

Imaginative Play



DIY Shop

Various tools, nuts, bolts screws etc... real and child sized, and other hardware. Overalls, hard hats, measuring gadgets, spirit levels etc... (Link with builders' yard). Add in gardening department, tills, shopping trolley, and assistants' outfits. Also brochures and magazines for fitted kitchens and bathrooms, paint leaflets and pots etc..., brushes etc... – the list could be endless. Add in cardboard boxes or real dolls' house and construction kits for children to create what they need to make.

Lunar Surface

Pea gravel on lino for ground, dark drapes suspended around to give dark feel, torches, spot lights shining on ground, child-made stars and planets suspended, white/shiny cushions on ground as hummocks. Climbing frame dressed up as rocket ship, interior to match. 'Cosy coupe' dressed up as moon buggy. Dressing up with home made oxygen tanks from pop bottles, and suits made from bubble wrap and wellies.

Outdoor Role Play

The setting was following a topic on transport. An outline of an aeroplane was drawn in chalk on the tarmac outdoor area. It was large enough to house aeroplane seats – numbered by the children. Observations of the children, independent use of resources and sensitive adults all supported and extended this learning experience. For example, an aisle for the air stewards to walk up and down with their trolley to serve refreshments, a cock pit with pilots control panel, including steering wheel, dials, buttons, movable 'control gears', clipboard and headphones. There was also nearby a 'check-in desk', with telephone, passports, tickets, flight times, holiday brochures, pens and pencils. Children could order a meal from the trolley, browse through the menu and give their request to the steward. Appropriate clothes and props were collected for the various roles involved including holidaymakers' suitcases, sunglasses, buckets and spades!

There was involvement from the children in setting up the role area and experiences of air travel were shared. Books and songs also supported this initial introduction to the role-play area. Children were able to explore and develop their play over a period of time. Non- fiction and fiction books, posters and small world role-play also supported and extended the learning opportunities within the indoor environment.

Time Will Tell!

Remember a role play area can last for a session, a couple of days, a week or grow over a month or so... depending on how you plan and develop it.

To give an extra dimension to role play we have at least two areas set up. For example a seaside and lighthouse, or a camping scene so children can really go on holiday. This is especially good if one is inside and the other outside.

We found that our children didn't really play in the vet's we had set up. Then we realised that as a lot of children lived in flats, not many had pets and even fewer had been to the vet's. It showed us that for children to engage in role play they have to understand the role and the scenario.

Ground Force

Small world play in sand, on real turf etc...is a fantastic way to recreate a perfect world.

Quick Change

If dressing up isn't possible just have a box of hats, bags and shoes. The children will do the rest.

One World

We often mix small world play together e.g. farm and train track, to challenge children to put one world in the context of the other.

Small World Story

To really exploit links between stories and small world play use small world equipment in story sacks, and place books alongside small world set ups.

Little and Large

Shift scales and put small world and role play together. For example moonscape with rockets and astronauts, or builders yard and Humpty Dumpty rhyme time sack.

Two Areas are Better Than one!

Experience and Beyond

Resource links:

"Speaking, listening, learning: Working with children in KS1 and KS2" DfES,

Multicultural, RE & Curriculum Resource Centre, Tel: 01509-621579 Email: BLofthouse@leics.gov.uk

Toy libraries: contact: Children's Information Service, Tel: 0116 265 6545 Email: childcare@leics.gov.uk

Traveller Education service, tel: 01509 890543,

"Imagination is more important then knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world."

(Albert Einstein) 2



10 ways to develop role play

- 1. Add a video camera, walkie-talkies/mobile phones (that work).
- 2. Introduce a problem or challenge.
- 3. Invite a grown-up whose occupation is the real-life version of the role play area e.g. fitness trainer for the role play fitness gym.
- 4. Role play the main character/role yourself.
- 5. Let the role play take over e.g. if a beach then collect together on the beach for a story.
- 6. Include your snack bar.
- 7. Take role play outside.
- 8. Use two levels, include the climbing frame!
- 9. Include sand/malleables, water and construction toys where appropriate.
- 10.Let children plan the whole play area. Include an opportunity for them to research (books, internet, visit real-life places) and then plan and build their version.

10 Steps to quick and easy pack-away areas:

- 1. Pop-up beach tents and a drape.
- 2. Incorporate the climbing frame.
- 3. Folding screen (Ikea).
- 4. Huge cardboard boxes (ask Toys 'R' Us for empty ones).
- 5. Parasol and drape (outside).
- 6. Keep a range of exciting fabrics.
- 7. Keep props in well labelled boxes.
- 8. Keep a mat as a 'magic carpet' to identify the area without walls.
- 9. Let the role play be at an existing area e.g. turn the snack bar into a café or water tray into a rock pool.
- 10. Teach children packing-away routine.

15 Favourite areas - with some ideas for setting up.

Pizza Delivery

Combine pizza restaurant with delivery vehicles.

Giant's Castle and Little Jack's House

Work as two areas together (a few beanstalks in between). Make all props oversized at the Giant's Castle, as Jack would see them, and everything undersized at Jack's house, as the Giant would see them.

Lemonade Factory

Water tray, bottles, paint/food colouring, lab coats, work bench, tubes, funnels, bubbles, scents, screw top lids, camera, stationery (waterproof?), phones, computer, goggles, include snack bar?

Photography Studio and Dark Room

Cameras (old and disposable, instant and digital for immediate use), old photographs, backdrops, props, dressing-up clothes, mounts, stationery (plenty of paper and crayons/felt tips), old cameras with tools to take them apart, an appointment book. Dark room: torches, red filter, photosensitive paper, stationery, pegs, drying line.

Florists

Pretend and homemade flowers and plants in a shop with baskets and oasis to make floral designs and bouquets etc. Add ribbons, cellophane, delivery cards etc. and a delivery vehicle.

Recycling Bay

Combined scrap yard, jumble sorting and repair shop. Offer large boxes, baskets to sort by colour, texture, size, function etc... Add sticky-tape, scissors, stationery for children to make things with and old mechanical objects for children to 'mend' with tool kits, such as radios, watches, tapes and players etc...

Bandstand

Combination of homemade, improvised and real instruments (percussion, wind, stringed) with CD/tape player, range of music, sheet music, music stands, stationery.

Dance Studio

Ball Pool

complete.

Carwash and Petrol Station

Shop/'mini-mart' setting alongside homemade petrol pumps and vehicles. Overalls, tool kits, water, buckets, sponges, bubbles, hose etc to wash vehicles. Works exceptionally well outside or using tough-spots.

Dressing up clothes (child-made ears and tails). Long, low-down tube and entrance, pop-up tents and adjoining tubes are fantastic for this. Fabric for bedding, props for food. Information books about rabbits, 'baby rabbit' soft toys.

Lighthouse

Clad climbing frame with large sheets of card and paint in lighthouse colours. Add look-out props, binoculars, torches and dressing up clothes for lighthouse. Adjoin to home corner as a hotel/ restaurant/visitor centre and also a large scale beach for a real holiday experience.



Borrow from a toy library and create a leisure centre with a reception desk, appropriate props and stationery, include stickers for length of time in the pool, sorting/storage area for shoes. Add a party den, a fitness gym and a healthy café to

Artists' Studio

Wide range of artists' equipment, papers and easels, overalls etc... Also include a range of articles for still life. Adults using the area alongside children will help to develop the area, as will developing the theme e.g. a calligraphy studio.

Rabbit Warren

CD/tape player, range of music, dressing up clothes, full-length mirror, streamers, coloured lights, cameras, discoball, books/posters about theatre and dance.