

Dramatic Play in a Preschool Classroom

Donna Schwartze & Bushra Rashid

What is dramatic play?

Dramatic play is a type of play where children assign and accept roles and act them out. It's pretending to be someone or something else. Dramatic play is also called pretend play, imitative play, and symbolic play.

Types of dramatic play:

Structured play Structured play is an activity that offers children a specific learning objective. It is often a teacher created environment that allows children to explore and be creative.

Unstructured play

Unstructured play means open ended, or creative free play with endless possibilities. It is child led and directed and doesn't require an outcome or product.

Advantages of dramatic play

- It teaches self-regulation
- Encourages language development
- It gives children an emotional outlet
- It teaches conflict resolution/problem solving
- It supports math and literacy
- Dramatic play is empowering to children
- It allows children to be creative
- Develops friendships
- Perspective taking-empathy

Teaching Strategies That Support Pretend Play

- Provide space for pretending and role play.
- Allow extended time for children's detailed pretend play to fully develop.
- Be alert to the people and events children portray in their role-playing activities and provide additional materials and props to support them.
- Participate as a partner in the children's pretend play and support the play with intentional reflective language
- Plan special experiences like field trips to add depth to children's imaginative activities.
- Bring visitors into the classroom to widen the range of experiences children can draw on in their pretend play.

Dramatic play themes:

Post Office, Doctor, Grocery Store, Pizza Parlor, Ice Cream Shop, Restaurant, Farm, Pet Store, Space/Astronaut, Hair Salon, Harvest Market, Airport, Flower Shop, Fairy Garden, Bear Cave, Shoe Store, Museum, Dino-land, Camping, Pirates, Under the Sea

Remember to have fun, as your enjoyment will reflect on the children.

Ready Set Play!