

Creativity, empathy, problem solving and social constructions all begin here. By promoting and encouraging your child's imagination, you are providing the building blocks of healthy, normal behavior.

Child's Imagination

Imagination is especially wonderful and exciting to watch develop in your child. Through the windows of your child's play and the talking he does to himself, you can actually follow your child, the "movie director," casting a set of characters into their various roles. Fantasy develops along with your child's more sophisticated knowledge of the world, although he cannot yet differentiate fantasy from reality.



Some children have such great imaginations that they tell the most unbelievable stories-and sometimes get in trouble for doing so. One child we know had an imaginary friend; whenever he did something really bad that he didn't want to catch the blame for, his imaginary friend was there to cover for him. Usually, the presence of an imaginary friend is just a sign of a healthy, imaginative child. But imaginary friends can become too powerful; they can interfere with your child's ability to accept responsibility, can be present to the exclusion of other friends, and can do all your child's talking. Luckily, this doesn't happen very often. If you are concerned about your child's imaginary companion, you may want to consult with a professional.

By three, your child has internal pictures of the people in his world. The television shows he watches, and daytime events. The world is no longer viewed as a place as filled with magical powers: cause and effect relationships are becoming explainable to him. Earlier, his parents were omnipotent; now there are some chinks in their armor. Before your child was able to connect cause and effect relationships, he thought things happened because of the things he did. Imagine how powerful and scared a two year old might feel if he thought he caused lightning to appear. This kind of

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If you're having trouble encouraging imaginative play in your child, then try starting it yourself and beginning by engaging your child with you. But, remember, it's your child's development, not yours so let them take the lead when they're ready.

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thinking takes years to change into the logical form it will acquire in adulthood.