

PRETEND PLAY GLOSSARY

Developed for ACM by Jennie Ito, Ph.D.



Cognitive development: The development of the ability to imagine, perceive, reason and problem solve.ⁱ

Correlation: The association between two variables.ⁱⁱ

Dual representation: Thinking about one thing in two ways at the same time — as both an object and a symbol.ⁱⁱ

Executive functioning: Cognitive processes that aid in the monitoring and control of thoughts and actions (such as self-regulation, planning and inhibition).ⁱⁱⁱ

Free play: Play which is child-led play, without the constant interference or involvement of an adult.^{iv}

Imaginary companion: A type of role-play in which children impersonate characters by creating pretend identities and interact with stuffed animals and invisible characters.^v

Imitation: Purposeful reproduction of another's body movements, whether novel or familiar.^{vi}

Individual differences: The aspects of people's personalities that make them different from other people.^{vii}

Metacognition: One's knowledge of their own cognitive processes or anything related to them.^{viii}

Metarepresentation: Representing how oneself or another represents the world.^{ix}

Narrative: A sequence of events and/or states of affairs.^x

Narrative absorption: "Seeing" or experiencing a fictional scene as vividly as if one were personally experiencing it.^{xi}

Object substitution: A type of pretend play in which an object (real or imagined) can be used "as-if" it were another object (e.g., pretending a block is a car or pretending with an imagined car).^{xii}

Parallel play: When children play along side others but do not interact.^{xiii}

Perspective taking: The ability to step outside one's own perspective and adopt the perspective of another person.^{xiv}

Play therapy: A therapeutic model that uses the benefits of play to facilitate treatment with an emphasis on the relationship between therapist and client.^{xv}

Pretend play: Acting "as-if" something is real when it is not. The term is also used interchangeably with other related terms such as dramatic play, make-believe play, imaginative play, and fantasy play. The fact that pretend play goes by so many names highlights its complexity and the numerous interpretations of this behavior.^{xvi}

Pretense: See pretend play

Representational insight: The realization that something is a symbol that stands for something else.^{xvii}

Role play: A type of pretend play in which children create imaginary roles or characters, and act “as-if” they are another character or animal (e.g., Batman or a cat).^{xviii}

Scaffolding: A process in which more competent people provide a temporary framework that supports children’s thinking at a higher level than children could manage on their own.ⁱⁱ

Script: A well-rehearsed and remembered set of actions and remarks that is associated with a particular character or context.^{xviii}

Sensorimotor play: The exploration of sensations and movements through play.^{xix}

Social development: The ways in which individuals’ social interactions and expectations change across the life span.ⁱ

Structured play: Play which is adult-led, guided and planned.^{iv}

Theory of mind: The understanding that behavior is guided by unobservable mental states, such as beliefs, intentions and desires.^{xx}

ⁱ *Psychology Matters glossary*. (2002). Retrieved June 15, 2009, from APA Online Web site: <http://www.psychologymatters.org/glossary.html>

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