

FIG 4-5 Using the paper-doll technique to prepare a child for physical examination.

[Table 4-2](#) summarizes guidelines for positioning, preparing, and examining children at various ages. Because no child fits precisely into one age category, it may be necessary to vary the approach after a preliminary assessment of the child's developmental achievements and needs. Even with the best approach, many toddlers are uncooperative and inconsolable for much of the physical examination. However, some seem intrigued by the new surroundings and unusual equipment and respond more like preschoolers than toddlers. Likewise, some early preschoolers may require more of the “security measures” used with younger children, such as continued parent–child contact, and less of the preparatory measures used with preschoolers, such as playing with the equipment before and during the actual examination ([Fig. 4-6](#)).



FIG 4-6 Preparing children for physical examination.

Physical Examination

Although the approach to and sequence of the physical examination differ according to the child's age, the following discussion outlines the traditional model for physical assessment. The focus includes all pediatric age groups (see [Chapter 7](#) for a