

# Do You Have an Appointment?

## Primary Objectives

14b. Engages in sociodramatic play

## Why It's Important

Some children are frightened to go to the doctor's office. Pretending at home to visit a doctor's office can help your child overcome this fear while she learns how to take care of others.

## Materials

Puppet or stuffed animal; baby dolls; craft sticks; pretend or real doctor's kit or first aid kit without sharp objects; adhesive bandages; pretend thermometer; white-collared shirt; unbreakable mirror; items found at a doctor's office (chairs, magazines, appointment book, phone)

## What You Do

1. Encourage your child and her playmates to set up a veterinarian's or doctor's office to see how her stuffed animals or dolls are feeling today. If she does not initiate the play, suggest that she pretend to be the doctor, the nurse, or the receptionist.
2. Ask your child what she remembers about a visit to the doctor's office. *What did you see at the doctor's office? Do you remember how the doctor checked your heart and then your throat? What did the nurse do?* Gather pretend items to supply the doctor's office such as adhesive bandages, popsicle sticks, a stethoscope (made out of a head band and string with a button tied to the end of the string), an appointment book, a phone, waiting chairs, magazines, and any other items you can think of.
3. Encourage your child to take charge of the pretend play as one of the professionals in a doctor's office. Have other children join in and play the roles that she does not choose. Watch what your child does and listen to her directions. You might need to prompt some language by beginning the interview process on a doll. *How can we help you today? You say your ear hurts?* Then ask, *Doctor, what do you think we should do about that?*
4. Watch for the times where your child steps out of the play and guides others on how they should act in their roles. Take her suggestions, and encourage her to talk about what she is doing and what her plan is for the patient. *What do you think is wrong with him, Doctor? What should we do to make him feel better?*
5. It is important that you follow your child's lead in this scenario. Merely encourage the play if she is interested, and then see where she takes it. You may end up somewhere else completely, but as long as your child is engaging in pretend play and using her imagination, she is learning.