**Imaginative play**

**General tips:**

* Model sequences of actions e.g. pouring tea, stirring it, drinking it.
* Expand on the child’s play, e.g. if they offer a toy a ‘bite’, do the same then make the toy rub its tummy and say “yum!”
* Comment on what you are doing using simple language, e.g. “I’m washing dolly. Wash her face, wash her hair…”
* Include emotions in the play scenarios by acting out and labelling these. For example, if bringing a ‘pet’ into the ‘animal hospital’, act alarmed and say “I’m so worried about my cat!” If giving a ‘birthday present’, ask the child, “Are you excited?”

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| **Scenario** | **You may need…** | **Suggestions** |
| Animal hospital | * Stuffed toys or figurines
* Implements (pens, torch etc).
* Fabric
 | * Use fabric as a ‘bandage’
* Pretend classroom objects are other implements/tools
* Use a table or desk as a bed/operating table
* Roles can include pet owner, vet, assistant, receptionist – a child could even pretend to be the pet!
 |
| Bakery | * Playdough
* Cupcake cases
* Candles OR pencils
* Bowl and spoon OR pen
 | * Pretend pencils / pens are candles
	+ Step up: say “Hmm, can you see any candles?” and encourage the child(ren) to find something themselves.
* Have ‘customers’ come in and choose a cake
	+ Describe the imaginary cake
 |
| Birthday party | * Playdough
* Cupcake cases
* Candles OR pencils
* Stuffed toys
* Paper
* ‘Presents’
 | * Blow out the candles
* Sing ‘Happy Birthday’
* Wrap and play ‘Pass the Parcel’ using any item and sheets of paper
* Give presents and show excitement – talk about objects as though they are something else (e.g. “It’s a Playstation!”)
 |
| Camping | * Blanket
* Chairs
* Cushions
* Sticks / pens
* Red/orange/yellow tissue paper
* Pretend food
 | * Build a ‘tent’
* Rub sticks/pens together to ‘make a fire’
* Pretend to toast marshmallows on sticks/pens above the tissue paper fire
* Say goodnight and turn the lights off
* ‘Wake up’, yawn, stretch etc. in the ‘morning’
* Cook breakfast over the pretend fire
 |
| Concert | * Toy microphone OR hairbrush/marker pen
* Dress up clothes
* ‘Mirror’ (real or pretend e.g. computer screen)
 | * Child(ren) pretend(s) to get ready ‘backstage’
* Pretend to put on make-up in the ‘mirror’
* Voiceover – “Introducing the amazing…”
* Woop and cheer!
* Pretend to play instruments e.g. air guitar, drum on a table etc.
* You may wish to put an appropriate song on so the child(ren) can lip sync or dance.
 |
| Cooking | * Toy kitchen
* Toy food
* Pots and pans
* Oven (can be a box, shelves etc.)
 | * Comment using a range of verbs to support vocabulary (e.g. ‘mixing’, ‘cutting’, ‘pouring’)
 |
| Doctors | * Doctor toy set
 | * No explanation needed!
 |
| Dolls | * Doll(s)
* Blanket/cloth/fabric
* Bottle
* Dummy
* Brush
 | * Model sequences around:
	+ Putting dolly to bed
	+ Feeding dolly
	+ Washing dolly
* Talk to and ‘soothe’ the doll
 |
| Driving | * Chairs
* Plate or flat book
 | * Arrange chairs to form a ‘car’
* Use a plate, book, or anything appropriate as a ‘steering wheel’
* Comment on the imaginary scenery
* Move with the ‘turns’ and ‘bumps’
 |
| Hair salon | * Chair and mirror (real or pretend)
* Pretend tools
* Bottles (this could be hand sanitiser or water bottles)
 | * Ask the client what they would like
* Pretend containers are bottles of product
* Make hairdryer noises, water noises etc.
* Act out and label emotions during reactions to the new hairstyle
* ‘Pay’ at the end.
 |
| Cleaning | * Spray bottles
* Cloths
* Broom, toy hoover etc.
 | * Comment on what you and the child(ren) are doing to increase understanding of everyday verbs
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| Cop and robber | * Rubber band
 | * Twist a large rubber band to make ‘handcuffs’
* ‘Drive’ around ake siren noises
 |
| Library | * Books
* Computer and mouse
* Bag
* Pretend library card (piece of paper/card or an unimportant card from an adult’s wallet)
 | * Lay out books around the room
* Pretend to stamp or scan books with an object – you could use a computer mouse as a ‘scanner’
* Pretend that the due date shows up on the computer screen
* Customer puts books in their bag
* Act out borrowing and returning books
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| Phone call | * ‘Phones’ (real or random items)
* Stuffed toys
 | * Put on voices
* Include emotions (e.g. “I’m so angry because…”)
* Include toys in the call, e.g. “Mr Crocodile wants to speak to you, I’m just going to pass him the phone”
 |
| Picnic | * Pretend food
* Bag/basket
* Crockery
* Picnic guests (stuffed toys, figurines etc.)
 | * Load up a bag of supplies
* Go outside or stay in the room and find a ‘picnic rug’
* Discuss the imaginary scenery e.g. “What a sunny day! Why don’t we go and sit under this tree?”
* Offer and share out foods
* Comment on the tastes
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| Puppet show | * Puppets
* Table
* Props (optional)
 | * Child(ren) hide behind and below a table or other surface to put on a puppet show
* If helpful, decide on the story in advance so the children have a structure to work with
 |
| Restaurant | * Pretend food
* Plates and cutlery
* Table(s) and chairs
* Paper/books
* Notepad and pen
 | * Pretend paper / books are ‘menus’
	+ Children could even make their own menus if there is time!
* The ‘waiter’ takes orders and scribbles in a notepad
* Comment on the food and how you are feeling
 |
| Shop | * Toy cash register (if available)
* Desk
* Items
* Bag/basket
* Tokens/money/card
 | * Lay out items around the room
* Browse and comment
* Put items in your basket
* Pay at the ‘till’
* Talk about pricing, the items or other small talk while ‘paying’
 |
| Superheroes | * Dress up clothes
* Fabric for ‘cape’
* Animal/person toys
 | * Act out superpowers
* ‘Save’ the toy(s) from a villain
* Act out and comment on emotions (e.g. mock screaming)
 |
| Tea party | * Tea set
* Stuffed toys
* Pretend food
 | * Model sequences (e.g. serving and drinking tea, cutting, serving and eating cake)
* Offer refreshments to the toys
* Comment on the tastes
* Make polite chatter people *and* toys
 |
| Theatre | * Dressing up clothes
* Pretend stage area
 | * Children (and adults) act out a familiar story e.g. Little Red Riding Hood
* People can play multiple characters
* Use random objects as ‘props’
* Bow at the end
 |
| Zookeepers  | * Stuffed animals
* ‘Enclosures’ (books, blocks, tables etc.)
* Containers
* Toy doctor kit
 | * Use items from around the room to make ‘enclosures’ for the animals
* Provide ‘food’ and water in containers
* Refer to the animals by name
* Make the animals interact with each other if in the same ‘enclosure’
* Pretend an animal is sick and make it better – give it ‘medicine’ or call the vet
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