

# Hoop Fun

## Primary Objectives

6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills

## Why It's Important

As children engage in more complex pretend play, they begin to substitute one object for another (e.g., a block for a phone or a box for a hat). This means that they are beginning to understand symbolic thinking—the concept that something can stand for something else. This is an important early literacy skill. As your child has more practice with symbolic thinking, she will eventually be able to relate this kind of thinking to more abstract concepts such as letters and numerals. For example, the letters *c-a-t* are symbols that spell the word *cat*, which represents the soft, furry animal that meows.

## Materials

Toy hoops

## What You Do

1. Add toy hoops to your outside play area. Allow your child to explore them and use them for different purposes.
2. As she explores the hoops, acknowledge her play. *You are going through the hoop. Now you are holding the hoop around your waist.*
3. Prompt your child to use the hoop as a prop for pretend play. *I wonder what else the hoop could be.*
4. If she does use it for pretend play by substituting the toy hoop for another object, talk about what you observe. *You are steering a big truck with that big steering wheel.*
5. When she is finished, explain that the toy hoops will be available for her to use the next time she plays outdoors.