Imagine This…

Albert Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited; imagination encircles the world.” By allowing your child the chance to use his or her imagination, you are helping develop a valuable skill — creativity. There are many ways to encourage use of imagination:

- Write stories about fantasy creatures or silly places

- Ask your child “What if?” questions. What if you were taller than our house? What if you had feathers instead of hair? Let them come up with their own ideas about what they would do in these situations.

- Encouraging “pretend” play lets your child try out skills and roles they see from adults. Provide dress-up clothes, play “store”, let your child serve you pizza or tea, and let them write your order down on paper (even if they don’t know how to spell the words).

It is fun for kids when you join them in their imaginative play. You can build on their play by asking open-ended questions (that can’t be answered with yes or no), using words to describe what they are doing — “I see that you are mixing your paints,” or by creating something new together, like a recipe, craft, or science experiment.

Featured Book

**Not a Box, by Antoinette Portis**

A box is just a box… unless it’s not a box. From mountain to rocket ship, a small rabbit shows that a box will go as far as the imagination allows. Your child will love entering the world inside a cardboard box, where anything is possible!

Here are some other Antoinette Portis books that support imagination and play:

- **Not a Stick, A Penguin Story, Kindergarten Diary**

More books that encourage imagination and play:

- **Harold and the Purple Crayon, by Crockett Johnson.** Harold and his crayon go out for a walk and their travels are limited only by Harold’s imagination. (series of Harold books)

- **Meeow and the Big Box, by Sebastian Braun.** Meeow finds lots of ways to play with a big box. (series of Meeow books)

- **Pete's a Pizza, by William Steig.** Pete’s parents turn him into a human pizza to get him out of his bad mood.
More fun with Not a Box…

Fun and games… Fix-It-Up Fun. Use a large cardboard box as a workbench. On top, place your “tools” — wooden spoons, whisks, a fork and spoon, a measuring tape, etc. Then ask your child to choose a toy to “fix,” using the tools to fix the toy. Role-playing games like this develop symbolic thinking and pretend play skills.

Math connections… Developing a sense of size and shape is an important math skill. Set out an empty box. Find 3-4 items of different sizes. Ask your preschooler: “Do you think Teddy will fit in this box?” After she responds, ask her to try it. “Do you think this block will fit in the box?” Once your child gets pretty good at this skill, ask, “How many blocks do you think will fit in this box?” (Let child respond.) “Let’s find out.”

Arts and crafts… Have boxes sitting around? See how to make a box town, a guitar, a tiny puppet theater, and more! www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/box/