

Relational and Self-Pretend Play



At this stage the child should begin to understand everyday objects and use them for what they were designed for, such as:-

- Putting together the pieces of a puzzle
- Placing blocks into a shape sorter
- Using a pen on paper
- Brushing their own hair
- Pretending to drink from a cup

Strategies to Ensure Success:

- **Encourage the child to help you** with the activities that you do around the home setting, e.g. washing up, putting shopping away, cleaning the house.
- **Show your child** an action and see if they will imitate you.
- **Hand over hand support** e.g. helping the child to pick up the toy themselves.
- **Backward chaining**; adult models all of the sequence and encourages the child to complete the last action, slowly encouraging the child to take on more and more of the sequence independently.
- **Repetition** of familiar actions in different places and with different toys.

Activity ideas to encourage relational play:

Toys

Encourage the child to use the toys for the purpose they are created;-

- Building a tower with blocks
- Rolling or kicking a ball with a bat
- Pushing cars around a track
- Using pretend hammers, saws, building toys

Everyday objects

Use everyday objects to pretend with e.g. an empty cup, brush or flannel. Carry out actions e.g. pretending to have a drink, brushing your hair, brushing teeth, drying hands. Encourage the child to copy you.



Telephone

Use toy telephones to have pretend conversations.

Miniatures

Using miniature toys e.g. animals, farms and dolls; children can learn to relate objects together. Put the animals on the trailer or the driver on the tractor, and then begin to act out a range of actions.