

Ideas for using the videos [Supporting Children's Learning in Dramatic Play Centers](#)

While it is best practice for teachers to visit programs and classrooms as a way to view others' approaches to curriculum and teaching, these videos provide a practical alternative to this experience.

About the videos:

- These videos feature providers from multiple early care and education classrooms (preschool and toddler) in Connecticut. The strategies employed are generally appropriate for use in home settings as well.
- The video set includes five videos.
An introductory video:
 - *The Importance of Pretend Play*
 Followed by four examples of dramatic play centers:
 - *Bakery*
 - *Train Station*
 - *Garden Center*
 - *We Can Clean, Too!*
- Each of the dramatic play center videos includes teachers' descriptions of their planning as well as reflections on their teaching.
- Dramatic play videos include connections to the CT ELDS at the end.

Major points of the videos:

- Pretend play is a worthwhile experience, and provides a meaningful context for integrated learning.
- Teachers should purposefully prepare the environment and support children's play.
- Although teachers may be using different curricular models, each center is intentionally planned and connected in an authentic way to children's interests and what is going on in the classroom.
- In two of the videos we see teachers engage children in the planning and creation of centers.
- Each of the Dramatic Play videos addresses:
 - Planning
 - Props
 - Building prior knowledge
 - Teacher's role
 - Connections to ELDS

Considerations when using this video to support professional development in different contexts:

- Ideas for using the video have been organized by setting and for various audiences: within a [college course](#), [training](#), and [program](#). Some of the strategies may be useful across settings, or could be modified to suit the needs of a particular group.
- While Play is the obvious focus, these videos could be used to support learning about a variety of topics:
 - Children's Interest and Engagement
 - Learning Centers
 - Curriculum Components: *Standards, Materials, Experiences, Interactions*
 - Reflection and Intentionality
 - Teaching Strategies

Possible talking points:

- High quality curriculum is intentional, responsive, and reflective.
- In the Train Station video, we see that child-made props are used effectively by older preschoolers. Such inexpensive play props can often be created for use with various topics and in different settings.
- Although these topics are not addressed in the videos, it would be useful to discuss the opportunities that these play centers provide to:
 - observe and assess children's progress,
 - engage families, and/or
 - celebrate different cultures and experiences.
- Consideration should be given to how long centers remain available and ways to scaffold learning while extending and enriching play.

[Technical Tips](#) for using this video.

HANDOUTS

- [Teacher worksheet](#) for possible use as a guide for planning a dramatic play center.
- [Table of components](#) included in the videos (can be useful when considering what videos to show).
- [Video observation worksheet](#) for use in courses or trainings so participants can note the components included.