

Imagine

How can so much fun get my child ready for school?

Princesses...Dragons and Knights! Oh My! Pretend play is not just silly kids being kids. It is children developing the ability to use their imaginations to represent objects, people and ideas. Dramatic play helps children to learn new vocabulary, practice language skills, problem solve, and to literally (and figuratively) walk in someone else's shoes, teaching empathy. These are all hard concepts for small children that can be easily learned through the fun of pretend, so set your imagination free!

Try these at home!

- **Mirror, mirror on the wall.** A secure mirror at the child's height enhances the experience of dress-up. Seeing themselves in the mirror helps a child to understand who they are pretending to be.
- **Recycle old clothes for dramatic play.** Hats, scarves, dresses, shoes, jewelry, anything you don't want can fill up a "dress-up box" and provide hours of entertainment to young children without spending a penny!
- **Copy cat.** Children love to pretend to be a grown-up and it helps to teach them what grownups do! If Daddy is cooking, give your child an empty bowl and spoon to pretend to cook just like him. If Mom is busy working give your child an old cell phone that doesn't work and a keyboard from an old computer and let your child pretend to be at the office.



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Things to say:

- “Well hello there, I am ___, what’s your name?”
Get into your own character and become a part of the imaginary world. See how your child reacts to this new addition and challenge their imagination while encouraging them to tell you what’s happening in the story.
- “Where is your building?” It’s not all about dress up. Building with blocks, playing with cars, and flapping your arms like a bird is all dramatic play. Next time your child is building with blocks simply ask, “Where is your building?” You may be amazed at the long answer and story you receive in return.

Books with Imagination:

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, by Judith Barrett

Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak

Aunt Molly’s Attic, by Breanne M. George

If I Built a Car, by Chris Van Dusen



Illustrations by Corey Smigliani

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