

# IMAGINATION



## WHY DO RESEARCHERS MEASURE CREATIVITY?

**Creativity has been identified as one of the most important skills of the 21st century.**

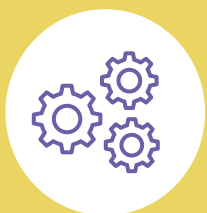
The development of creativity begins at an early age. Given that most children attend early childhood education and care (ECEC) during this critical developmental period, it is important that there is consensus on how to define and assess creativity in these settings.



## WHAT IS IMAGINATION BASED CREATIVITY?

**Imagination is one component of creativity, some of the most frequent components include:**

- **General Imagination** (e.g., create fantasies through images, roles, and ideas)
- **Pretend Play** (e.g., make believe)
- **Constructive Imagination** (e.g., manipulating objects to create or build)
- **Dramatic Play** (e.g., dramatize life situations)



## HOW CAN YOU MEASURE IMAGINATION?

**Imagination can be measured using several tools, the most frequent tools include:**

- **Singers Pretend Play** (i.e., used during free play to observe the uniqueness of children's actions)
- **Thinking Creativity in Action and Movement** (i.e., ask and observe children to move their bodies in as many ways as they could think of)
- **Torrance Test of Creative Thinking** (i.e., child answers what other ways or how many ways a child think of to a problem)

## WHAT CAN YOU DO IN THE CLASSROOM?

It's important for educators to observe and document each stage of children's creativity development using commonly used tools. By regularly recording these observations over the year, educators can track each child's growth and better understand their creative progress.



### ACTIVITY

#### "WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE?"

**Objective:**  
Explore divergent thinking by asking children how many ways they can think of to use a common object.

#### Instructions:

- 1 Provide children with a simple object, such as a paperclip or cardboard tube.
- 2 Ask them, "What else could this be?" and encourage them to list or act out as many uses as they can think of (e.g., a cardboard tube as a telescope, microphone, or building block).
- 3 Praise their creativity and unique ideas.

### ACTIVITY

#### "MOVE LIKE AN ANIMAL"

**Objective:**  
Observe children moving their bodies in creative ways.

#### Instructions:

- 1 Gather children in an open area.
- 2 Ask them to pretend they are animals and move as creatively as they can (e.g., crawling like a lizard, flapping like a bird).
- 3 Challenge them to invent and demonstrate movements for imaginary animals.

### ACTIVITY

#### "RECYCLED ROBOT BUILDERS"

**Objective:**  
Manipulate objects to create or build.

#### Instructions:

- 1 Provide children with recycled materials such as cardboard boxes, paper towel rolls, bottle caps, and glue.
- 2 Challenge them to build a robot that can perform a specific task (e.g., clean their room or bake cookies).
- 3 Once finished, have the children present their robots and describe its features and purpose.



**Project Background:** This infographic is from a scoping review that explored 81 different research papers about teaching and assessing creativity in young children. It is part of a larger study where OISE researchers are creating evidence based professional development opportunities for teachers to learn how to develop creativity for young children.

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**TORONTO**

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Email:** [equityeducation.utsc@utoronto.ca](mailto:equityeducation.utsc@utoronto.ca)

**Web:** [equityeducation.ca](http://equityeducation.ca)