



Everyday role play.

Use clothes and objects you have at home to pretend to be someone or something else and help your child to make up their own pretend play.

Your child can pretend to be a postman, pirate or princess, doctor, fireman or shopkeeper. Your child might want to be a mummy or daddy. What are they interested in being?

Use props such as hats, scarves, belts, pieces of material that can become skirts, aprons, or cloaks, a high viz jacket. Wrap a stick in silver foil to make a wand. Use a big cardboard box as a car or ship or den. Make a little shop using real packets of food and tins and some coins. Provide a basket or bag to put things in.

Den Building

Use a blanket or sheet or throws to make a den with your child, under the table, between cupboards, behind the sofa, anywhere in the house. Fix the covers using clothes pegs. Talk to your child about what the den is for. Is it a home, a hiding place, an animal's cave, a place to play with a favourite toy? Help your child choose some objects to put in the den, such as cushions, a box to put things in, a rug, a book and toys, teddy, a torch. Have a picnic in the den. Can you get in the den too and make up a let's pretend game?

Sharing books

Make a small collection of story books and information books, from charity shops and the library. Share books with your child several times a day and especially at bedtime.

Read aloud, talk about the pictures, ask questions like 'where's the dog?'. Encourage your child to join in when they are familiar with the words.

Play Experiences to try at home



Dance

Your child will enjoy moving their body to the rhythm and beat of any music and will love to copy your dance moves! Show them how to sway, wiggle, jump, turn, lift up arms and legs All you need is some music and some space to dance. Any music, whatever you both like, the radio, a CD or use your phone.

You could wave a scarf about in time to the music or put some dry pasta or rice into an old drink bottle to make a shaker.

Playdough

You can make this playdough with your child helping you.

You need 2 cups flour, 3/4 cup salt, 4 teaspoons cream of tartar, 2 cups lukewarm water, 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil, and food colouring. Stir together the flour, salt, and cream of tartar in a large saucepan. Next add the water and oil. Add a few drops of colouring. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Continue stirring until the dough has thickened and begins to form into a ball. Remove from heat. Allow to cool slightly and then knead until smooth. Store in a Tupperware box or plastic bag.

Now you and your child are ready to PLAY with it, roll it, squidge it, cut it, shape into anything you like. Provide a plastic knife, some pastry cutters and anything that will press marks into the playdough.

Enjoy rhymes together

Start with rhymes you're familiar with or look some up on the internet or in books. Try Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Baa Baa Black Sheep, Humpty Dumpty, Wind the Bobbin up, Incy Wincy Spider, and whole-body action rhymes such as Head shoulders knees and toes.

Rhymes can be shared at any time, face to face, in the bath, bedtimes, any time. Lots of repeating will help your child to learn them. Encourage your child to join in with words and actions.

Play Experiences to try at home



Sort it out!

Build a collection of different sorts of objects like buttons, shells, pebbles, conkers, and acorns. Provide some small pots and encourage your child to sort the objects out by their type, size, shape, or colour. Once sorted you can count the objects or make patterns from them on the table and talk about the different shapes. Or make a collection of some socks and help your child put them into matching pairs.

Joining things together

Provide everyday objects and materials that can be joined together. Try: Scraps of paper and card, empty food boxes, toilet rolls, sellotape and glue. Or string/wool to tie around sticks, feathers, boxes, chair legs. Or old wrapping paper to wrap up pretend presents. Or a big scarf to wrap around a doll or teddy.

Find some connecting toys like wooden blocks, duplo lego, jigsaws, and railway tracks and play alongside your child to build and make a variety of models and pictures.

Mark Making

Marks can be made with fingers and tools like crayons, pens, chalks, paint brushes, and sticks outside in sand or mud.

Marks can be made in all sorts of substances like paint, yoghurt, shaving foam, mud, sand, water (on paths, fences, and walls outside with a brush).

Marks can be made on paper – any old scraps, old wallpaper roll, cardboard, old envelopes, and paper bags, and outside on the ground or walls (the rain will wash away paint and chalks).

Marks can be random lines, squiggles, scribbles, blobs, shapes, faces, people. Encourage children to have a go themselves and praise all their efforts.

Display their artwork by sticking it up somewhere they can see it or take a photograph of it and talk about it.



Mini beasts!

It is easy to find spiders, beetles, ladybirds, worms, and woodlice etc by turning over a log or stone, or under leaves, or digging in the soil of your garden or local park. If you find a minibeast, talk to your child about being kind and gentle, where it lives, what it might eat, how many legs, how it won't hurt us and is good for birds, hedgehogs and badgers to eat. You could help your child make a minibeast home in an old shoe box with some leaves, twigs, and soil, and put a minibeast in there carefully to watch. But do remember to return it to its real home later on.

With support your child will be able to hunt for minibeasts on their own, but they will want to show you what they've found!

Little helper

Children love to be helpful and to be involved with everything you are doing.

Give your child little jobs to do while at home, for example: help prepare a snack like peeling a banana and chopping it up, fetch something for you, start to help with dressing themselves like pulling up a zip or pulling up their trousers, help pick up the toys and put them away, help put washing in the washing machine, use a duster or dustpan and brush. When out shopping, involve your child by asking them to put things in the trolley or onto the conveyor belt and ask them to carry or hold something for you.

Small World

Collect some little people such as playmobile characters, some animals or dinosaurs, and a small toy vehicle such as a tractor, car, or lorry. Put in a shoebox, and include a few items of dolls house furniture, an old hanky, and a few pebbles and sticks. Help your child create a scene like a house or farm or beach and make up stories with these items. Your child will have their own ideas - let him or her take the lead.