

Supporting Children's Learning in Dramatic Play Centers

Example of how the videos might be used in a college course

At home:

Have students view the introductory video The Importance of Pretend Play. Then have them recall personal memories of childhood play and write a brief description of one example of their pretend play that they will be willing to share in class.

In class:

- Give students a chance to share their memories with a classmate. Then engage in a group discussion about the importance of play in a child's life. If the students can recall the feelings this play evoked, bring their attention to the research findings about the effects of emotions on learning.
- Review the different types of play and explain that this discussion will focus specifically on dramatic play. Or, for a more advanced course, have the students recall various types of play and identify the unique features of dramatic play.
- Have students work in small groups to discuss what they have observed in early childhood classrooms in dramatic play centers (if applicable).
- Show one or more of the example videos and have the students jot down notes as they watch using the video observation worksheet. After viewing each, provide time for them to work with a partner using the CT ELDS to identify the strands addressed in the video.
- In small groups, allow them to share what they noticed including both familiar and/or new strategies, and discuss why they think teachers chose the strategies they did.
- Have them work in groups to choose one video example to focus on. Then plan for additional materials and experiences that the teacher could provide to enhance children's learning related to a few of the strands they identified. (Provide Bloom's Taxonomy or Webb's Depth of Knowledge as a resource.)
- Brainstorm as a class some strategies for including families in the planning of these experiences. Alternatively, use this opportunity to encourage thinking about how they might address children's individual needs within the center.

NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards:

1 Promoting Child Development and Learning
a, b, c

4 Using Developmentally Effective Approaches
a, b, c, d

5 Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum
a, b, c

6 Becoming a Professional
c, d



Assignment:

Have students create a plan for a dramatic play center that addresses what children should know and be able to do. (If working with children, they might also implement that plan within a classroom as part of a long-term project.)