

# A Practical Guide to Understanding Social Pretend Play in young children

## What is social pretend play?



**Social pretend play is when a child engages in play with others around a non-literal theme or using common toys in a non-literal manner.**

## Why is social pretend play important?

- Supports children as they learn to interact and cooperate with their peers
- Encourages children to use their imagination when playing



**Begins and continues with support beyond the preschool years**

## How does social pretend play support children's development?

**Social pretend play promotes the development of:**

- social skills,
- imagination,
- cooperation,
- critical thinking,
- language,
- creativity,

**and much more!**

## How can adults support social pretend play?

- Model how children can create imaginary together scenes or use objects for a non-literal purpose in cooperation with others
- When children create an imaginary scene, join the scene in a way that supports their social interactions and cooperation
- Provide positive attention as children play
- Expand on children's play to encourage them to continue to create imaginary scenes
- Provide children with plenty of time, space, and materials to engage in social pretend play

This work was funded in part by the Caplan Foundation for Early Learning. For more information on the Play to Learn project click [here](#).



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