



Developing pronouns through play

Pronouns are those little words that allow us to refer to a person by their gender. By learning the basics 'he, she and they', you can use these as a foundation for vocabulary relating to gender identification going forward. As you practice 'he, she and they', you might also find yourself modelling, 'him, her and them'. These words are possessives and definitely appropriate to be learning.

Take 5-10 minutes a day (or 3 times a week depending on your schedule) to play with your child and choose one of these activities to try.

1. Sort the girls from the boys

Spend some time going through the toys / soft toys / stuffies in your child's play boxes. Talk about putting all the girl toys in one pile and all the boy toys in another. As you do this, talk about why 'he' is going in the boy pile and why 'she' is going in the girl pile. It is okay to say, 'she is going in the girl pile because I decided she is a girl today'.

You can then sort all the toys into colours or similar. And as you do it use phrases such as, **he** is grey, so **he** needs to go with **his** grey friends. **They** are all grey.'

2. Look in books. Talk about who is a girl and who is a boy.

Who is in the story. Talk about who the girls are.

E.g. 'That is a girl. **She** is called Jasmine. **He** is a boy. **He** is called Aladdin.'

Lots of emphasis on the pronoun words, **he** and **she**.

3. Tell stories with dolls, teddies and furniture.

One doll hides from another. Your child has to help with your instruction;

"Let's put **her** under the bed."

"Where is **she** hiding? **She** is under the bed."

4. Role play

Take two different types of doll or a doll and a teddy. Say that they have been out playing and have become dirty, so they need a wash. Use a sponge/flannel, towel, hairbrush/comb and a toothbrush.

Give your child instructions such as,

"**she** needs to wash **her** arms."

"**he** needs to brush his hair."

"**She** needs dry feet. Lets dry **her** feet". Etc.

In all these activities, let your child tell you what to do as well.

5. Cut out game.

Cut out pictures of people or use real miniature toys. Use doll-size or ordinary furniture and ask your child to hide the children and then you where they are. Then swap roles:

"Put the boy under the table. Where is **he**? **He** is under the table.'

"Put the girl on the box. Where is **she**? **She** is on the box.'

6. Tea party

Have a tea party with boy toys and girl toys. You will need cups and plates. Tell your child we are going to have a party and all your toys are invited. **They** can all enjoy the fun.

Model how to give out pretend drinks and food and comment as you do this.

E.g. Let give **them** some milk. First we will give **him** some milk. **He** likes milks.

Now lets give **the girl** some cake. **She** likes lemon cake. Lets give cake to **her**. **She** is eating the cake.

Most of all, have fun with your child, and let your imagination be your guide.

