

# Health & Wellbeing



## Play

Children play in many different ways through dress-ups, having a tea party, playing “mums and dads” or building a cubby. Pretend play is important for children to develop problem solving, flexible thinking, and logical sequences in their thoughts. It helps children develop friendships, social skills and is important for their emotional well-being and development of language. This table provides an overview of how play develops in children and the types of games/objects that they enjoy playing with at different ages.

| Age          | Types of Play   | Social Stages of Play   |
|--------------|---|---|
| 0-6 months   | Exploring and sensory play. Babies enjoy soft rattles, familiar sounds and faces, cuddles, play mats and mobiles.   | Attachment and bonding.   |
| 6-12 months  | Sensory play evolves into functional play. Children use toys according to their purpose. At this age, children enjoy familiar objects such as cup, spoon, comb, containers etc.   | Attachment to caregivers.   |
| 12-18 months | Children engage in simple pretend play directed toward self (pretend eating, pretend sleeping). They enjoys cars, dolls, soft toys, spoons, cups and enjoy using real furniture within their play such as chairs, bed and bath.   | Begins peer interactions and parallel play.   |
| 18-24 months | Children are able to link play steps together to form a sequence e.g. cuddle teddy, wrap teddy in a blanket and put teddy to bed. At this age, children pretend to make inanimate objects perform actions like dancing, eating, bathing. As their motor skills improve, they love active play. Children enjoy dolls/characters, sandpit, trucks, blocks, lego, boxes, drawers, instruments, containers and recycling items.   | Plays alongside others in parallel play, imitates others, takes turns and participates in groups. |
| 2-3 years    | Symbolic play develops and they are able to link multiple combinations into sequences of pretend play. They start to use abstract objects for multiple pretend ideas. Their construction skills develop and they are able to draw, build and do puzzles. Enhanced gross motor skills enable them to climb, jump, take part in rough and tumble and get messy in their play. Children enjoy a variety of characters, dress ups, tea sets, phones, handbags and bandages. | Plays in either parallel play or within a small group.  |

# Health & Wellbeing



## Play

|           |  |   |
|-----------|--|---|
| 3-4 years | Imaginary play becomes more complex with multiple steps, sequences and themes. Their characters portray feelings. Arts and crafts become more skilful. They love active play including visits to the park, swings, running and jumping. Children love dress ups, cubby houses, junk materials, bags, boxes, doll houses, lego sets, car garages and farms. | Plays with other children in a shared activity such as singing and dancing.         |
| 4-5 years | Children engage in play with simple rules, organised gross motor games, and imaginary play with prescribed roles. They begin to engage more in complex construction. At this stage, children enjoy character costumes, sand play, water play, junk materials, playdoh, arts, crafts, cooking tools and building tools.                                     | Play is now “dramatic” with pretend play, role play, dress ups and telling stories. |