

Container Play

Before Container Play

Children need to first establish exploratory play using a range of senses, with a variety of objects. Through modelling, they will learn the function of everyday objects in this way. Alongside this play, young children may also begin to establish anticipatory communication, such as responding to predictable rhymes and songs such as Round and Round the Garden.

Object Permanence

During this period of development, young children are beginning to want to look for an object that has been hidden or dropped out of sight, as they are remembering experiences and information (object permanence). You can practice these skills by encouraging the child to take part in

1. Peekaboo and
2. 'Where's it gone?...oh...here it is!' Hide favourite toys under chiffon scarves or other 'see-through' fabrics. Extend this game by using blankets or other opaque material. Then move onto hiding toys under boxes so that the outline of the object cannot be seen.



This is a particularly important play activity to do with young children with SEND. By playing in this way, you are able to:

- Encourage their focus of attention of one item at a time.
- Model language by naming the item
- Combine the game with an anticipatory phrase 'Ready, Steady, look!'
- Introduce the idea of looking inside a box or bucket for something, as well as under a cushion or cloth
- Develop taking a turn with the child, to hide the toy, so encouraging the back and forth in play

Container Play – over and over again!

Children then enjoy container play where they put collections of all sorts of things in one box or trolley, for example, and transfer them to another container, tipping them all out in between. It is another important stage because the child is hiding things and finding things for himself, reinforcing the understanding that objects don't just disappear!

Young children with SEND should have plenty of opportunity for container play and be supported to practice hiding and re finding things.



Outcomes of Container Play

From container play emerges posting and shape sorting play.



Often at this stage very young children appear to do the same type of play over and over again. It may be lining up toys, knocking objects down, mixing things together. This is an important stage and should be encouraged. It is in these situations that our young children with SEND can show good concentration, as they are naturally engaging in a play that suits their learning.