Better Parenting

My First Time with a Playmate

Make a first playdate feel easier with familiar toys and simple imitation games.

Helps Your Child Grow



Relationships with Other Children

Meeting another child in a relaxed outdoor setting and joining simple imitation or side-by-side play helps your child become familiar with a new playmate.

Steps

- At a first playdate, your child may feel nervous, keep their distance, or grab a toy. These are common responses while two young children get used to one another.
- Choose a neutral outdoor place and keep the first visit to about 20 - 30 minutes. Plan it between meals and naps.
- Bring several toys so both children have choices. If they become interested in the same activity, help them play beside each other or share a turn.
- Break the ice with imitation. Sing or play a song with animal sounds and invite both children to copy a sound or movement, together or one after the other.
- You can also let the children sit together on a ride-on wiggle car while one adult pulls and another stays beside them for support.

Tips

- A first meeting does not need to produce obvious interaction. Regular chances to be around other children help the setting become familiar.
- If your child seems unsure, let them watch from beside you before moving closer or joining in.

Observations

- ○ Imitates an animal sound or movement alongside another child
- ○ Looks at the other child with interest and moves closer or begins to play nearby