

PLAY DESCRIPTIONS AND CODES (PDAC)

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PLAY SKILLS

EXPLORATORY PLAY (EP)

Play Skill	Description	Example(s)	Age Range
Mouthing (Mo)	puts toy in mouth	sucks block	Up to 9 months
Basic Manipulation (BM)	visually inspects or handles toy	turns object in hand or visually examines it, bangs object	By 12 months
Single Functional Action (SF)	performs one action with an object	shakes rattle, rolls ball, opens doors, presses buttons, turns wheel on car	By 12 months
Nonmatching Combination (NC)	random combinations of objects and functions	puts toy dish on car	By 12 months
Similarity-based Combinations of Objects (SC)	combining objects based on physical similarity	stack toy plates, put blocks of same color or size together	By 15 months
Functional Combinations of Objects (FC)	combining objects based on similarities in how objects are used	put toy lid on teapot, put fork with plate, combines cup and saucer	By 18 months
Complex Exploration (CE)	performs two or more actions with object	puts ball in shape sorter and then puts ball in bucket, moving objects in and out of containers, puts all animals in barn	By 18 months
Approximate Pretend Play (AP)	the child may be engaging in pretend play but there is not enough evidence to give them full credit for pretend play	puts phone to ear but doesn't talk or make sounds; touches comb to head of doll but does not make combing gesture	18-24 months

All ages are approximations.

At 18 months, children engage in more play than exploration.

SIMPLE PRETEND PLAY – (SPP)

Play Skill	Description	Example(s)	Age Range
Self-Directed Play Act (SD)	child acts on himself or herself	child eats from an empty spoon, combs his/her hair, washes hands	By 18 months
Object-Directed Play Act (ObD)	child acts on or with inanimate objects	child pours from a pitcher to a cup, arranges bedclothes	By 18 months
Other-Directed Play Act (OtD)	child acts on another person or lifelike object (anything with eyes) with a toy	child feeds a doll, grooms a dog; wash mom with toy sponge, rock doll	By 24 months
Repetitive Combinations (RC)	the same play behavior with the same toy is directed toward two or more different objects/people OR the same play behavior is seen with different toys on one object/person	child puts an empty cup to a doll's mouth, then to the mouth of experimenter and self; child pretends to eat a sandwich, then a cookie, then a carrot	By 24 months
Agentive Play Act (AGP)	action is attributed to animate or lifelike toy	child makes a doll drive a car, makes a doll shovel sand, makes toy dog bite or bark	By 24 months
Object Substitution Play Act (OSub)	using one object to stand in place for another	using a toothbrush as a paintbrush or pretending a block is a telephone	By 30 months
Self Substitution Play Act (SSub)	child pretend to be someone or something else	child says "I am Superman" or "I am a cat"	Begins at 30 months

COMPLEX PRETEND PLAY (CPP)

Multiple Step Play Act: Multi-step pretend play sequences involve any combination of 2 or more different Simple Pretend Play Acts. Must be able to label the sequence or scheme (e.g., taking care of baby, making dinner, going to the doctor).

Play Skill	Description	Age
2 Step Complex Pretend Play (2CPP)	2 play acts in a theme	By 24 months
3 Step Complex Pretend Play (3CPP)	3 play acts in a theme	By 30 months
4+ step Complex Pretend Play (4CPP)	4 or more play acts in a theme	By 36 months
Preplanned Complex Pretend Play (PCPP)	Preplanning of thematic multi-step play	By 42 months
Complex Pretend Play with Substitution (SCPP)	Thematic multi-step play with substitution	3-4 year olds
Multi-theme Complex Pretend Play (MCPP)	Preplanned multi-theme complex sequenced play with substitution	5 year olds

NONPLAY BEHAVIORS (NP)

– Behavior seen in the absence of any play with a toy

Unoccupied (Un)	Child does not engage in toy play.
Transition (Tr)	Child cleans up or sets out toys.
Aggression (Ag)	Child displays aggressive behavior in the absence of play.
Conversation (Co)	Child is speaking or listening to another child or adult and is not playing with toys at the time of the conversation.
Rough and Tumble (RT)	Child is engaged in physical activity without toys.

SOCIAL SKILLS

Play Partners

Number: How many children and adults are involved in the play?

Child(ren): Record the number of additional children in the play.

Adult: Record the number of adults in the play.

Play Initiation and Response

Initiator: Child initiates play with another child or adult

Other Initiator: Another child initiates the play with the target child.

Follower: Child follows play of another child or adult

Other Follower: Another child accepts the play initiation of the target child

BEHAVIORS

Document any behavior that interferes with or impede play or social interactions.