

Supporting Children's Learning in Dramatic Play Centers

Example of how the videos might be used during a training

Provide participants with a link to the introductory video [The Importance of Pretend Play](#). Ask them to view the video as part of their pre-work. Have each participant recall a memorable scenario they noted in the past week when observing children involved in dramatic play. Then, during the session, choose one or more of the example videos to show and discuss, depending on your goals.

- Invite participants to share their stories with a partner and describe what they noticed about the children's affect and level of engagement during play. Provide an opportunity for a few people to share with the large group. As they do, assist the group to identify connections to learning standards. *Note: If there was an example where children were not actively engaged, refer back to it throughout the session in order to troubleshoot as concepts are discussed.*
- Present content related to play. Emphasize the importance of early play experiences as opportunities for learning. Also address that children's emotional states and dispositions affect their learning.
- Show the chosen videos or segments, pausing to focus on key points.
- Use the blank [video observation worksheet](#) as an opportunity for participants to note the components they notice as they watch and discuss the video. Work in small groups to compare notes and share their own experiences and various strategies used. Discuss what is familiar and possibly new.
- Working in small groups, have participants choose a topic for a dramatic play center based on one of the earlier-shared observations (building on children's interests) or a scenario you provide. Then ask each group to create a plan that includes all of the elements discussed. As each group reports out, review key points.
- Provide empty boxes and paper towel tubes along with some basic art supplies and invite each group to create one or more simple props that could be used in their center. Prompt them to consider how they might engage children in creating similar props.
- Provide time for each participant to make an action plan for how these ideas will be incorporated into their own classrooms. Give the [teacher worksheet](#) as a guide to encourage intentionality.

CT Core Knowledge and Competencies:

2. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches

- Interactions and Experiences
- Intersect of Content and Implementation
- Use of Diverse Approaches
- Individual Ways of Learning and Knowing

3. Building a Meaningful Planned Program

- Building a Planned Program
- Domains of Learning
- Developmentally Appropriate Environment
- Interactions with Materials

