



**TOOLS  
OF THE  
MIND**

## What next?

Tips for supporting children's make-believe play:

**PROPS**—While they can be great fun, children don't need expensive toys like a toy doctor's kit or a toy cash register to engage in make-believe play. But they do need props to help them remember what to do and say. A shoebox can be a cash register in a store, an examination table for a doll at the hospital, or a brick oven in a pizzeria! A paper towel tube can be a vase for flowers, a cast for a broken doll's arm, or cut into rings, pepperoni or onions for a made to order pizza. Simple home-made props are all you need to support high-level make-believe play! Save things like cereal and packing boxes—with some paper, markers, yarn, tape and scissors, you'll have everything you need to play any theme!

**ROLES**—What does a baker wear? A doctor?

When a child puts something on to pretend to be someone else, something magical happens. Children use more mature language and behavior when they are pretending to be doctors, groomers, sales clerks, pizza-makers, cashiers – adults! Think about what children might put on to 'transform' into another role. A piece of fabric can be an 'apron' for a cook; an old white t-shirt with a sticker on the pocket can be a lab coat for "Dr. Jorge" or a mechanics work shirt. Even a paper headband that reads 'mom' or 'dad' can set children up for pretending to be, and acting older and more mature than they are—building self-regulation as they play!



Investing in your child's make-believe play is building the skills that will support her/his later success in school . . . and will be fun and make lasting memories for you both!

