

THE STAGES OF PLAY

- it is helpful to consider a pupil's stage of development when thinking about play ideas

STAGE	PLAY IDEAS
Sensory Interacts and explores the world at a sensory level: Enjoys exploring different textures and feelings with hands, body and mouth: • Mouthing • Shaking • Examining • Dropping • Throwing • Feeling • Rubbing • Tearing • Spinning Interested in: bright colours, movement, watching faces, listening to voices and listening to songs	○ Adult-child interaction: people play ○ Boxes or bags of objects with different textures to explore ✓ Soft cloths ✓ Kaleidoscope ✓ Shakers ✓ Spinners ✓ Squeezy toys ✓ Bubbles ○ Physical play: tickling, chasing, hiding ○ Books that 'do' something : ✓ Touch & Feel ✓ Lift-the-flap ✓ Noisy books ○ Nursery rhymes and songs ○ Music of different kinds
Exploratory Learns that objects that are hidden can reappear; uncovers toys Learns through repeating actions such as: dropping objects and watching the result	○ Cause & effect toys ○ Jack-in-the-box ○ Peek-a-boo ○ Musical toys ○ Sand play ○ Water play
Organising / manipulating Explores the world in a more deliberate way Motor control is more developed	○ Play dough ○ Stacking cups ○ Duplo ○ Postbox ○ Can turn pages in a book and look at pictures ○ Action songs
Functional Develops more spatial understanding Greater understanding of functional use of objects e.g. teacup, spoon etc	○ Simple inset puzzles ○ Container play – in/out of container ○ Throw and catch with ball ○ Skittles and ball ○ Building ○ Musical instrument toys ○ Ride on toys/scooter etc
Symbolic/Imaginative May start to use objects to represent other things e.g. box as a car May enjoy building with blocks etc Can attempt more complex puzzles and matching activities	○ Can listen to and follow stories ○ Making things with play dough ○ Matching games and puzzles ○ More complex building activities ○ Pretend play e.g. dolls, tea sets, cars, sunglasses, bags, purses

