

## Language & Learning

---

### Learning Through Play

#### Everything Can Be A Toy

Although babies don't play with each other at very early ages, they watch older children play with toys. What is a toy? Toys are what we play with.

#### **Mom and Dad are definitely toys.**

**Toys are toys.** When babies are in their first year, appropriate toys change with every month. From mobiles to keys to stacking cups to sorting boxes, your baby wants more and more challenges.

**Safe household objects are toys.** Big plastic lids and washed out plastic bottles can be as much fun as commercially made toys.

**Water is a toy.** Outside in the wading pool (with you right there!) or in the bathtub, water is fun from a very early age. See the suggestions on the first page for water ideas.

**Grass, rocks and leaves are toys.** When you go outside, your baby can see new and interesting objects from the stroller or carrier. You can choose what to pick up and bring closer, or maybe you just want to point them out and touch, but someday those sticks can turn into horses, and the rocks can become little houses on a cleared spot of earth, as your baby grows into a creative child and begins to pretend.

**Clothes are toys.** Nothing is quite as much fun as popping your baby's head out of the neck hole of a shirt as you say or sign, "Where are you? THERE you are!" Hands, feet, and whole bodies disappear and reemerge during dressing and undressing, and everyone knows that shoes and socks are designed to be taken off. This can be a good time for learning the names of clothing and body parts. As your little one grows, clothes will be fascinating toys for dress up and make believe.