

Imagine the Fun

AT YOUR LIBRARY

Setting the Stage for Imaginative Play

Young children learn by imagining and doing. Have you ever watched your child pick up a brick and pretend it is a zooming car, or hop a carrot stick across the table as if it were a person or a bunny? Your child is using an object to represent something else while giving it action and motion. But this pretend play is not as simple as it may seem. The process of pretending builds skills in many essential developmental areas.

So how do you set the stage in your house to foster imagination and creativity? Here are just a few things to keep in mind.

Play space. A child's play space should be inviting. It should be organized and free from chaos. It should include a variety of objects to explore and manipulate, and they don't all have to be toys. All play items should be easily accessible to children and in plain view.

In addition to toys, have open-ended supplies that encourage creativity. Paint, markers, glitter, and other messy mediums can be kept in a place easy to monitor, while less messy items like pipe cleaners, felt, fabric, and other creative items can be easy-access.

Quiet time, meaning turn off the electronics. We are not suggesting you go completely screen free. But we are suggesting you limit screen time and have times specifically set for quiet time. Turning off the screens allows children to think. When they think they imagine.

Renew or rotate. Sometimes an old toy needs new life. Before tossing or donating an older toy consider setting it out with different toys to see the reaction. Sometimes when seen in new light a toy can take on a whole new function.

Rotating keeps toys fresh and reminds children of other, possibly forgotten, toys. If storage space is tight it isn't always possible to have a large amount of toys within reach, so some toys must be stored in closets or attics. In that case, rotation is necessary, so stored toys can be utilized.



Idaho Family Reading Week November 17-23, 2013

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Sensory play. It is so important for children to have time for sensory experiences and a wonderful way to spark imaginative play. Here is some information on why they are important and a round-up of ideas to create your own Sensory Bins.

Toys. Toys should be carefully selected. Open-ended toys encourage thinking and allow creativity, logic, and imagination to be explored. Blocks are a perfect example. There is no "right" way to play with blocks. You can build towers and knock them down, you can make patterns, you can learn basic principles of physics, you can learn textures and weights, you can make paths and towns, and more all while having fun.

Adapted from Learn, Play, Imagine website

Check out this website for ideas on imaginary play at home!

<http://www.learning4kids.net/2012/06/19/great-places-to-play-at-home/>



Plastic Container Drawer



Cardboard Box Bus



Couch Cushion Obstacle Course



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