

CONSTRUCTION PLAY

Children love building houses, garages, castles and other structures. Teachers and parents are always amazed when learners take a box and turn it into an extraordinary toy that has the ability to occupy them for hours on end.

Why construction play is important:

These types of games encourage design, problem-solving and building skills. In addition, children exercise their creativity and imagination.

What you can do to encourage construction play:

Provide wooden blocks, Unifix™ blocks and Lego™ pieces for children to use. Do not put them all out at once. Alternate them so that learners get a chance to work with different types of construction toys. Cardboard boxes, plastic containers and tins (without sharp edges) also make excellent construction toys – in many ways these items extend the child's imagination even further than their commercial counterparts.

SENSORY PLAY

Most children enjoy playing with sand, mud and water. Tactile-defensive children may not find these types of activities appealing but they should be gently encouraged to take part.

Why sensory play is important:

This kind of play develops learners' awareness of their five senses.

MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY

Children enjoy pretend games. They like to pretend they are adults like their parents, doctors or nurses, as well as fictional characters like superheroes, fairies and pirates.

Why make-believe play is important:

This type of play stimulates the child's imagination. It is also language-rich, as learners use language they do not necessarily need or use in their day-to-day activities.

What you can do to encourage make-believe play:

Make sure that the fantasy area is well-stocked with clothing for your learners to dress up in. Use the themes you use in your teaching to influence what type of clothing and supporting accessories you put out – for example, for the theme of community workers ('People who help us'), try to put out items such as a doctor's white coat, a stethoscope and empty medicine bottles. Read lots of stories to stimulate your learners' imagination – the things they read about with you will carry through to their imaginary play.