



6 Stages of Play Development

Type of play	Age	Explanation
Unoccupied Play	0-2 years	Playing alone, little movement, more about observing and taking the world in around us.
Solitary Play	0-2 years	Children block out everything around them but what they are concentrating on.
Onlooker Play	2-2.5 years	Children watch and learn, but don't join in. They start to display signs of symbolic play, e.g. pretending to feed the dolls, drive a car or talk on the 'phone' using a banana.
Parallel Play	2.5-3 years	A type of learning play, they copy the activity of others. Imagination starts to close the gap between what's real and what's pretend.
Associative Play	3-4 years	Time to show interest and join in others play activities. E.g. tea parties, dinosaur battles
Cooperative Play	4-6 years	Playing together as part of a group, working with others, accepting game rules and forming social bonds.