



Sticks & Stones Education

Presents

The Value of Small World Play

“It is in playing, and only in playing, that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.”

D.W. Winnicott

Children’s learning and development is holistic. It is difficult, near to impossible to separate some elements of learning from others. Small world play supports children’s learning and development holistically.

Small world play support’s children's personal, social and emotional development. Children can play in a small world context that supports them to make connections with other people, both real and imagined, as well as the world in which they are a part of. Children can experiment in imaginary situations and explore their own emotions; how they feel about the situations, people and living creatures in the world around them.

Small worlds can be designed specifically to promote and support children’s active exploration of their interests. Examples of these could be fairies, dinosaurs, or animals. Through interest based learning, children are more likely to be engaged in play for extended periods of time. By giving children time to be actively engaged in play, you are giving them multiple opportunities to extend their own learning. This engagement also supports children’s developing *concentration skills*.

Children may create their stories while they engaged in solitary play. When engaged with peers, through collaboration they develop stories together. This will give children opportunities to develop their social skills, their active listening skills as well as verbal communication skills. Children can also explore complex social concepts such as negotiation and the sharing of ideas.

Small world play is an avenue to support *creative play*. Children can design the scenes where they then use their imaginations. Children can re-enact familiar stories or combine stories with new plot twists. Creative thinking links strongly to *literacy and communication*. Through the design, placement and manipulation of the small parts, children are also refining their hand-eye coordination and fine motor muscle skills.

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