



Role Play/ Pretend Play



Role play or pretend play is when children play as if something or someone is real. Using their imagination to act out real life roles supports children's understanding of how the world works. Fun role playing ideas can be as simple or elaborate as you like using what you have already around the house.

Some items you will need:

- Table/bookcase
 - Basket
 - Shoe boxes
 - Shopping bags
 - Open ended materials (food containers, milk/juice cartons, cereal boxes, tins of beans, empty yogurt pots, rice, pasta, fruit and vegetables)
 - Handbag and purse
 - Paper
 - Pencils
- Optional additions
- Shopping trolley/basket
 - Play kitchen
 - Scissors
 - Calculator/card reader/till
 - Toy/old phone
 - Toy keys

What is my child learning?

Role play helps children manage their feelings, develop socially, problem solve, be creative and imaginative and supports language development.

It gives children the opportunity to learn new words such as the names of fruits, vegetables and any other items relevant to the play.

Mathematical language is enhanced using a calculator, playing with pretend money and by asking questions such as: *How much is this box of cereal?*, *What can I buy for €20?* or *What time does your shop close?*



Suggestions to extend play

- Change your shop into a restaurant. Create a new sign and make menus using a colouring pencils and paper. Add some cups, plates, spoons, forks, knives, napkins and flowers.
- Alternative role play ideas: going on a train journey, have a tea party, a toy shop, an office, an ice-cream shop or a doctor surgery
- Alternative jobs to role play: chef, fire fighter, doctor or construction worker. Think about how to make costumes and what accessories are needed for the job.
- The key thing here is to let the child lead the play and for you to follow their lead.

Setting up a shop

- To create a pretend shop you will need a table/bookcase.
- Place all your open ended materials on the table/toy box/bookcase for example; cereal boxes, milk/juice cartons, baskets of fruit and vegetables.
- Make some money using a pen, paper and scissors. You can also create a sign with the name of the shop and the opening hours, labels and price tags.
- The shopkeeper can use a calculator, card reader or a till.

