

Dramatic Play & Researcher Center / Juegos Imaginativos y Centro del investigador

- *Preschool Foundations SI #2.1: Interact easily with peers in shared activities that occasionally become cooperative efforts SI 2.2: Participate in simple sequences of pretend play*
- *Preschool Foundations SI #3.1: Participate in group activities and are beginning to understand and cooperate with social expectations, group rules, and roles*
- *SL #1: Participate in collaborative conversations about grade appropriate topics and texts*
- *L #6: Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to and responding to texts*

Summary

Dramatic Play provides an opportunity for children to utilize the new vocabulary and concepts related to a theme in an age appropriate, low affect environment. In a carefully created dramatic play area, children are provided materials that will promote the use of vocabulary and encourage discourse with their peers, all while having fun. Children can feel free to try out new words without feeling undo pressure. And, thoughtful teachers and adults can prompt students through their use of questioning and modeling the language themselves. Dramatic play among preschoolers and kindergarten students morphs into centers of inquiry with realia where first, second and third grade students can “act” as scientists and explorers. Tied to the thematic content of a unit, these centers enable students to enter into the content in tangible, hands-on ways.

Implementation

A high-quality dramatic play environment is:

1. Related to a central theme
2. Filled with a variety of high-interest realia and props that will promote interaction with peers
3. Dress-up items that enable students to put themselves in a relevant role
4. Organized, clean, and accessible

Teachers in Preschool and Kinder should provide ample opportunities for children to use the dramatic play area. While dress up is always fun in a dramatic play area, think creatively about other materials that would create active engagement and also provide an opportunity for children to “write.” For example, while studying Community Helpers, the dramatic play area could be stocked with dress up clothes and include a “ticket book” for the police officer or a clipboard for the doctor to record in the patient’s chart. In the context of a unit on Weather, the dramatic play center should be stocked with thermometers, a rain gauge, sundial and graph paper to record data, along with a map on the wall and a “video camera” for students to give their weather forecast.

For students in First Grade and beyond, the dramatic play area takes the form of a Researcher Center where children are able to assume the role of a scientist or historian studying the content of the theme. Centers should be stocked with realia, puzzles, and manipulatives related to the theme. They become opportunities for students to examine objects, draw pictures and take notes and observations related to the content. The content of the



Researcher Centers might include magnifying glasses, clipboards and pencils, books with photographs related to the topic, etc.

Notes on Dramatic Play/Researcher Centers

Photos of Dramatic Play/Researcher Centers Continued...



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