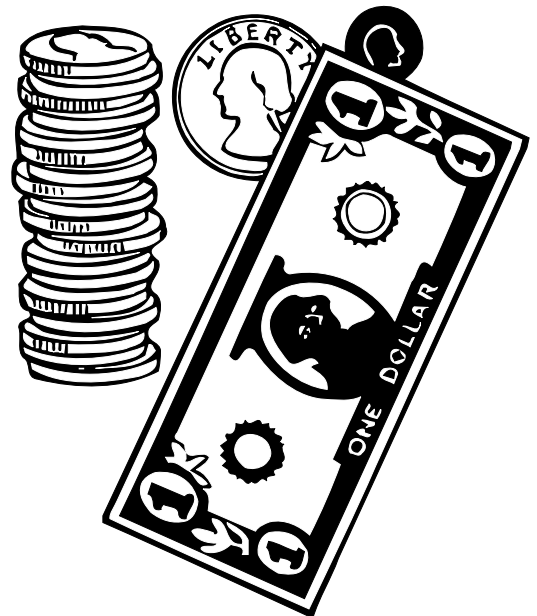
DIFFERENT PLAY MATERIALS CAN GIVE THE CHILDREN NEW IDEAS FOR PRETEND PLAY

DOCTOR OR VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE

If you don't have a toy doctor's kit, try to get an old set of headphones and attach a block to them with yarn to make a stethoscope. Cut a drinking straw in half to make a syringe to give shots. Lay some pillows on the floor for an examining table. A long sleeve white shirt makes a great lab coat. Some old file folders or paper on a clip board could be used for health charts. Don't forget a waiting room with some magazines.

SHOE STORE

Ask parents to bring in old shoes and shoe boxes. You may want to include a ruler for measuring foot sizes, a cash register, and play money.



Pennsylvania Pathways

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