



★ Early Years Home Learning ★

Executive Function Role Play Shop



This is best:



Indoors

Materials:

You may need:

- Toys and real life objects to sell in the shop
- A till (this could be a box), money (real money or loose parts)
- Paper and markers to create signs, labels and write receipts
- Bags



The basic idea: Join in with your child's play and use their ideas and interests to make a shop. You could provide real items to sell in the shop and make props using things around the house: a box could become a till with some real coins, a purse and bags to recreate the real life experience.

Tips to support your child: Your child will need you to join in with this play to make it more meaningful although they might want to control certain aspects as well. Follow your child's lead. They will enjoy being the "director". Young children do not have as many opportunities to "be in charge" in life and role play is a fantastic opportunity to allow them to do this safely. Look for opportunities to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills if they are interested - for example maybe they could write a shopping list? Label products? Count coins to pay? Recognise the labels on some products? What other real life or fantasy contexts would your child enjoy for role play - Café? Holiday? Fairy tales? Jungles? It can be hard for us adults to enter into an imaginary world with a child but this is quality time that will benefit your child and perhaps you as well. Can you tell them about the role play you enjoyed as a child? They might like to recreate this with you. You can revisit this type of play and add different objects and take on different roles over different days or weeks.

How this benefits your child:

This kind of child-led experience is great for promoting the development of 'executive function' which is essential for being an effective learner. Executive function does not develop naturally, children need experiences such as this to support it. The three main aspects of executive function are working memory, inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility. Remembering how shops work and the processes involved in acting out roles involves working memory. Taking turns and cooperating with you involves waiting which helps with inhibitory control and in finding ways around 'problems' - not enough beans in the shop? Found an alternative? They will be developing cognitive flexibility.

Make this simpler...

- Follow your child's interests and create a role play experience they will engage with. It doesn't need to be a shop.
- Model being in character to your child to support their imaginative play.

Make this more challenging...

- Create scenarios for your child to overcome 'I need 6 bananas but there isn't enough, can you help me?' 'You didn't give me enough change', 'Can I please have a receipt?'
- Introduce siblings or other children to the role play if you feel this would be appropriate and challenge your child's imaginative and cooperation skills.

"The fun is in the journey,
not the end result!"



Top Tip from our Speech and Language Therapy partners:

Label the items your child is using or selling in the shop and talk about what they are doing. This will help develop their vocabulary.

