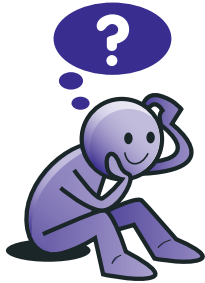


Section 7.1

Role play

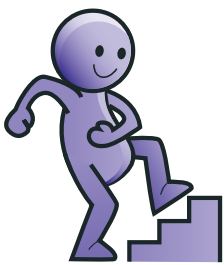


Why is this important?

Role play is how children learn to ‘act out’ situations or events that are not in the present. They use knowledge of their own experiences to pretend to be someone else (e.g. nurse, mummy, teacher, bus or train driver, shopkeeper) and also act the part of roles from books, television programmes, etc.

What to do

- Gather together some clothes for dressing up. Hats, gloves, bags and other accessories are especially useful.
- Encourage the child to dress up and pretend to be someone different (e.g. nurse, doctor, vet, policeman, teacher, spaceman, cowboy, train driver, or perhaps an animal).
- Help the child get into the game by looking at books which have a story, or pictures about a particular character.
- Make the pretend environment together (e.g. in the shop, use empty packets and boxes and pretend money, purses and bags; make food items from play-dough or draw and cut them out).
- Useful books might be about familiar fairy stories or those which relate to real-life experiences (e.g. shopping, a trip to a café, the dentist).



Step up

- Use an increasing variety of familiar environments and routines: the theme corner is an excellent resource.
- Read a story and encourage the child to act it out with friends, or using toys.
- Use puppets to act out different ideas.
- Make a more unusual environment together (e.g. a station, campsite, library, hairdresser or doctor’s surgery).

Step down

- You may need to take the lead by making suggestions and encourage the child to join in.
- Invite an older friend or relative to play to ‘show’ the child some ideas.

