

DRESSING-UP

Dressing-Up is a diverse provision area that can support children to explore both fictional and real-life characters in greater depth. Additionally, it supplements learning that takes place within Role-Play areas.

The use of open-ended resources and materials can help ensure that children are free to explore their imagination and experiment creatively. For example, one child may use a piece of material as a superhero's cape, whilst another may use it as a veil or a skirt.

Through dressing-up, children can make sense of their world and the roles of others. Taking on these roles enables children to better understand their lived experiences from both their own and others' perspective. This helps them to process events, play out concerns and learn to empathise.



CURRICULAR & DEVELOPMENTAL

Health & Wellbeing

When participating in a group, children can learn to negotiate, take turns, share, manage conflicts and build positive relationships.



Dressing-up materials afford children the opportunity to develop both fine and gross-motor skills. Through the manipulation of fasteners, clips, zips and buttons, children can further develop their coordination and enhance their independence.



Literacy

Materials and props support children to explore both real and imaginary scenarios. Children can embody characters and develop stories through which they can communicate their thoughts and ideas.

Through dressing-up, children can participate in the retelling or re-enactment of familiar stories. This supports exploration of new vocabulary, the sequencing of stories, and the art of bringing characters to life through accents, tone, pitch and volume.

Maths & Numeracy

Dressing-up provides opportunities to develop an understanding of size as children use comparative language to describe items and materials. *"This piece of material is bigger than the other."*

Children have the opportunity to develop sorting and matching skills through organising clothes into pairs, outfits, groups and themes.

Resources and materials can be identified according to colour, pattern and texture, with children using mathematical language to describe and discuss their properties.

Other

When dressing-up, children engage in selecting appropriate materials and resources suitable for their intended purpose. This can open up conversations surrounding the properties and textures of different materials.

Children can compare and contrast clothing from the past with their own clothing in the present.



ROLE OF THE ADULT

When providing specific dressing-up clothes, practitioners must be well-informed about the purpose behind why these are being introduced. If there is a focus on Julia Donaldson books, this could justify the presence of a scarecrow outfit. Specific dressing-up clothes are not a permanent fixture. Open-ended materials are always best practice.

Practitioners should demonstrate that materials can be used by everyone, regardless of gender or cultural background. It's important to be mindful of gender stereotyping.

Be aware of the number of resources available at any one time in this area. It's essential not to over-resource.



ROOM STRUCTURE & LAYOUT

Ideally, the Dressing-Up area should be located in a space that can comfortably accommodate a full-length, child-sized mirror, allowing children to fully see themselves as they engage in imaginative play.

The area should have suitable storage that allows for resources to be presented in an organised and inviting manner.

It's important to note that this doesn't need to be a large or elaborate setup. A small case, mirror and coat stand can often be sufficient. The emphasis should always be on providing high-quality, open-ended resources that inspire creativity, self-expression, and imaginative exploration.

Remember!

Dressing-up is different from 'fancy dress.' A Spider-Man costume can only represent one thing!

Open-ended resources offer endless possibilities.



RESOURCE IDEAS



- A range of materials and fabrics
- Clothes related to interests
- Open-ended clothes: plain tops, shirts, trousers, skirts, dresses
- Clothes that reflect our multicultural world
- Bags, purses, cases, hats
- Appropriately sized shoes
- Costume jewellery & accessories
- Glasses, sunglasses (non-prescription or remove lenses)
- Seasonally relevant resources: scarves, hats and gloves
- Belts, aprons, towels
- Pegs, clasps, ribbons
- Relevant books and visuals



REFLECTION POINTS

- Are children supported to wear dressing-up materials whilst they explore the setting, including outdoors? Does the setting maintain consistency in this approach?
- In what ways do practitioners promote inclusivity and support discussions surrounding gender-bias and cultural stereotypes?
- Does the area include a range of open-ended resources and materials that can support children's imagination and creativity?

