

Heuristic play

Heuristic play helps babies and toddlers to discover textures. It also helps babies and toddlers to concentrate and learn about shapes and sizes. This type of play fosters creativity and imagination. With non-mobile babies objects made from natural materials are put out in a form of heuristic play known as **treasure basket play**. The way children play with objects changes as they develop. For example, toddlers begin to spend longer dropping smaller objects into containers. Table 2.1 gives examples of items that might be included in heuristic play and treasure basket play.

Table 2.1 Treasure basket play and heuristic play.

Treasure basket play	Heuristic play
Items may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leather wallet • wooden spoon • metal tea strainer • lavender bag • wooden curtain rings • a fresh lemon • small metal lid • silk scarf. 	Items may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plastic water bottle • curlers • corks • shells • cardboard tubes • small tins • wooden pegs.



Key terms

Heuristic play – play in which children learn from discovering a range of objects.

Treasure basket play – discovery play for babies where all the objects are made from natural materials.



This child is engaged in heuristic play. How are they learning?