

## SETTING UP A DRAMATIC PLAY DRESS-UP AREA

Gather an assortment of items which children can use for dress-up play. Some suggestions are:

- \* Dresses and skirts -- no more than ankle length on children. Cut off and hem if necessary.
- \* Blouses and shirts -- short sleeve, front-button shirts are easiest for children to use.
- \* Belts and ties -- put away if children hit or tie each other up.
- \* Sturdy jewelry -- no pins or small items.
- \* Shoes -- no high heels.
- \* Aprons and scarves
- \* Purses and wallets
- \* Hats and gloves



Older children's clothing works well because it is large enough for young children to put on easily and small enough that it usually doesn't drag the floor. Ask friends and parents to donate items that you can use. Children's school uniform shirts are good because they are often blue, beige, or white which can represent uniforms of various types. Garage sales are also a good source of cheap, fun accessories. Wash in very hot water before use and as needed.

Put a few choice items in a plastic laundry basket to make it easy for children to select and return items. Do not allow children to sit in the laundry basket. A dress-up area usually works best if placed near the house keeping area. Putting it near the housekeeping area supports and enriches dramatic play activities. Each classroom for children 2 and up should have a dress-up area.

Before children lose interest in the area, vary what is available. Replace items when some are removed for laundering. Remove several and put in a few new items every few days.

The dress-up area can relate to themes that are a part of the curriculum. Here are some examples:

**Grocery Store**-- aprons, purses, wallets, empty containers of food, toy cash register.

**Firefighter**-- discarded vacuum cleaner hose or piece of water hose; man's or older child's blue shirt with FIRE DEPT written on it; plastic fire hats.

**Post Office**-- man's or older child's blue shirt with US MAIL written on it, large purse for mail pouch.