

# Tips To Create Imaginative Play Time

(NAPSA)—Imaginative play is plentiful in U.S. toy rooms these days. Kids and parents are finding a renewed love and appreciation in all things that are active and engaging during play time. There's no need to pick up that joystick. Instead, you can get your family involved in the next big play trend sweeping playrooms across the country—using your imagination. Imaginative play and role-playing have many parents going back to their roots and the playroom floor as they pretend to be pirates searching for a long lost treasure or the zookeeper in charge of all the animals.

Luckily, this year's top toy picks include plenty of great options to help get those creative juices flowing. Playmobil, the toy company, which has been making imaginative play worlds and figurines for 30 years, has several options to keep the kids playing. In fact, their Crane and Zoo were recently listed as Parents' Choice award winners and won the platinum Oppenheim Toy Portfolio award. Not only do these activities keep kids off the couch and in the playroom, they are proven to help children develop and grow in mental and motor skills.

"A more elaborate brain comes with a more elaborate play life, which means that children are better able to break down real-life barriers," said Peggy Stewart, New Jersey Teacher of the Year 2005. "These skills will help children find success in the school years to come."

Helping your kids unleash their creativity and imagination is easy—but beware, you may find yourself on the floor wanting to join in on the adventure. Here are a few easy suggestions to make your children's next play session an adventure they'll never forget:



- **Take a trip**—An imaginative play trip to a far-off land can whisk you and your child away. Grab plastic swords and the Playmobil pirate ship and figurines for a fantastical voyage on the high seas.

- **Dress up**—Are your old clothes, bridesmaids dresses and old costumes cluttering up the attic? Use them in the next exciting role-playing adventure. Help children interact by having them dress as their favorite superhero or fairy tale character. Kids improve communication skills while enjoying being the man or woman of their dreams.

- **Host a play party**—The next celebration you have for your child can evolve into creative play time for your youngsters and their friends. Action figures, such as the Playmobil Zoo or Treehouse, let children's imaginations go wild.

- **All the world's a stage**—Cut out a hole in a piece of cardboard, add a bit of colorful paint and you have terrific props for a puppet play. Kids can use old socks, toy figurines, even their hands to put on a show for their friends and family. For instance, one mom took her old shelving unit and turned it into puppet theater for her kids.

A few props and some ingenuity can get your children exploring the wonders of their own imaginations.