

Find Ten New Ways to Play

So often as parents we feel stuck while trying to play with our children. Where do we go with the play? What do we do next? How do we keep our child's interest?

Reverting our adult brains back to childhood play tactics is hard for most of us. It can be extremely helpful to spend some time practicing by "thinking like a kid." Here's a simple activity you can do to get your child-like creative juices flowing:

Take a common object or toy you have in your home that your child finds interesting—like a ball, a blanket, a paper towel tube, or blocks (keep it simple). Grab a piece of paper and a pen and set the object on the table in front of you. Then just start brainstorming.

Write down at least ten things you can do with that object that are not its intended purpose. The more outlandish you get, the better.



Little children can turn common objects into anything, so think outside the box. Let's use a ball as an example. You can:

1. Hide it in your shirt
2. Sit on it and bounce
3. Feed it to your baby doll for breakfast
4. Dip it in paint and roll it on a paper
5. Lay on it for a pillow
6. Roll it into a tower of blocks to knock them down
7. Hide it and go on a treasure hunt
8. Put it under a blanket to make a ghost
9. Draw a face on it to make a new 'friend'
10. Play "I'm gonna get you" with it by rolling it at someone.



This brainstorming technique is a great exercise to do with another adult. It brings out a lot of fun and creative conversation.

If you're having a hard time, take a minute to remember a favorite playtime you had as a child. Try and put yourself back in that moment and then continue the exercise. Doing this activity makes it a lot easier to come up with creative ideas in the moment you need them.

Next time you're playing with your child, try out some of your ideas. You'll be surprised how much children love it when the adults in their lives learn to think like a kid!