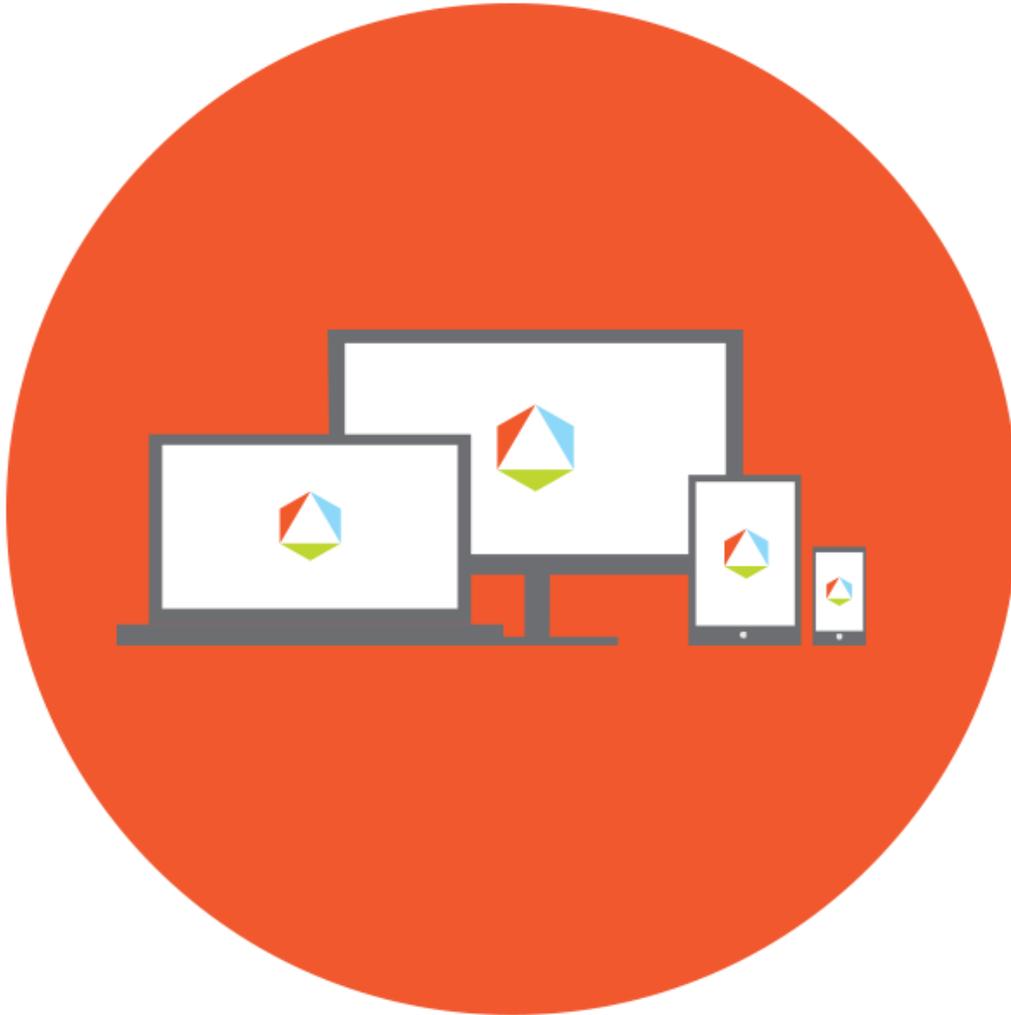




FIRSTPATH
AUTISM



Lesson Guide
27. Pretend Play Skills

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Overview

Teaches:	Abstract play skill of imagining and pretending. This is taught by intentionally using objects as something other than what they are, by taking on a character other than oneself, or acting out an imaginary scenario/role.
Before beginning:	Before beginning, the child should be familiar with basic play skills (e.g., sharing, taking turns, etc.), have mastery of motor and/or vocal imitation skills, and some emotions id and perspectives skills, which can be useful in socialization opportunities.
Why it's important:	Pretend play is an important childhood play skill; therefore, teaching a child how to do this allows him/her to be able to more fully participate with peers who are engaging in this type of activity. Modeling adult activities in play is also an important learning tool for how to perform daily tasks and how to behave in certain situations. Pretend play abilities also contribute to participation in plays/skits/musicals. This lesson can also be helpful in developing and generalizing emotions/perspectives skills (since the child is often required to "be" or think like someone else), which can be useful in future socialization opportunities.
Materials needed:	Use materials appropriate to the specific pretend situation—dress up clothes, tools, cooking utensils, chairs, etc.
Generalization activities:	Limitless! Be creative, and tailor to the child individually. Think especially about activities/routines/people frequently present in the child's day. Possibilities include Dad fixing things around the house, Mom or Dad cooking, the mailman carrier delivering the mail, the librarian putting away books at the library, the store clerk ringing up items at the store, the teacher in her classroom. Also, recent novel situations can be utilized as a subject for pretend play, as a way to recall, remember, and increase familiarity with the event (e.g., a child's recent trip on the airplane may lend to pretend play as a flight attendant



	serving passengers). In addition, an adaptation of the popular party game Charades can be a great opportunity to generalize this skill.
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Steps

Prepare

1. Ensure all necessary materials are present.
2. This lesson may be naturally reinforcing for some children since it is play-based. However, if needed, make sure to conduct a reinforcer assessment to identify potential additional reinforcers.
3. Ensure all materials are available to record data on the teaching session.
4. For some children it may be helpful to pre-teach what is going to occur, especially during the first run of a new pretend scenario. For example: "We are going to pretend to cook dinner. Here are all of our pretend toys and dishes. This box is going to be the oven!", etc.

Teach

1. Start the lesson with a reminder that pretending is about to happen. This will help orient the child, as well as act as a prevention measure for the child possibly perceiving the events literally/seriously.
2. In many cases, you will need to tell the child specifically what you are going to pretend, then demonstrate it before giving the child the opportunity to imitate. Example for Target 1: "We are going to pretend that this banana is a phone. Watch me!", while then modeling saying hello, pretending to listen,



saying goodbye, etc. Another approach to this step, if teaching Target 3, is to read a book or watch a scene from a movie, and then act out that scene together.

3. Give the child the opportunity to "pretend" what the adult has just modeled.
4. Keep in mind that for many children, at the outset of this lesson, it is essentially a motor and/or vocal imitation response that is required. This is okay. As the lesson advances, the concept of pretend should gradually become more familiar to the child. This is another reason it is important for the teacher to emphasize the term "pretend" frequently during this lesson.

Correct response	Incorrect response	No response
<p>Teacher: "We are going to pretend that this chair is a horse. Watch me!" (teacher models straddling chair and saying 'Giddyup!') "Now it's your turn to pretend that the chair is a horse!" Child: Straddles chair as adult did, starts "riding" and saying, "Giddyup!" Teacher: "Great job pretending!"</p>	<p>Teacher: "We are going to pretend that this chair is a horse. Watch me!" (teacher models straddling chair and saying 'Giddyup!') "Now it's your turn to pretend that the chair is a horse!" Child: Sits down in chair and starts coloring. Teacher: "Uh oh! We can't color while we are pretending to ride a horse! Let's try again." (Teacher re-starts teaching at this point; does not deliver reinforcer until child makes attempt to pretend as requested.)</p>	<p>Teacher: "We are going to pretend that this chair is a horse. Watch me!" (teacher models straddling chair and saying 'Giddyup!') "Now it's your turn to pretend that the chair is a horse!" Child: Looks at teacher without responding. Teacher: "Oops. We are pretending that this chair is a horse. Ride this horse, like me!" (Teacher does not deliver reinforcer at this point; instead, models pretending again and gives child opportunity to respond.)</p>



TYPICAL ORDER OF LEARNING TARGETS:

1. Pretending an object is something other than what it really is
(examples: banana is a phone, book is a pillow, chair is a horse, etc.)
2. Pretending to role-play familiar (real) adult activities/actions
(examples: cooking, cleaning house, mowing lawn, driving, doing laundry, taking out trash, going to get the mail, grocery shopping, talking on phone, etc.)
3. Pretending to be a different character from a book, movie, or the community
(examples: Curious George, Spiderman, Cinderella, the librarian, a teacher, a construction worker, a pilot, etc.)

**Also keep in mind the following skills as potential additional targets OR to address within one of the targets above:

- Child talks to dolls/stuffed animals during play and/or helps them "interact" together
- Child uses different "voices" for different characters in pretend play
- Playing "dress up" where costumes/props/accessories are an important part of helping establish a pretend character
- Playing the game "Charades" where the child or adult "acts out" a certain character or activity without using words, and the other person has to guess what character/activity is being acted out. Modifications of this basic framework can be made based on the child's skills (e.g., allowing talking or costume use, having visual cue cards of "choices" of the right answer available, etc.)