

Small world play

Playing with 'small world' toys supports children's language, imagination, early literacy and social and emotional development as they invent their own stories based on their own experiences. Whether it is toy cars, dinosaurs, people, dinosaurs, this open ended play can be extended by creating an exciting world for the play to take place, and as a way of starting to develop more complex play and story ideas.

This is best when it is multi-sensory, providing a variety of textures, smells, sights that stimulate children's brains in different ways. A good way of doing this is to include natural materials such as grass, twigs, pebbles, sand.

When supporting small world play as an adult, try to follow your child's lead, even if it seems repetitive. Comment on what is happening to add language to the play, 'ooh the car is going up' or 'the mummy's sleeping', but try not to direct the play yourself, or to ask too many questions about what is happening – better to guess: 'looks like the dinosaur is eating,' is often better than asking 'what is the dinosaur doing?' as this carries on the play, models language and doesn't interrupt the play by putting the child on the spot.

Weekly challenge #6: Create your own small world scene

On a tray or plate, choose a theme together and gather some simple resources from around the house and outdoors to create a scene for some of your toys to live in/go on an adventure in.

Go as simple or as elaborate as you want – see some [examples](#) for inspiration!

See the video posted on 22nd April on Linden Children's Centre facebook – (they are also posting lots of great activities there each week too! <https://www.facebook.com/Linden-Childrens-Centre-173465379363646/>)

Extras

Hackney-based charity EcoActive is sharing [weekly activity ideas](#) on other creative projects to make use of your recycling!

Also Hackney museum have some [activity ideas for under 5s](#) based on their collection.

Recipes – we will try to carry on sending regular tried and tested recipes that we usually like to do with children at nursery. See attached this week's offering 'Weetabix cakes'!

Other guidance and resources:

Latest Government advice and resources for parents of young children - The government published updated [guidance](#) for parents of young children during the lockdown

Also a reminder that the government '[Hungry Little Minds](#)' website has lots of learning ideas, arranged by age (0-6 months, 6-12 months etc).

Health and Wellbeing - Hackney Learning Trust has made available a resource bank of [resource bank](#) to support parent and practitioners mental health and wellbeing during these very difficult times. See also the Institute of Health Visiting's 'Parenting through Coronavirus' [resource bank](#) which provides a wealth of trusted information for parents around health and wellbeing.

Please also see the attached poster for seeking medical help for children during this time.