

Heuristic Treasure Baskets

The term **Heuristic play** describes the activity of babies and children as they play with and explore the properties of 'objects'. These objects are things from the real world.

Heuristic play involves the sensory exploration of everyday items such as pasta, a wooden spoon, a piece of string or leaves in the garden. The difference between heuristic play and playing with toys is that toys are often limiting in what they can do, meaning a car is meant to be rolled back and forth, while heuristic play with any household object allows your child's creativity to take over.

Having an everyday object to play with stimulates innovation, creativity and imagination as your child discovers the ways the object can be used. Heuristic play stimulates creativity and imagination.

Imagination leads a child's play with heuristic objects, rather than muscle memory taking over when a child knows that a noise happens when they push a button, for example. During heuristic play, open-ended play opportunities allow children to explore, learn and develop in a completely natural way.



Time to get creative!

See the next page for heuristic play ideas and inspiration



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What you need...

A blanket to place on the floor for your baby to sit or lie on

An open and shallow basket for putting objects in that your baby can reach into

A variety of objects found around the home with different shapes, colours and textures. These may include: a spoon, a small container, a pine cone, a small jewellery box, a tennis ball, an unused toothbrush, a small heat pack or bean bag, a plastic cup, an ice cream scoop and so forth

***Safety reminder: It is extremely important that each item in the basket is safe and clean. Ensure that all items will not break apart in your baby's hands or mouth causing a choking hazard.**



What to do:

- + Sit or lie your baby in front of the basket
- + Sit behind the baby and encourage the baby to inspect and play with objects by using simple words to describe them
- + Talk about the texture of the item, colours, shapes and what the item might be called or used for in the home

TIP! This activity is developmentally appropriate for babies who can already sit up safely and are beginning to reach out to grab things

