

## Section 4.4

# Learning to talk through play

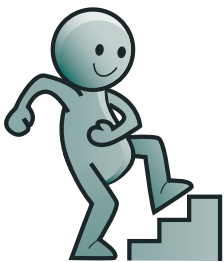


### Why is this important?

Imaginative play is crucial for learning new skills and practising these skills in a safe environment. Play is vital in encouraging language development.

### What to do

- Gather together dolls or other soft toys and one of the following:
  - ★ Doll's tea set.
  - ★ Empty bottles, sponge, flannel, toothbrush, etc.
  - ★ Bottle and bed (a shoe box will do).
  - ★ Shop.
- Encourage the child to act out situations through play (e.g. tea party, bath-time).
- Talk to the child about what he/she is doing.
- Get a doll/teddy/favourite toy/playmobile figure for yourself and play alongside the child to show what to do. Talk to *your* doll so the child can hear – keeping your sentences short and just using the words you need (e.g. 'doll drink', 'doll sleep').



### Step up

- Suggest more complex sequences (e.g. 'We went to the shop today. Let's pretend *doll's* going to the shop').
- Ask questions about what is happening (e.g. 'What's doll doing? Is doll eating or sleeping?').
- Suggest things that extend the play (e.g. 'Doll's woken up. Does doll want a drink?').

### Step down

- Act out sequences together and encourage the child to copy.
- Use the toy and accessories alongside real activities. For example, bath the doll at the same time as the child is being bathed. Talk to the child as you are washing him/her and comment on what the child is doing (e.g. 'wash doll', 'wash tummy').

