

ROLE PLAY



Whilst role play is represented throughout various areas within an Early Years environment, the setting-up of additional 'Role Play' areas can support children to re-enact significant life experiences, such as going to the hospital or visiting the hairdressers. These areas should be linked to children's interests and exist alongside the Home Corner rather than as a replacement.

Role Play promotes imagination and creativity, providing opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, be expressive, build emotional resilience, and have fun.

Through performing the role of others, children can develop social connections and discover more about themselves, including their likes, dislikes and aspirations.

CURRICULAR & DEVELOPMENTAL

Health & Wellbeing

Playing alongside peers, children develop social skills and awareness surrounding the needs and emotions of others, fostering empathy and respect.

Role play can support children to share their ideas and experiences, listen to others and negotiate.

Through role play, children have opportunities to explore different roles in their communities, including a lollipop person, doctor, shopkeeper and teacher. Roleplaying enables children to understand things from another person's perspective.



Literacy

Role play provides opportunities to engage with environmental print from different societal contexts, such as signs or symbols associated with a visit to the dentist or supermarket.

Children develop communication skills through both verbal and non-verbal interactions. Verbally, they can explore role-specific language and experiment with volume, pitch, tone and accent. Non-verbally, they may imitate the body language of different roles within the community, such as a postal worker delivering mail.

Within role-play scenarios, there exists a wide-range of meaningful mark-making opportunities, including making shopping lists, creating menus, or writing prescriptions.



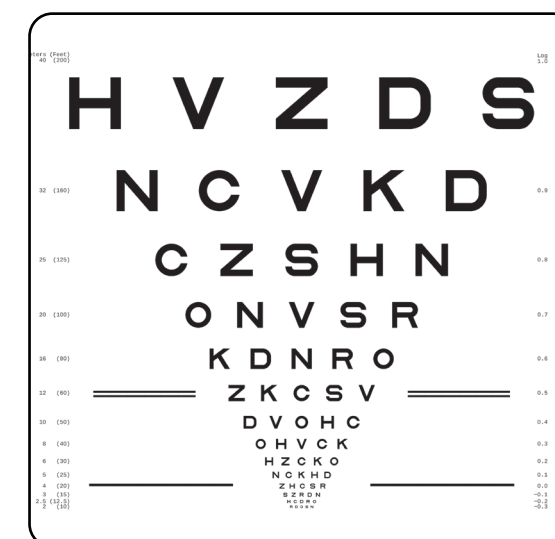
Maths & Numeracy

Role-play areas support children to explore and develop mathematical concepts and skills related to number, money, time, measure, and problem-solving with meaningful concepts.

Scenarios such as going to a shop or café can provide opportunities to explore counting, adding, subtracting, one-to-one correspondence, and the writing of numbers. It can also support the introduction of the concept of fractions.

Children can develop problem-solving skills through imaginative play, exploring comparisons and figuring-out problems such as "do I have enough?", "how many do I need?" and "how much will it cost?"

Concepts such as time and information handling can be explored through scenarios that include the use of calendars, diaries and charts at the opticians.



Other

Role-play can support children’s dramatic expression by enabling them to deeply portray characters and become immersed within their roles.

Children can develop an understanding of similarities and differences between themselves and others within families, communities and across traditions.

Different role play scenarios support children to explore the ways that technology can be used across the world of work.

ROLE OF THE ADULT

Staff should observe, support and ‘tune-in’ to the needs and interests of children to ensure that learning opportunities are child-led and sensitively supported.

Practitioners should work in partnership with children, collaborating to develop a plan, select appropriate resources, and create role play areas.

The area lends itself well to the purposeful transportation of resources between different provision areas. Staff should be aware of this and maintain a consistent approach.

ROOM STRUCTURE & LAYOUT

Whilst some settings may not have a permanent role-play area, when setting up, it’s important to consider the space required for a particular scenario. A café will require space for a table and chair, whilst a hospital will require space for a bed.

Role-play areas can extend the play taking place in the Home Corner. If a child is ‘going to the shops’, they need somewhere to shop and somewhere to bring the shopping back to. This supports children to make connections with the ‘shopping cycle’, enhancing understanding of what this looks like and the process involved.



RESOURCE IDEAS

Resources required for the Role Play area will be specific to the current interest being explored. Below are some examples of resources for common role-play scenarios.

Shops

Till
Items to sell: loose parts & recycled packaging
Bag, purse, money
Receipts, price tags, labels
Shelving
Scales



Doctor/Hospital



Stethoscopes
Medical uniforms and scrubs
Thermometer, mirror, bandages, syringe
Blood pressure monitor, prescription pad
Height chart
Waiting Room: magazines, leaflets, posters

REFLECTION POINTS

- What are the different factors taken into consideration when planning children’s learning through additional role-play? What are children able to explore in this space that they can’t in any other area?
- To what extent is the role-play area valued? Is it given the necessary space and resources for children to play meaningfully and with purpose?