

Provider Tip of the Week

October 6, 2021

Pretend Play



Did you know that children are learning through play every day?

Pretend play is great for a child's cognitive development. Pretending to be someone else requires concentration, building their **self regulation** skills, and allows a child to put themselves in someone else's shoes, promoting their **perspective taking** skills. As a provider, you can model for families how they can promote pretend play in your next visit by:

- **Having the child pretend to be the doctor** - During the physical exam, you can discuss playing doctor. You can say things like, "Today, let's play a game. I want you to pretend to be the Doctor. What should you examine first - my eyes or my ears? Great, now it's my turn and I'm going to listen to your heart. It sounds healthy and strong!"
- **Using pretend play to get through painful procedures** - During a painful procedure, like giving a vaccine, you can suggest that the child pretend to be their favorite superhero. Try saying, "I know that you've had shots here before, and it hurt. I promise that I'm going to go as fast as I can and that it'll be over soon. To make it easier, I want to play a game. Do you know any superheroes? I want you to imagine that you're your favorite superhero and show me what they'd act like if they got a flu shot."



Provider Tips powered by the **Keystones of Development curriculum**, login at parenting.mountsinai.org/providers/ to learn more.