**Imaginary Play**

Why encourage imaginary play: 1. It’s fun. 2. It helps develop language skills, including thinking of ideas and organising them, developing vocabulary and expressing ideas. 3. It develops confidence. 4. Children can act out worries or work out and rehearse ways of dealing with things. 5. It develops thinking skills. 6. It develops social skills. 7. It’s fun! “Research has shown that children who are active in imaginary play are usually happier, more cooperative, better able to share and take turns, and have bigger vocabularies.”

What do I need? Nothing, apart from the time and willingness to join in your child’s story.

Remember you are trying to encourage your child to use their imagination; shop bought dressing up clothes are nice but can restrict your child to one idea. A Harry Potter costume will turn your child into Harry Potter, a black piece of material might turn them into a wizard or witch, batman, a spider, a robot etc.

A few props can help to encourage ideas:

Dressing up clothes such as old hats, bags, beads, scarves, old mobiles

A large cardboard box can become a house, car, Tardis, rocket, shop, aeroplane, fort …..

Smaller boxes could be turned into miniature worlds such as farms, houses, castles etc.

An old sheet or blanket can be a den, cave, spaceship etc.

A few plates and old food boxes can become a kitchen, café or shop.