



SUPPORTING MAKE-BELIEVE PLAY

Intentionally supporting children’s make-believe play keeps the play going and ensures children get the most out of the play experience. Here are some ways you can support children’s make-believe play!

SUPPORT	EXAMPLE (RESTAURANT THEME)
Introduce what children can do in the area—identify a scenario. You can reference books or virtual field trips (e.g., use your phone/camera to film a scenario to show children later). Include children in the brainstorming process!	The restaurant has run out of bowls for the soup.
Use props to brainstorm scenarios. This can help children learn to use them in their own play.	Remind children of the props in the make-believe play area and share ways to use them. For example, talk about all the food available in the restaurant, look at the menu to see what soups the restaurant has, or look at the cooking utensils. Or, if children are brainstorming different scenarios, think about how they might use props.
Act out the scenario for children, using props and role speech. Have fun with this—kids love seeing their teachers in make-believe play! Encourage parents to act out scenarios for their child too, to engage in a learning experience that is unique to their culture.	If you have another adult in the room, one of you can be the server or chef, and the other can be the customer who’s ordered a bowl of vegetable soup. The server or chef could show the menu to the customer to suggest another soup or use the other ingredients to make a different kind of soup.
Use self-talk to explain what you are doing as you do it. This “narrating” can make your speech and actions more salient for children. It also supports language development for children who are non-verbal or have language delays. Also, use children’s home language, when possible to engage them in the play.	If you’re pretending to be the chef or sever, you could talk through your options: “Hmmm... my customer ordered the vegetable soup, but we’re out. I could make a different kind of soup or see if they want the salad on the menu instead.”
Encourage children to act out the scenario with you in their home language or in English, repeating your actions and role speech (parents can do this too). If you don’t have enough props for children, they can pretend they are using the prop—a great way to support symbolic representation! Remember to use gestures or pictures to support children who are non-verbal or have language delays.	Have children practice using the role speech, repeating after you: “I’m sorry, but we’re out of vegetable soup today. Would you like a salad instead?” Then they could pretend to show the customer the menu and take their new order!