

And Now for Dramatic Play . . .

Young children enjoy pretend play developing scenarios and story-lines within kitchens, fire stations, hospitals, pet stores, grocery stores, restaurants, etc. All of these ideas can be adapted at home and within centers. Some ideas to encourage conversations between children within these scenarios include:

1. Sitting down at a table in the kitchen area and asking a nearby child for a menu (to begin a dialogue for **restaurant** play)
**continue the conversation by ordering food from this child, then accepting what is brought - pretending to eat, asking for more food, etc.
2. Entering the dramatic play area with a stuffed animal and asking for help for your sick animal (as though at the vets).
**continue the conversation by asking what needs to be done for the animal to make them well etc.
3. Setting up a line of chairs in an area of the room and sitting down in one of the chairs and asking 'where are we going?' (as though on a **bus**)
**continue the talk by asking, "When will we get to school?" or "Who else do we need to pick up?" "What will we do when we get there?", etc.
4. Setting several chairs in two lines close together. Sit down in one of the chairs and ask a passing child, "Will you be joining me on the **airplane**?"
**continue the conversation by asking "where are you going to?" "What will you do when you get there?" "Did you put all of your bags inside the airplane?", etc.
5. Setting up a line of chairs in an area of the room and sit down in one of the chairs saying, "We better hurry! We need to get to the fire!" (as though at a **fire station**)
**continue the talk by saying 'what do we need to help us put out the fire?' 'How should we put out the fire?' etc.
6. Pretending to bring a letter to the **post office**. Ask a nearby child for a stamp and begin the dialogue.
**continue the conversation by asking 'how much will the stamp cost?', 'what kinds of stamps are available?', 'how long will the letter take to get to its destination?', etc.
**ask the child to help you create a letter to someone
7. Pretending to enter a **grocery store or clothing store**. Collect a few items inside a basket or container and hand to a child near the dramatic play area to purchase the items. Start by saying, "Can you help me please?"
**continue the discussion by asking 'how much do all of the items cost?' Perhaps set up a mistake that the child needs to work through, such as 'I really don't want that orange because it costs too much!' etc.

8. Placing two chairs together in an area in the room. Take a doll to the chairs and place her on the chairs saying, "Oh, my poor baby is sick. I need some help please." Look at a passing child and ask them for some help with the baby (as though at the **hospital**).
 - **continue the conversation by asking "what's wrong with my baby?"
 - "Will my baby need to stay in the hospital for long?" "What do I need to do when I take her back home?", etc.

9. Placing several shoes in lines on the floor. Go to a pair of shoes and attempt to put them on. Ask a passing child, "How much do these shoes cost?" (as though at a **shoe store**)
 - **continue the conversation by asking "Do these shoes look nice on me?"
 - "Are there other colors?" "Do you have shoes with buckles, zippers, or snaps?", etc.

10. Going to the book area and choosing a few books (as though at the **library** or at a **book store**). Ask a passing child "How much do these books cost?"
 - **continue the conversation by asking what the books are about, asking for books about certain topics, asking how many books can be taken out at a time (if pretending to be a library vs. a bookstore), etc.
 - **create a story together with a child

© *Kate Ross, MS, CCC-SLP (2011)*