

**Adapted (Yoder) Developmental Play Assessment (DPA) Procedure (Lifter)**  
**Last Revised 4/22/09**

**Introduction & Requirements for the DPA**

(I removed this because, indeed, the particular actions we code ARE defined by the toys used)

The Development Play Assessment procedure is designed to be recorded, and then later, coded for play activity scoring and analysis. In addition to the audio and video recording equipment, the following are required:

- a Tripp Trapp Chair
- a table of an appropriate height for the child
- a chair for the Examiner
- two carefully designed sets of toys, the specific contents of which are described in detail below

The toys in these two sets have been selected based on careful consideration of the manipulative and pretend play possibilities they offer. They have been divided into 2 intentionally balanced groups in order to simplify their presentation. Each toy set was constructed to permit a variety of play actions from very simple manipulative play behaviors up through sequences of pretend play, socio-dramatic, and fantasy play activities.

**A. Procedure Length: 10 minutes**

**B. Participants:** The assessment has been designed to evaluate the play of preschool age children with developmental disabilities, but is easily adapted to younger and older children. The adult participants include the “Examiner” who is the person administering the assessment, and a second person operating the video-camera.

**C. Positioning of the Child, Examiner and Parent During Administration:**

The child, by design, is to be seated in the Tripp Trapp Chair, at table throughout the procedure. The accurate coding of detailed play actions from the DPA is made easier if the child remains facing the camera throughout, with neither toy nor the adult blocking the view of the camera. Past experience tells us that play coding is difficult when positioning is unrestricted. Only if absolutely necessary to gain the child’s cooperation, the child may be allowed out of the chair. This is not idea for coding data however.

The examiner is seated 90 degrees to the child’s left as shown in the drawing below. This assures the adult will not obstruct the camera’s view of the child, the child’s hands and the toys on the table.

The parent, by design, is to be out of the room during the administration of the DPA. Only if absolutely necessary to gain the child’s calm cooperation should the parent be invited into the room. In this event, the parent should be immediately directed to sit in a separate chair directly behind the child.

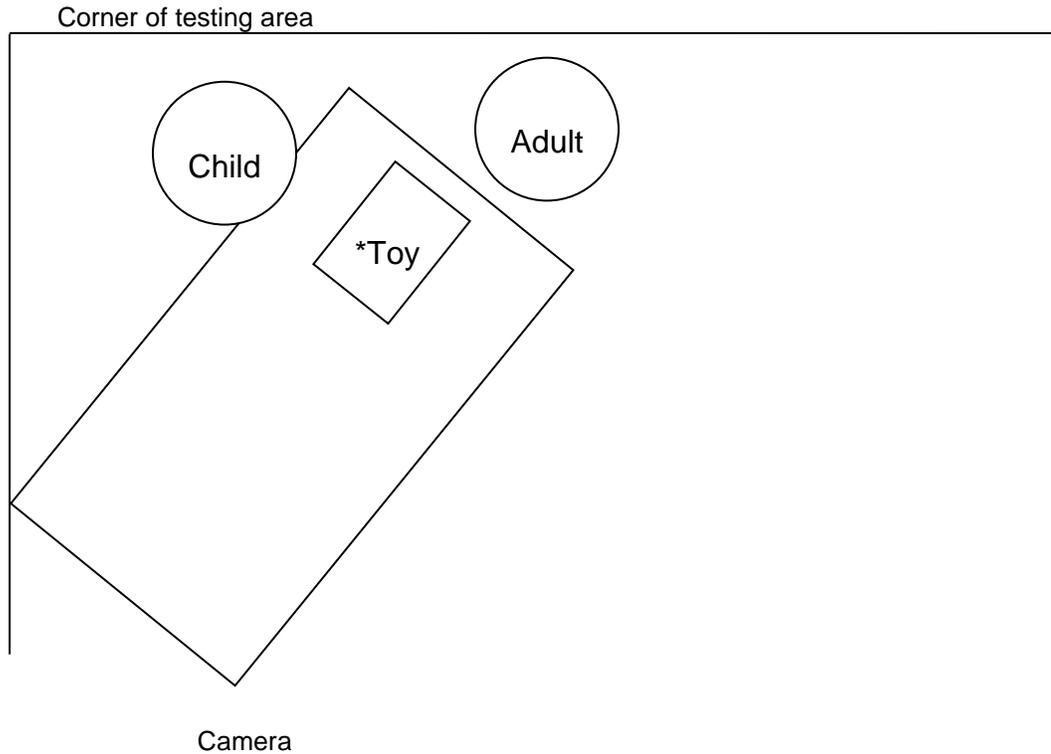
If the child is unwilling to participate even with the parent sitting behind in a separate chair, then the child may sit on the parent’s lap, on the parent’s right leg, to ensure minimum obstruction of the camera view. This is not ideal for recording codable data and should be considered a last resort.

If the parent does need to remain in the room during the assessment, the examiner must give the parent the following instructions.

**“We want to see how (Child’s name) plays with different sets of toys. Please try not to talk to your child and try not to respond if your child tries to interact with you. If**

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**your child hands you a toy, take it but please hand it immediately back to me. Please do not show or tell the child what to do with the toy.”**



\*NOTE: Large toys must be placed to slight left of child (toward adult) and smaller toys can be placed in front of the child.

**D. Toy Sets:**

**Toy-set 1**

- Stacking donuts & a stick in plastic box with lid loosely on so child can remove it easily
- An extra stick on top of lid of the box of stacking donuts
- Set of nested cups, nested and sitting upright
- Baby doll with clothes on
- Blanket, folded or unfolded
- Spoon, comb & mirror. These three items should be placed apart from each other on the table so as not to suggest an association between them, for example the mirror and comb should not be side by side.

**Toy-set 2**

- Four zoo animals in a shallow plastic box, lid loosely on so child can remove it easily
- Small boy figure, placed anywhere
- Three-part train, cars uncoupled, with battery removed
- Cup, saucer & pitcher with lid on, separated so as not to suggest an association
- Nuts & bolts, in the shallow dish without a lid (the toy "nails" and toy "boards" with holes have been removed from this set)

**E. Procedures for Administration**

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1. Place each of the toys from the first toy-set within easy reach of the child. See photo for items within each toy set. Note that the lid is placed LOOSELY on top of the container. In the first toy set, the doll is not placed on the blanket; the nested cups are presented nested with opening up; the blanket is between the doll and the spoon; the spoon is separated from the nesting cups.



2. In an animated voice, present the toys to the child saying, **“These toys are for you to play with”**.
3. Observe the child carefully, showing interest and pleasure in whatever he is doing, verbally responding to whatever the child is doing commenting or describing and using an animated voice. “You’re giving the doll a drink!”. Imitate the child’s actions. Add playful vocalizations to the play.
4. Respond to the child’s gestural and verbal requests immediately, using gestures and verbalizing while complying with a request or accepting a toy that is offered.
5. At all times refrain from modeling any actions for the child. Do not for example show the child how to play with something. The adult should avoid relating one toy to another unless the child has done so already. For example, taking up the spoon and feeding the baby pretend food with it. This is extremely important.
6. After the toys have been laid out on the table, the adult can “present” one toy at a time to the child by touching it or moving it slightly closer to the child while commenting on the toy. The adult should imitate the child’s actions, continuing to show interest and pleasure in whatever the child is attending to.
7. If the child fixates on a particular toy or action for more than a minute the adult should redirect the child’s attention to another toy being careful not to demonstrate HOW to play with the toy.

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8. When the child perseverates (plays in the same way) with a single toy for more than 3 minutes, redirect the child's attention by moving the toys one at a time into the child's view, saying "These toys are for you to play with" or "Oh look! A mirror!" Do not show the child how to play with the item or tell the child how to play with the item or suggest relationships between the items when redirecting. Only draw the child's attention to the toys and show interest and enthusiasm. Once the child has shifted attention to a new toy, remove the item the child had been perseverating on. If the child continues to perseverate, remove items from the first toy set and bring out the second toy set.

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9 The duration of exposure to each toy set is somewhat flexible, but 5 minutes for each toy set is the target duration. Whether the exposure to a toy set is abbreviated or lengthened it is important that the child have an opportunity to play with each toy in each set. So it is the examiner's responsibility to introduce toys to the child when they become unengaged with the toys for 10 seconds or more.

Abbreviate the duration of exposure to a group of toys, under the following conditions:

- a) The child is crying uncontrollably for 3 minutes.
- b) Do NOT abbreviate the play session due to child's lack of interest or perseverating. We want to give the child every opportunity to play with the toys.

Lengthen the duration of exposure to a group of toys, under the following condition:

- a) If the child is spinning out an elaborate play theme, or if the child appears particularly interested in certain of the toys and is playing purposefully, not perseveratively, with them.
- b) If the child begins to play intently and purposefully with a set of items late in the allotted time period.

**10. How to Transition to the Next Toy-set:**

The examiner should say to the child "**I have more toys for you to play with!**" and begin to remove the toys that the child is not interested in. Once all the toys in the first set have been removed, introduce the new set of toys. If necessary to maintain the child's good will, a toy from the first set can remain on the table or in the child's hand while you bring out the new set. If a toy from the first set is used to transition to the second set of toys then this toy should be removed as soon as the child's attention has shifted to the new set of toys.

11. Present the 2<sup>nd</sup> toy set. As before, the toys are placed within reach of the child as indicated in the above photo. In the second toy sets, the cup is not placed on the saucer; the train cars are not connected; the man is lying on the table.

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12. Repeat the principles used for interacting with the 1<sup>st</sup> set of toys.
13. If both sets of toys have been introduced and the full time for the session has not expired then re-introduce the 1<sup>st</sup> toy set again and begin the cycle of introducing toys again.
14. Say **“stop coding here”** at the end of the DPA to signal to the camera operator to cease taping.

**DPA Short instructions:**

1. Present toys saying in an animated voice, **“Here (Child’s name), these toys are for you to play with.”**
2. Verbally respond to what the child is doing, using an animated voice, e.g., “You’re giving the doll a drink!”
3. Respond verbally and with gestures to the child’s gesture and verbal requests, e.g., accepting gives, complying with requests.
4. Imitate the child’s actions.
5. Redirect after a minute of perseverative play
6. Draw attention to each toy, without demonstrating any use for it.
7. After 5 minutes, remove the toys from the table, present the second set and say **“(Child’s name), I have more toys for you to play with.”**
8. Say **“Stop coding here”** at the end of the 10-minute period.
9. **DO NOT SHOW THE CHILD HOW TO PLAY WITH SOMETHING,**

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**10. DO NOT SUGGEST WAYS TO PLAY**

**11. AND DO NOT SUGGEST ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN THE TOYS.**