

still prominent, there is much less emphasis on the exclusive use of one sensory modality. The toddler inspects toys, talks to toys, tests toys' strength and durability, and invents several uses for toys.

Imitation is one of the most distinguishing characteristics of play and enriches children's opportunity to engage in fantasy. With less emphasis on gender-stereotyped toys, play objects such as dolls, carriages, dollhouses, dishes, cooking utensils, child-size furniture, trucks, and dress-up clothes are suitable for both genders (Fig. 11-3); however, boys may be more interested than girls in activities related to trucks, trailers, action figures, and building blocks; girls may prefer doll-related activities.



**FIG 11-3** Young children enjoy dressing up. (©2011

[Photos.com](#), a division of Getty Images. All rights reserved.)

Increased locomotive skills make push-pull toys, straddle trucks or cycles, a small gym and slide, balls of various sizes, and riding toys appropriate for energetic toddlers. Finger paints, thick crayons, chalk, blackboard, paper, and puzzles with large, simple pieces use toddlers' developing fine motor skills. Interlocking blocks in various sizes (but large enough to avoid aspiration) and shapes provide hours of fun and, during later years, are useful objects for creative and imaginative play. The most educational toy is the one that fosters the interaction of an adult with a child in supportive, unconditional play. Parents and other providers are encouraged to