

# Stages of Play

## The main stages of play

AGE (roughly)	STAGE OF PLAY	DESCRIPTION
0-2 years	Solitary play	Solitary (solo) play simply means that the child is playing alone, despite the little interaction with others.
2-2.5 years	Spectator play	This is a term used for a child that is watching other children play but will not join in
2.5-3 years	Parallel play	A child playing alongside others but not with them, e.g. 2 children playing in the sandpit next to each other but not playing together
3-4 years	Simple co-operative play	Children playing together with little or no plan/structure to their activity (taking turns). Also developing friendship preferences usually mixed sex groups.
4-6+years	Complex co-operative play	Children playing together with a plan of a structure/working as a team to complete an activity.

Other stages of play include:

- **IMAGINATIVE PLAY** – which usually begins at 18-24 months and continues well into school age, an example of this is using a brick as a phone or role play
- **CREATIVE PLAY** – begins around the age of 2.5-3 years and will continue into school age e.g. using sounds in stories or making up scenarios
- **PHYSICAL PLAY** – beginning around 3-4 years and continuing into school age. This play includes interactions such as dancing, Simon says, Mr wolf and general 'playground' games
- **MANIPULATIVE PLAY** – also beginning around 3-4 years this type of play is used to describe the creative activities e.g. making something, threading beads, building structures.

**\*NOTE\*** children may reach some stages of play earlier or later than others depending on their personal abilities.