



Transcript for the video:

Grocery Store to Craft Market: Building Background Knowledge Through Dramatic Play

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Part One:

Preschool teachers Leisha Flynn and Karla Alamo prepare to engage children in creating a new dramatic play center.

Chapter One: Selecting and Introducing the Topic (0:29)

Leisha Flynn, Preschool Teacher: In the beginning of the year, we send out a survey to families, and it says, basically, "What sort of areas does your child know?" We chose the dramatic play topic based upon that research that we received from our families.

Karla Alamo, Teacher Associate: And it seemed like the grocery store is one of the places that kids know, that they all have visited before. So we really wanted to start from the basics.

Leisha Flynn: It was also a place that there could be multiple roles in dramatic play. We knew we were going to web with the children to really find out what the children know about the grocery store.

Karla Alamo: What do we do at the grocery store, things that they have seen at the grocery store, things that they buy at the grocery store.

Leisha: Do I have to do anything, or I just take the food with me?

Child: No, you have to pay.

Leisha: Oh, I have to pay with what? What does that mean?

Karla Alamo: We watched a video on the internet. So for the kids that have not gone to a grocery store, then at least they get the idea of what it is and how it looks like.

Karla: Because I see the shopping cart, and I can also read. And right here it says, "Whole Foods," okay? So that way, I know, "Oh, food."

Leisha: They sell food here.

Leisha Flynn: It was a great way for the children to visually have something they could see prior to playing the actual grocery store.

Chapter Two: Creating Props for the Grocery Store (1:58)

Leisha: My friends, on the art table, I see some boxes. Because when we talked about our grocery store, do you see what's in this picture, Kayson?

Child: A grocery store.

Leisha: A great grocery store.

Karla Alamo: Moving forward was a lot of work, a lot of planning with the kids.

Leisha: Do we have any money? Do you have any money in your pocket right now?

Child: Yeah.

Leisha: You do? Do you have any money in your pockets? Let me see.

Karla: Let's see.

Leisha: Nope, no money.

Karla: Nope, no money.

Leisha: What do we have to do? We have to make some money!

Karla Alamo: We did small groups in tables.

Leisha Flynn: For the children to have lots of hands-on experience creating the props for the grocery store, the signs, a great way to bring in math in terms of money.

Teacher: And then after you're done making all of your labels, we will put them on blocks, so we will have our own cans.

Leisha: For the grocery store. I see.

Karla Alamo: And the kids were able to make every single item and every single sign with numbers, letters, money. Everything that comes to having a grocery store in a classroom, they did.

Chapter Three: Opening the New Dramatic Play Center (3:16)

Karla Alamo: When we did the grand opening, it was really fun. The kids were so excited, because we had closed dramatic play for like two or three days.

Leisha Flynn: We did our initial introduction where myself and my co-workers chose different roles.

Karla Alamo: And what we did was we modeled what we do or how we go to the grocery store.

Teacher: You're welcome. Have a great day!

Karla: Oh, I appreciate your help.

Leisha: So now I can make everything I need. You can just have a seat, and I'll make you your cookies.

Karla: Oh, thank you!

Leisha: So my friends, do you see how Miss Sydney had a job, Miss Karla had a job, and Miss Leisha had a job?

Karla Alamo: That was the way we introduced our grocery store to the children before they started playing. So they had the idea of, "This is how I play here," or, "This is what I do at the grocery store."

Leisha Flynn: If you can't role play it, then the children really don't know the different roles that they can play and will only do all of the same thing or all of what they're familiar with. So by choosing the different roles, I think it gave them an example for how they could interact with the items in dramatic play.

Child 1: Want to be the worker now?

Child 2: Yeah.

Karla Alamo: At the beginning, I would say like the first couple of days, they modeled most of what we have already modeled to them.

Leisha Flynn: When we first introduced it, we actually chose two of the older children and two of the younger children to start dramatic play. And the younger children often take a step back and let the older children sort of direct the play.

Child 1: I need toothpaste, please.

Child 2: What? What?

Child 1: Toothpaste, please. Toothpaste. Over there. No, toothpaste, over there.

Child 2: Up there?

Child 1: Over there.

Child 2: Right here?

Child 1: Yep. Good job. Thank you!

Leisha Flynn: And then the more familiar they become with different scenarios that they have seen, or acted in, they continue to use it again and again. So then they become the ones to direct.

Child: Okay, welcome to my store! Welcome to my store!

Leisha Flynn: I think that this grocery store setting really enabled children who don't often play in dramatic play to come in and choose a role.

Child 1: Here's your money!

Child 2: Thank you!

Part Two:

Children build on their new knowledge of buying and selling to create a real craft market in their classroom.

Chapter Four: Creating Items for a Craft Market (6:07)

Leisha: So, I wrote a word up here. It says, “market.” Quinn, what’s a market?

Child: It’s when you sell stuff.

Leisha: It’s when you sell stuff.

Leisha Flynn: We noticed actually in the fall that many of the children were talking about going to the fair, and what they got at the fair, what they saw at the fair.

Karla Alamo: And then Leisha and myself thought about it, and we’re like, “Wait a minute. Maybe we can do a market now, because they know what a grocery store is. So now we can go over to a market.”

Leisha: My friends, we are going to have a market, a lot like this craft fair. And we are going to make items. And we’re going to invite our friends from the Blue Room, from the Green Room, from the Purple Room, from the Toddler Room, and they are going to come and buy some of the things that we make for them.

Leisha Flynn: We really wanted it to be sort of different mediums—like one would be clay, one would be wood, one would be fabric—just made of different sort of natural materials.

Karla Alamo: We made pinch pots out of air clay; jewelry, using pipe cleaners and beads; suncatchers, using glue and food coloring; quilts, and we framed them; wooden pieces, we used real wood.

Leisha: But we’re not going to take them home. We’re going to sell them in our market.

Leisha Flynn: The hard part was keeping the items to sell. I think it’s a really difficult concept for children that young, not to say, “I want to take it home to my family.” And so as we talked about it over and over and over, the children got really excited that other children were going to come into their classroom, that we were going to set this up, and that they could be experts of each item.

Karla: You made a beautiful necklace! Can you make another one for our market?

Chapter Five: Opening the Craft Market (8:09)

Leisha: We have made all of these fabulous things to the market, but how do we get our friends to come to the market?

Leisha Flynn: Many of them have had experience with receiving an invitation for a birthday party.

Karla Alamo: So we wrote invitations for every classroom. We did small groups again at tables, and each group wrote an invitation with the kids' words.

Leisha Flynn: And then we get to deliver it, which is, they love it. That they get to walk to the classroom, and they read the invitation to the teacher. It was an overall great experience.

Teacher: Oh! So we have an invitation to go to the Teal Room next Monday.

Child: And we made a card.

Leisha Flynn: They had their invitation, and so they knew when to come, and each child had a ticket, and we made a pathway leading through the market. And we described to them that they could pick one item per ticket.

Leisha: And we have market experts that can tell you what we have.

Leisha Flynn: We encouraged them to travel through the whole market so they could really get a lay of the land and see all of the different items that were for sale.

Karla Alamo: We placed at least two children per center, per table, and they were explaining how they made the item, what they used to make the item, what the item was, and it was just, it was so beautiful.

Teacher 1: Hailey, did you want to buy with your ticket?

Teacher 2: Here, let me give you my ticket.

Teacher 3: Look at all your hugs from your Teal Room friends! Love it.

Conclusion (9:48)

Leisha Flynn: I think the children had a sense of pride in the final product.

Karla Alamo: It's always like, we have this idea, but they really put more into it.

Leisha Flynn: I heard from many children outside who said, "This was the best day ever!" And, "This was awesome! Everyone came to our classroom!" And I think they also had a sense of pride that another child was taking home an item that they made.

Karla Alamo: So I really think that by having them be part of our dramatic play and our set-up and our hands-on experiences, really really play an important part of the kids wanting to be in dramatic play.

Leisha Flynn: That the more freedom you give them to create their own items and create based off their own ideas, it really leads to a more rich play center.

Every child in the Teal Room contributed to the design and development of the grocery store, which led to deeper engagement in the play center.

The rich pretend play experiences children had in the grocery store gave them the background knowledge they needed to create the craft market.

Four other classrooms visited the market. Every child went home with something.