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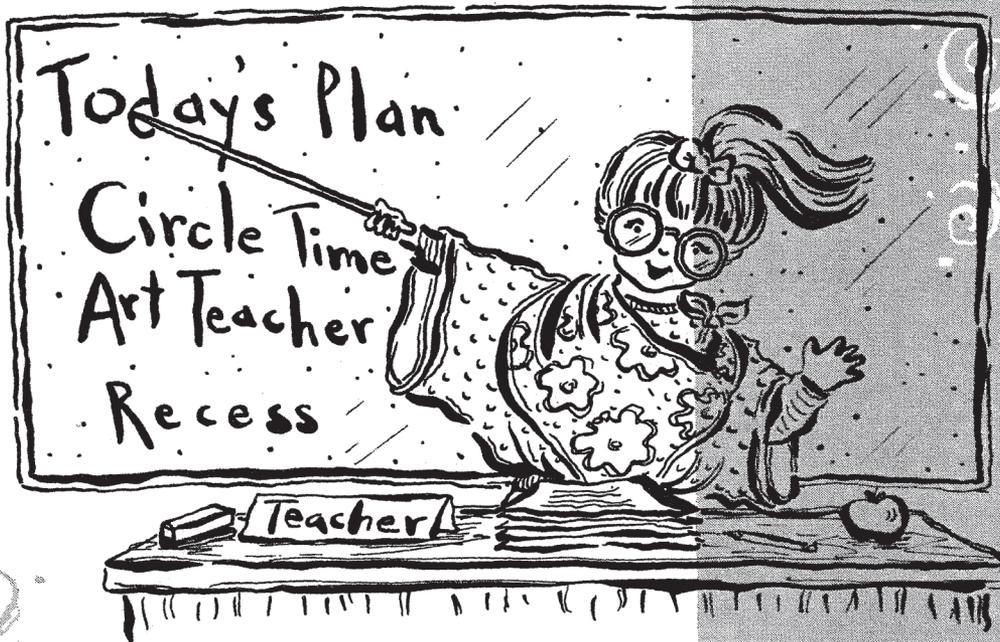
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# Just Pretend!

Creating Dramatic Play Centers with Young Children



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Illustrated by

**Cyd Moore**

 GOOD YEAR BOOKS



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# Just Pretend!



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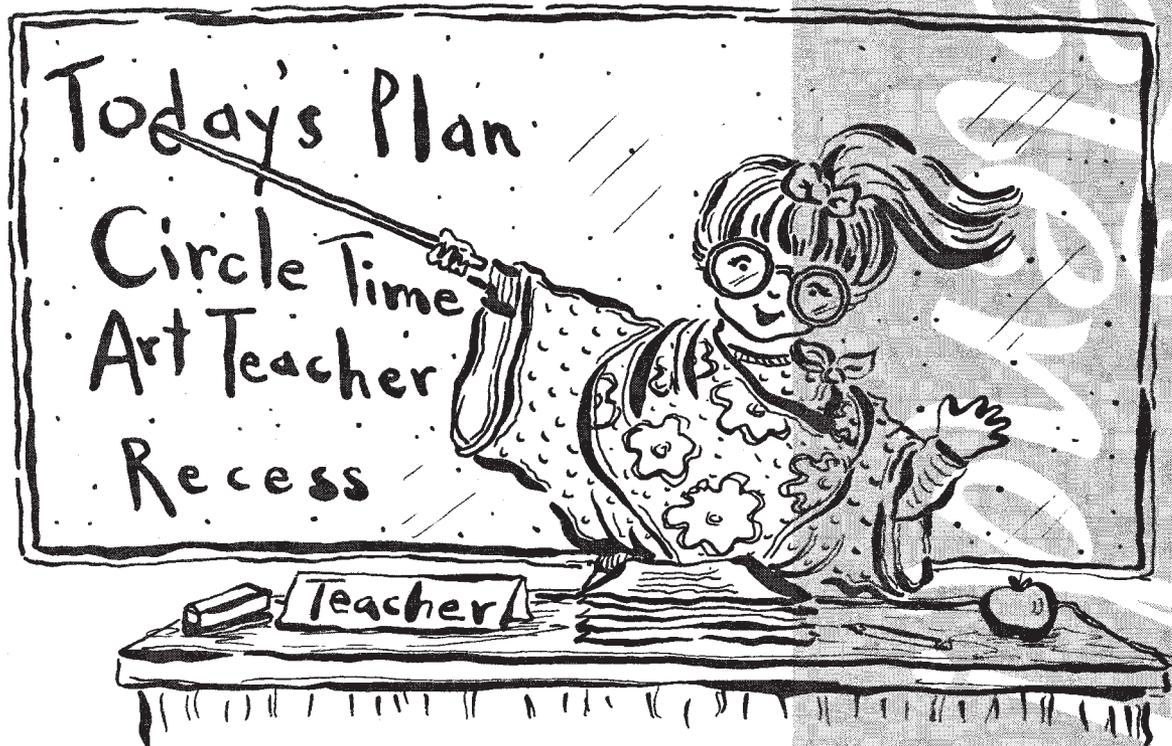
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# Let's Play School

*It's fun to not be yourself! That's why it's fun to play school. When playing school, a child can become a nurturing caretaker, a test-corrector, a powerful command-giver, or a mischief-making learner. Observe children's play carefully. You may see a bit of yourself.*



Just Pretend

## Model Language

School play reflects the important role of school in the child's life. Kindergartners demonstrate how much they enjoy school as they assume various roles, imitating the behaviors and language of their new friends and teachers. As they grow, children's impressions of their classrooms and their own identities are revealed in their play. Children reveal their cognitive and language skills as they investigate, experiment, and initiate activities in play. Children will naturally imitate the language, vocabulary, tone of voice, and volume that you use in the classroom. Watching as they play the role of teacher can be a humbling experience. Each time a teacher speaks, he/she is providing a language model for children.

## Related Vocabulary & Concepts

*desk, library, chart, records, sharing, cooperation, pupil, student, homework, chalk, chalkboard, eraser, stapler*

- Use topically related books, such as those in the list that follows, in introducing the center and during its use. Book-related activities should include reading aloud to children and opportunities for them to explore the books on their own.
- Designate a special area of the room where children can play school, such as a corner where a chalkboard is available.
- If appropriate, allow children to set up a pretend classroom outdoors.
- Demonstrate how to make environmental signs and labels, such as *teacher's desk* or *library*, and directional signs such as *Turn in your milk money today*.
- Provide maps, posters, or alphabet charts for display.
- Use a table as the teacher's desk.
- Provide adultlike materials that will foster literacy activities, such as chalk and chalkboard, erasers, staplers, pens, unused activity book worksheets, and books for record keeping.
- Provide book sets with records or tapes that can be used independently by children.
- Provide Blackline Master 1, *Student Record*. Talk together about why teachers keep records and how they can be used to help children. Encourage children to use the play records to practice their writing, even if it is only pretend.

## School Room Equipment & Materials

table for teacher's desk	plant	2 or 3 student desks and chairs
wastebasket	posters for display	chalkboard, bulletin board
pencil sharpener	cardboard boxes for books	activity worksheets

## Literacy Materials

chalkboard, bulletin board	posters	maps
writing materials, paper	notebooks	books, tapes, records
chalk, erasers	alphabet cards	individual chalkboards
stapler	Blackline Master 1, <i>Student Record</i>	

# B O O K S

# T O R E A D

- Duke, Kate. *The Guinea Pig ABC*. New York: Dutton, 1983. Adorable guinea pigs pose and interact with alphabet letters. (Preschool-1)
- Goemmel, Heidi. *Colors*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1990. A girl finds all the colors of the rainbow in familiar objects. (Preschool-1)
- Hennessy, B. G. *School Days*. New York: Viking, 1990. A simple, rhyming text tells about events at school. (Preschool-1)
- Johnson, Dolores. *What Will Mommy Do When I'm at School?* New York: Macmillan, 1990. An African-American girl worries about her mother as she prepares for her first day at school. (Preschool-K)
- Jonas, Ann. *Color Dance*. New York: Greenwillow, 1989. Colorful dancers show what happens when colors are mixed. (Preschool-2)
- MacDonald, Suse. *Alphabatics*. New York: Macmillan, 1986. Alphabet letters change shape and form and become objects that reinforce initial sound/letter relationships. (Preschool+)
- Maestro, Betsy and Giulio. *Harriet Reads Signs and More Signs: A Word Concept Book*. New York: Crown, 1986. Harriet reads environmental signs as she takes a walk to Grandma's. (Preschool-1)
- Martin, Bill Jr., and Archambault, John. *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*. Ill. by Lois Ehlert. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989. An exciting ABC with bright designs and text, inviting participation. (Gr. 2-6)
- McMillan, Bruce. *Time to . . .* New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1989. A photographic journal of a kindergartner's day that teaches the concept of time. (Preschool-2)
- Schwartz, Amy. *Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner*. New York: Orchard Books, 1988. Annabelle's big sister has prepared her well for the first day of school. (Preschool-2)
- Thompson, Carol. *Time*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1989. A bear has a busy day at school. (Preschool-K)



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# Blackline Master 1

## Student Record

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name	Knows Alphabet	Date
Need to talk to parent		

Notes

# Play Super Heroes and Heroines

*Children who are developing self-concepts and discovering the real world through their five senses often choose to engage in super hero play. Favorite super hero characters change with the times, but the reasons for young children's affection for this type of drama remain constant. Super heroes represent strength and have the potential for making powerful changes in the world. They can do what children would like to be able to do. They are protectors of the weak and doers of good. Children see these fantasy figures as positive role models.*



## Model Language

Invite children to talk about their favorite super heroes. Ask them to share how they know about these heroes—through television, movies, books, cartoons, and so on. Have children describe what these characters do and have them describe how they look. (Help children visualize what their heroes look like by describing your favorite hero.) Encourage children to talk about the good things that super heroes do for others or what super powers they would like their heroes to have.

## Related Vocabulary & Concepts

*cape, costume, power, strong, space, fly, good deeds, helping, super, protect, make-believe, magic*

- Establish a space in the room where super hero drama may be enacted.
- If dress-up props are provided, make the rule that only those children dressed in the props can be involved in the play. (Teachers always have the option of keeping super heroes from entering the classroom.)
- Create the concept that super heroes can only do good things in the classroom. They do not create destruction.
- If play becomes rough or is too consuming, direct children to other activities and give the players a rest.
- Provide maps for heroes to read and paper and pencils for players to create their own maps.
- Provide Blackline Master 2, *Heroes' Secret Message Form* and *Super Hero List*. Talk together about why people use codes and why secrecy is sometimes important. Encourage children to share their codes, explain their maps, and tell others about what they have included on their Super Hero lists. (Note: The children's actual writing on these forms can be real or "pretend.")

## Super Heroes Play Equipment & Materials

capas  
flashlights  
gloves  
blocks or small empty boxes for mountains  
magic power belts or headbands (aluminum foil covered)

## Literacy Materials

maps  
paper and pencils for secret messages and map making  
super hero name signs  
books or magazines for reading instructions  
paper for writing secret codes  
*Blackline Master 2, Heroes' Secret Message Form, Super Hero List*

# B O O K S

# T O R E A D

- Bond, Felicia. *Poinsettia and the Firefighters*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984. Poinsettia pig has difficulty adjusting to her own room upstairs as she deals with strange sounds and noises. The alert pig saves the day by calling the fire department. (Preschool-3)
- Brown, Marc. *Arthur's Nose*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1986. By the end of this story, Arthur has learned to like his nose. (Preschool-3)
- Brown, Marc and Brown, Laurene Krasny. *The Bionic Bunny Show*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1985. An ordinary bunny plays a super hero on a television show. Readers will delight in the problems he has maintaining his image. (Preschool-3)
- Carlson, Nancy. *I Like Me!* New York: Viking Kestrel, 1988. Louanne Pig discovers her unique attributes. Readers will think about their own uniqueness. (Preschool-1)
- Dale, Penny. *Bet You Can't*. New York: Lippincott, 1988. A brother and sister cooperate in cleaning up their rooms. Even super heroes have to clean up. (Preschool-1)
- Johnson, Angela. *Do Like Kyla*. Ill. by James E. Ransome. New York: Orchard Books, 1990. A young girl tries to imitate her big sister's actions until she discovers she can do things, too. (Preschool-2)
- Jonas, Ann. *Round Trip*. New York: Greenwillow, 1983. Readers will use their imaginations as they travel through this visually exciting book of images. A great book for partners to read together. (Kindergarten-3)
- McPhail, David. *Lost!* Boston: Little, Brown, 1990. A fantasy about a boy who helps a lost bear find its way home to the woods. (Preschool-3)
- Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963, 1988. The classic tale of a boy who travels to an island where wild things live. (Preschool+)



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# Blackline Master 2

## Heroes' Secret Message Form

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Secret Code \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Draw your own  
adventure map.



## Super Hero List

Things I need for my trip

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Good things I have done

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

People I will help today

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_