

**Drama Games for Early Childhood**  
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Narrative Pantomime

Children re-enact the story while it is being told. This helps give the students an introduction to dramatic structure.

Hats and Characterization

Set out a variety of hats, such as fireman, chef, nurse, etc. The instructor should improvise a character, based upon a hat, to illustrate the exercise. Then each child picks a hat by looking at it, not touching it. They then create a character based on the hat as the teacher talks them through a day in the life of their character. "Where do you live, what is your job," etc. The child can then draw a picture of their character on the job.

Right and Wrong Names for Objects

We are always so concerned about being right or wrong, This time we get to throw out that rule. First children point to an object and say what it is, "this is a ball." Have them do that for one minute with as many different objects as they can. Look, point, speak. After they do that, have them do the opposite: point to an object and call it anything other than what it is. This may be funny and confusing at first, but tell them not to give up. It helps them begin to think "outside the box" and also increase vocabulary. What's not allowed is name calling, so rules of the classroom should be reminded before this exercise.

Presents

The children sit opposite a partner and one starts by handing a pretend box to their partner. It can be any size or shape. the receiver tears into the imaginary wrapping and opens the box to reveal whatever they want. They say out loud what it is, and should be delighted with it: "A princess dress - wow!" And they can pretend to play with it and share it for a minute then hand a present over to their partner. Variations on this can be they have to pull out items that start with a certain letter, or they could pull out an emotion and put it on,

I Am A Magician

In this game, the teacher starts and says, "I am a magician and turn you all into..." and then gives two adjectives and a noun. For example: slimy, slippery worms, warm fuzzy bunnies, crisp colorful leaves. The students then act them out. If a student has an idea, they can become the magician. Obviously this can also be a good introduction to basic English language components of adjectives and nouns.

What costumes are we going to wear?

Doing plays with children at this age doesn't have to be complicated. Costumes should take advantage of this and only suggest to an audience something bigger, not realistically present it. The kid with a hat is a cowboy, the one with a necktie is a car salesman and the glasses kid is playing grandma. Almost any fairy tale can be costumed from the dress up area:

Little Red Riding Hood A red bandana, glasses for grandma, and sunglasses for the wolf. Jack and the Beanstalk A green bandana for Jack, a Viking helmet for the cow, large shoes for the giant Puss and Boots A feather (in his hat) for Puss, a crown for the king, and the shoes again for the ogre. Keep it simple and use the stuff you have. The magic that kids find in playing dress-up, will be stronger (and easier) than anything you try to make.

Prop in a Bag

Using a pillowcase or bag, place everyday items and toys into the bag. Try to find items that have unusual shapes and are very diverse from each other. The children sit in a circle on the floor. One person reaches into the bag and without looking pulls out an object. Now, the child must create something totally different from what it really is but fits it's shape and size. For example, he might reach in and pull out a deck of cards, which he explains is a cell phone and demonstrates how to use it. Or maybe he selects a book, which in turn is his pet bird using the pages for wings. the child returns the item to the bag and the game continues on in the same manner. If another child selects the same item, they have to come up with something different from the original player. Children that are shy or analytical

sometimes take time to warm up to the creativity of the game. Tell them, it's okay and we'll wait for them to think of something. Remind them that since it is coming from their imagination, it can't be wrong.

### Duck, Duck, Animal

This is a take off of Duck, Duck, Goose without the chasing. The children sit in a circle on the floor. One child goes around the outside of the circle gently tapping the sitting children's head saying "duck" with each one, then instead of selecting a child to be a goose, he says a different type of animal, like "elephant". The child that was tapped an elephant gets up and goes around the circle pretending to be an elephant and the child that chose him sits in his spot. Once the selected child has went around the circle as an elephant he then becomes the next one to choose a different animal and begins the same process of saying "duck" and tapping heads until he comes to the person he would like to be a different animal and says that animal, like "penguin", and that child then becomes and penguin and the game continues on in this way.

### Change One Thing

Divide your students up into two lines of equal number facing each other. The persons directly across from each other are partners. They quietly study each other closely then one line turns around and hides their eyes. The other line changes one thing about them. They may take off one shoe or un-tuck their shirt or roll up a pant leg. After all have changed one thing the other line turns around and guesses what they changed. This game is all about being observant. After the changed item has been identified, the lines switch parts and continue to play.

### The Directing Game

In this game one child is the director and the others are the players. The players make a line behind a wall or down a hall where the director can't see them. Then the director calls out a character, like "fireman", and the first person in line crosses the room or stage as a fireman. Then the director calls out another character like "teacher" and the next child in line crosses as a teacher. Students may just have actions or can say lines, most of the time I find they like to say lines that they make up, which is usually very funny. The game continues until every one of the players has crossed the line. Then a new child is selected to be the director and the players mix up their line so the new director doesn't know who will be coming out first. Encourage your directors to think about all kinds of different characters