



## **PLAY: Symbolic 9 [S9]**

**Child expands pretend play with other people into (a) new roles, (b) new themes, (c) fantasy roles**

### **Purpose**

- To help your child learn to take on different roles that could be in the same theme, a different theme, or a fantasy

### **Description**

This occurs when the child begins to give ideas for new characters or new play routines while engaging in pretend play with other people. Expanding play themes shows the child is beginning to show more creativity in his/her pretend play, and developing more advanced imagination skills.

- Adds a new role of neighbor while playing house
- Suggests playing zoo as an extension of an activity with animals
- Pretends to be Superman and rescue the child from a burning building

### **Activities**

- *Playtime.* Various toy sets (for example: kitchen sets, train/car sets, farm sets): Add more imaginary parts, such as someone who could ride a horse or a person to check tickets on the train. This is another great time to include siblings or friends in play!
- *Dolls/Action Figures:* If you have been playing doctor/patient, encourage your child to play different roles (for example: patient, nurse, parent of patient).
- *Dress Up Clothes:* While playing firefighter, suggest that your child add an imaginary firehose.



- *Forts and Pretend Places:* While playing store suggest that your child take on the role of the stock boy/girl or an angry customer.
- Act out scenarios that your child is familiar with. For example, act out going to a favorite restaurant and being the waitress or the customer.
- Act out scenes from your child's favorite shows then encourage your child to expand those scenes and include different characters and themes.

### **Strategies**

- *Expand to show my child the next developmental step* – model adding on to play with more people while your child is engaged in playing with others
- *Provide verbal cues* – suggest to your child that another person might be able to take on a role in your play activity (e.g., doctor, nurse, patient; mom, dad, baby)

### **Suggested Toys**

- Dolls/action figures
- Kitchen toys
- Dress up clothes
- Forts and pretend places
- Toy animals/dinosaurs

### **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