

Fill 'Er Up

Primary Objectives

2c. Interacts with peers

14b. Engages in sociodramatic play

Why It's Important

Has your child seen you fill up a car with gas? Is he interested in playing with cars or riding on a bike or plastic car? Your child might enjoy acting out the role of a gas station attendant. He can expand his vocabulary and his imagination while having fun at his pretend gas station.

Materials

Ride-on cars or pretend cars; props related to gas station play (optional)

What You Do

1. Invite your child and a few other friends or siblings to play Gas Station with you.
2. Ask them to decide who will run the gas station and who will drive the car(s). See if the children can agree on roles. You can offer to play one of the roles if the children all want to be attendants or drivers. Encourage them to make all of the decisions about the dramatic play scenario.
3. Ask your child, *What have you seen at a gas station? What could we use for the gas tank, the nozzle, and the window wiper?*
4. If your child and the other children have little knowledge of gas stations, talk about what people see and do there. This activity will create new language about cars and how to care for them. Encourage this educational conversation to continue at other times.
5. Watch while your child and his playmates pretend to carry out the routine procedures of a gas station. Engage them in their play to keep them interested.
6. Take this activity as far as the children want. They might want to wash the plastic cars outside or pretend to sell a car to you. Think about what your child has observed in his life and encourage him to represent those experiences through play.
7. You can also include a variety of props around your home, such as hand air pumps, clean oil cans, tire gauges, bicycle tires, several different sizes of cars and trucks, and vehicles whose tires can be removed and replaced.