



Facilitating Guided Play for DLLs

Early childhood educators support play by setting up the learning environment, gathering play materials, and including play in their daily schedule. They observe DLLs while they play to determine what interests them and to learn about their individual variations in learning. They also act as a resource and interact with children when needed. DLLs benefit from educators who know when to join children at play

and when to remain outside their play activity. If adults interrupt children's play, the flow of play may be influenced and children may change it to please others. When DLLs encounter challenging play opportunities, the educator should provide scaffolding by asking the right questions or providing the needed resources to guide children's outcomes.

Strategies to Guide Play of DLLs

In this section, we provide three strategies that provide support and guide children's play (Salinas-González, Arreguín-Anderson, & Alanís 2019).

1. **Spark conversations during play through verbal mapping.** Describe to children what they are doing or the objects they are playing with in meaningful contexts. As discussed in Chapter 3, representational language includes labels for objects and actions that are at the center of children's attention.
2. **Provide new props to extend children's play in three phases.** Educators have a critical role in organizing their environment to maximize everyone's participation in play. Equip the play areas (e.g., math, dramatic play, construction) with objects, props, and literacy materials in gradual phases to build on their knowledge and extend their play interest. Figure 5.1 reflects each phase during a flea market play theme.
3. **Create a print-rich play environment.** Include functional labels, pictures, books, and other materials reflective of children's culture and language. This will encourage DLLs to be involved in emergent literacy activities while they play.

Building with Familial Boxes

- › Encourage families to donate a variety of hollow boxes (e.g., food, storage, shoes) for children to explore in the construction center.
- › As children explore the boxes, narrate their actions by saying things like "You are placing all the bigger boxes on the bottom," or "I see you have used five boxes for your creation."

Imagining with Pashminas or Towels

- › Provide a variety of *rebozos* (shawls) or pashminas in the dramatic play center for children to engage in open-ended, culturally relevant, and imaginative roles. Towels work great too!
- › Depending on their experiences, children may use the *rebozos* as a dress or to carry babies on their back. You may even see superheroes or *luchadores* (wrestlers) wearing their *rebozos* as capes.