**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 |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| 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 |