



Doll Play

What is Doll Play?

Children play with the doll as if it is alive (i.e. also called decentering). The term “doll” can be used to refer to dolls, soft-toys, toy animals, and characters such as Lego figurines, Paw Patrol or Tayo the Bus. For example, the doll eats and sleeps, can talk and has feelings. Doll Play is for boys and girls!

What are the benefits of Doll Play?



Re-enact own experiences
(e.g. tell stories, express emotions)



Prepare for new experiences
(e.g. starting preschool, toileting)



Practice social skills
(e.g. sharing)
and develop empathy
(e.g. relate to how others feel)

What can I do to help?



Include dolls in play
(e.g. use a character the child likes, introduce a variety of dolls)



Show your child how to use dolls in play
(e.g. act out a scene from child's experience, let the doll take on a voice, express emotions)

What are the different types of Doll Play?



**18
months**

Uses single actions with doll



e.g. hugs doll, feeds a doll, puts doll to bed

**Uses variety of
single actions**

**20
months**



e.g. showers doll, sits doll on the chair, pushes
doll on a toy car

**2
years**

**Sees doll as alive
and doll does things**



e.g. doll reads a book, doll eats with a
spoon, doll rides the bus

**2.5
years**

Uses an abstract doll



Uses an abstract doll (e.g. uses stick/block as a doll)
Attributes properties to doll (e.g. doll is hungry)
Begins to identify with the doll (e.g. 'I take the school bus too')

Uses a doll house in play

3 years



Uses more objects in relation to the doll, the doll does many actions/can do many things, and can move from place to place.
Alternatives to doll house: fire station, car park set, headquarter (e.g. Paw Patrol Lookout Tower), etc.

**3.5
years**

Pretends doll has characteristics or 1-2 emotions

e.g. doll loves to drink milk,
doll is scared of the dark, doll is caring



Pretends doll has a life or career that is separate from the child

**4 - 5
years**



Acts out a play scene with the doll and describes what is happening (including doll's thoughts and feelings)

e.g. the doll is a doctor and goes around saving lives