



PLAY: Functional 1 [F1]

Child plays with toys in functional or simple pretend ways

Purpose

- To help teach your child to start using toys in the way they were meant to be used.
- To teach your child the start of early pretend play.

Description

This occurs when the child uses a toy in the way it was meant to be used. Playing with toys in simple, functional ways shows the child is beginning to understand the purpose and way to use simple toys.

- Moves a car down a specific path or while making car noises
- Puts toy food in the toy oven
- Opens the door to a barn to put animals inside

Activities

- *Bath Time:* Use boats and make boat noises as you push/pull them through the water.
- *In the Kitchen:* Use toy cooking sets. Show your child how to stir with a toy (or real spoon) or prepare a pretend meal, eat delicious pretend food (yum!), or feed a baby doll.
- *Playtime:* You can use cars or trains and make them make noises, or pretend to drive them together to places your child likes to go. You could try using toy animals or dinosaurs that can pretend to eat, sleep, growl, swim, or fly. This is also a great time to include siblings or other adults to help model appropriate play.



- *Playground:* Bring a few toy cars, trucks, buckets, or shovels to the sandbox. You can show your child how to use them to build and to pretend (make mud pies and pretend to eat them!). You can encourage other children at the playground, or friends/siblings, to join in.

Strategies

- *Model play with animation* – show your child how to play with toys in a silly or enthusiastic way so that your child is drawn to pay attention to you.
- *Provide visuals* – show your child pictures that show some ways to play with toys. You can take pictures on your phone or use YouTube videos.
- *Join perseverative play (make it interactive)* – if your child is playing with a toy in a repetitive way, join in and make it fun, then you can model appropriate play.
- *Play for a purpose* – set little goals for yourself and your child to accomplish during play (e.g., my child will imitate pushing a boat in the bath). Exaggerate your excitement when your child plays with the toy functionally (e.g., giving a high five, clapping).
- Add variations and elaborate on the activity to avoid repetitiveness and make the activity more interesting (e.g., make different noises as you push vehicles, play with toys in different rooms or bring them to the playground).

Suggested Toys

- Kitchen toys
- Transportation toys
- Toy animals/dinosaurs
- Sand toys
- Grooming toys

Goal Mastery

An ASAP Goal is mastered if your child meets ALL of the following criteria:

- Shows the skill at least three times
- Shows the skill during different activities or in different settings such as during snack time, during playtime, or at the grocery store.
- Shows the skill with minimal help or support from an adult