

Activities as Stimuli

Doing can be just as engaging a stimulus for enquiry as reading, seeing or hearing. Here are some suggestions for practical activities, in this case emerging out of the topic of toys.

First, some aimed at exploring particular concepts and themes.

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| Creative/
collaborative game | <i>Imagination</i> – have a cardboard box in the middle of the circle, and see how many different ways people can think of playing with it. Perhaps repeat the exercise with a toy that is more specific. – <i>How does imagination work? Do toys make your imagination lazy?</i> |
| Research | <i>Traditional vs. modern</i> – compare a selection of toys that children would have used one hundred years ago with those used today. What are the similarities between the differences? (Mass production, branding, connection to TV, indoor). – <i>Is it better to be a child now than 100 years ago?</i> |
| Show and tell | <i>Growing up</i> – bring in a toy that used to be a favourite, but that you are too old for, and one that you play with now. How are they different? How are you different? – <i>Why grow up?</i> |

And some that are aimed at developing particular skills and philosophical moves:

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| Home dialogue | <i>Giving reasons</i> – get children to ask their parents what they remember being their favourite toy when they were the same age as the child is now, and why. Are their reasons similar to the reasons the child would give for their favourite toy? |
| Group task | <i>Finding criteria</i> – get boys and girls in separate groups to draw up a list of things that make a good toy, and then compare lists. Is there any feature such that everything that has it is a good toy? (<i>Sufficient condition/enough by itself to make it an x</i>) Is there any feature that all good toys must have? (<i>Necessary condition/can't be an x without it</i>). You could test the suggestions by inviting them to come up with <i>counterexamples</i> .

How much technical terminology you introduce is a judgement call, but you can begin to get the structure of the thinking in place using age-appropriate language. |