

WHAT DO CHILDREN DEVELOP THROUGH PLAY?

Here are a few examples of the different types of things children are learning and developing as they play.

- When playing with plasticine children develop their fine motor skills. Children are working on hand-eye coordination and building up the muscles in their hands and fingers when modelling plasticine. These are valuable pre-writing skills, as good muscle strength and hand-eye coordination will help children hold and use writing tools properly later on. By playing with plasticine, children are also experimenting with things like colour, shape and texture.
- When playing with dolls and a tub of water they are learning about the concepts of wet and dry, floating and sinking, clean and dirty. They are also engaging in sensory play, and experimenting with the way water feels.
- When playing with musical instruments children are developing sound recognition (the sounds that different instruments make and an understanding of how sounds can change (e.g. high, low, soft, loud, fast slow) and an appreciation of music. These valuable listening skills are transferable to the area of language and communication.
- When playing with transport toys, children are experimenting with friction and motion, up and down, forwards and backwards, fast and slow.
- When children are playing with blocks, they are learning about colour, shape and patterns, as well as the concepts of weight, size, height, length, vertical and horizontal.

In dramatic play and small world play (acting out scenes from real life, stories and/or imagination created with small figures and objects) children are representing ideas that help them make sense of the world around them. They can also experiment with playing different roles and inventing different scenarios, taking them beyond the real world and developing their imagination.