Let’s Pretend

Age: Preschool-age (3-4 years)

This activity helps your child's development in this domain: Social-Emotional, Language and Literacy

What You Need:

Nothing

What To Do:

1. The sky’s the limit on what you and your child can pretend to be or do—you could ask him to pretend to be a flower growing or popcorn popping, or that he is flying an airplane or riding a dinosaur. Have him tell you about his experiences as he pretends. Join in on the fun and pretend along with him.

2. Try the three examples provided to get started.

Example 1. Describe how certain foods are prepared. For example taro (kalo) is cooked, peeled, and pounded, and mixed with water to make poi. Similarly, sweet mochi rice is steamed, then pounded to make mochi. Ask your child to act the part of the person pounding the kalo or the rice and to describe what he is doing. Sing a song together about what he is doing. See below for an example. Later, if you have the chance, let him taste the real food and talk about the texture and taste of the food.
Pounding Poi
Pounding, pounding, pounding, pounding poi.
See the poi man pounding, pounding poi.
Mashing the taro, soon we shall have poi.
Pounding, pounding, pounding, pounding poi.

From Hawaiian Rainbows
A recording by Margaret Young Pang ©1988

Example 2. Tell your child that you are going on an adventure together. Have him sit on a chair or stool or on the floor and pretend that he is sitting in a canoe. Show him how to hold and use a pretend “paddle” to paddle his “canoe.” Explain how the action of the paddle against the water makes the canoe move in different directions. “Paddle” your pretend canoe together and encourage your child to talk about where you are going and what he “sees” or “hears.” Add your own comments about what you “see.” Ask questions to encourage your child to use his imagination. For example, “I see a big black bird flying above us. Do you see it? It’s an ʻiwa bird (frigate bird). Where do you think it is going?” As you “paddle” together, sing a song about paddling a canoe.

One Paddle, Two Paddle
One paddle two paddle
Three paddle
Four to take me home
Fourteen on the right
Fourteen on the left
Take me to Hawai‘i nei
No ka best.

Lyrics & Music by Kui Lee © 1966
Example 3. Describe for your child how a balloon gets bigger when air is blown into it, and how it shrinks when the air is let out. Have your child lie down on the floor and pretend to be a balloon. Ask him to imagine that someone is blowing air into him, and to show how he grows with each breath. Join him as he reaches and stretches to show himself getting bigger. Now ask him to imagine that he is deflating, getting smaller and smaller. Join him once again. As you and your child play this game, talk about how much bigger or smaller you are getting. Create a story together about your child as a balloon.

! Safety Alert: Adult-size scissors are not safe for young preschoolers. Let your child practice cutting with blunt, child-sized scissors. Monitor your child as she uses the scissors. If you do not have appropriate scissors or the paper is too thick for your child to cut, do the cutting yourself. Discuss the dangers of moving around with a pair of scissors in hand.

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