

## Building Social Behaviors Through Pretend Play: Ages 4-5

**Giving your child the opportunity to pretend will help him to:**

- Develop problem solving skills
- Gain control over new situations and build confidence
- Consider the perspective of others
- Negotiate and compromise



### Ideas to try with your child:

- Let your child decide what to play and what props are needed. Ask questions like, “What shall we play?”; “What will we need?”; or “What is my job?”
- Include other children in making up stories and acting them out. Help your child listen to the ideas of others and plan with those ideas in mind.
- Encourage your child to become an imaginary character in a favorite book, movie, or game.
- Prompt an imaginary situation as a play partner: “Look! Here comes an elephant!”

### If your child is struggling:

- Encourage planning by asking questions like, “Who or what will you be? What will you do?” This will help them think through their ideas.
- Encourage taking turns among play partners and talking through everyone’s ideas to make decisions.

### Going further:

- Provide materials for props (coins, bills, empty boxes or containers)
- Supply writing materials like sticky notes and markers to make their own props or write things down during play. Accept all forms of writing, from letters-like symbols to scribbles.

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 4-5** that parents can help improve at home.

