

The *FOUR* Types of Play



A child's play skills typically develop from age 2 months until about 5 years. The ages here refer to the typical **age of emergence** of these skills. .

Exploratory Play (2-10 months)

Child picks up a toy, may use both hands, shakes toys, bang toy against another object, uses it in a few different ways

Example: child holds rattle, manipulates it with both hands, shakes it

Relational Play (10-18 months)

Child takes toys apart, puts toys together

Example: child has stacking cups, puts them together, takes them apart

Functional Play (12-18 months)

Child plays with toys in simple pretend and functional ways, uses dolls or action figures in pretend ways, includes others in play

Example: child "wears" toy as hat, child feeds doll, child watches as adult feeds doll

Symbolic Play (18-30 months)

Child engages in a lot of pretend play; uses doll or action figure in multiple actions, child engages in pretend play with others

Example: action figure flies in sky then runs across ground then takes nap, child pretends to be a dog and other child pretends to be a cat and they play together

