

Types of Drama

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Outline: Types of Drama

- Conventional Theatre
 - Conventional theatre by the pupils
 - Conventional theatre by other drama groups
- Participatory Drama
 - Finger Play
 - Dramatic games
 - Story drama
 - Puppets
 - Role Play
- Dramatic Play
 - Symbolic Play
 - Dramatic Play Centre

Conventional Theatre: the activity or job of writing, performing or organizing performances of plays. The plays are performed usually on a stage for an audience.

- An activity or job: It is carried by a pool of talents to achieve an aim
- Performing: Live.
- Organizing: Requires planning, rehearsals and collaboration.
- Stage: a platform or space for the performance.
- Audience: a group of spectators who watch the performance.

***Note: By conventional here, we mean "typical." Theatre means more than this definition. But when it is mentioned, non professionals immediately think of it in the sense it is defined above.

Conventional Theatre by children: a dramatic performance put together by children with the guide of a teacher or/and theatre specialist(s) in a typical sense of the theatre as defined, above to achieve educational goals.

- It Could be for a school audience.
- It Could be taken out of school to another school(s), to communities for outreach or some audience other than school audience.
- **Example:**
 - The Lion and the Mouse play story dramatized in the last class
 - Crown Basic Academy's children day presentation where students developed a drama based on their own experience and staged for parents and teachers.

- Uses in Early Childhood Education
 - uses entertainment and humor to attract children's attention
 - Emphasizes learning through the interplay between actual and fictional contexts .
 - Helps children learn planning and organizational skills
 - Team work is learnt.
 - Helps to discover children's latent ability, either dramatic or in any other fields of Endeavour.
- Role of the teacher
 - Serves as guide
 - Collaborates with external specialists
 - Contextualizes the drama to suit educational purpose and curriculum
 - Follows up the performance either in class or enhancing interactive sessions between children and the cast and crew of the play performed.

Conventional Theatre by Other Drama Groups is a performance of play or any other form of performance arts put together by professional troupes or theatres for children.

- It may be performed in schools e.g.
 - My (Akolo's) experiences as an actor on tour to schools.
 - Children may be taken out for excursion e.g
 - Students who come on excursion to watch the Jos Repertory Festival of Theatre.
- ***Note: plays for children should not take too long so they don't lose concentration.

- Uses in Early Childhood
 - Helps in exposure the children.
 - Social skills are enhanced.
 - Dramatic skills are enhanced in children.
- Role of teacher
 - Chooses the theatre or group and liaises with it.
 - Scrutinizes the content of play in terms of language and action to suit the children.
 - Conducts follow up discussions.

Participatory Drama: Finger Play

- **Definition:** Nursery rhyme with coordinated hand movements to help "act" the rhyme out
- **Example:** Itsy Bitsy Spider
- **Uses in Early Childhood Education**
 - Teach language
 - Fine motor skills
 - Time filler
 - Re-focus children's attention on the lesson
- **Teacher's Role:** Lead and model the Finger Play
- ***NOTE:** A similar dramatic teaching strategy involves children acting out songs using larger movements (e.g., *Lord I lift your name on high*)

Participatory Drama: Dramatic Games

- **Definition:** A physical activity where children use their imagination to become something different
- **Example:** Octopus
- **Uses in Early Childhood Education**
 - Fun physical exercise during break time
 - Practice their social and emotional skills
- **Teacher's Role**
 - Explain the rules of the game
 - Referee the game to ensure children follow the rules
 - Demonstrate when needed

Participatory Drama: Story Drama

- **Definition:** Children use their imagination to act out a story. There are two types of story drama, including:
 - **During:** Children perform certain actions during the story
 - **After:** Children dramatize a story after it has been read/told in class
- **Example:** *Going on a Bear Hunt*
- **Uses in Early Childhood Education**
 - Improve English language skills
 - Improve comprehension (understanding)

Participatory Drama: Story Drama

- **Teacher's Role**
 - **Story Drama During Reading**
 - Introduce the Story
 - Teach children the actions before reading the story
 - Prompt children to do the actions when reading the story
 - **Story Drama After Reading**
 - Asking questions can help guide children as they plan the drama
 - Who are the characters in the story? Who will be each of the characters?
 - Where does the story take place (setting)? Is there anything we can do to decorate the classroom like that setting?
 - What happens at the beginning of the story? How can you act that out?

Participatory Drama: Puppets

- **Definition:** Moveable model of a character controlled by another person
- Puppets can be used in ECE by:
 - **Children's Puppet Drama:** Children dramatize through use of puppets
 - **Teacher's Puppet Drama:** Teacher illustrates a story or a key lesson through a puppet drama
 - **Conventional Puppets:** A puppet troupe presents a drama to the class
- Puppets can be:
 - Purchased commercially
 - Made by teacher/parent
 - Made by the children

Participatory Drama: Puppets

• Types of Puppets

- **Finger Puppets**
 - Trace finger on cloth, make the puppet, and sew/glue together
- **Hand Puppets**
 - Brown bags
 - Socks
- **Stick Puppets**
 - Draw the character on thick paper, paper plates, etc.
 - Attach the character to a Stick: Straw, Stick, Spoon, etc.



Participatory Drama: Puppets

• Uses in Early Childhood Education

- Teach a range of skills – social, emotional, health, religious, etc.
- Capture children's attention
- Help transition to a new activity
- Help a teacher read/tell a story
- Children's use of puppets improves physical skills

• Teacher's Role

- Provide puppets or material for making puppets
- Lead a puppet drama (teacher's puppet drama)
- Discuss children's puppet play

Participatory Drama: Role Play

• **Definition:** Children dramatize a specific situation by imagining they are in a specific role in a specific situation. It may include:

- Child being in a role they are not normally in (see a situation from another's perspective)
- Child being themselves in a situation they have never been in before

• **Uses in Early Childhood Education**

- Help children practice skills needed for certain situations
- Foster empathy with others
- Improves conflict management

Participatory Drama: Role Play

• **Teacher's Role**

- Describe the situation
- Assign children to roles (oftentimes assigning roles to a child that they may not normally take)
- Provide coaching during the role-play
- Discuss the role-play after
- Sometimes the role play (with either similar or different characters) can be completed again

Dramatic Play: Symbolic Play

- **Definition:** Use of an object, action, or idea to represent another object, action, or idea
 - Symbolic play can happen anywhere (classroom, outdoors, home, market, etc.) with any materials
- **Uses in Early Childhood Education**
 - Available during play time or at various learning centres
 - Promotes abstract thinking
- **Teacher's Role**
 - Collect materials for children to play with ("loose parts")
 - Suggest imaginative uses for objects
 - Model symbolic play
 - Discuss children's symbolic play

Dramatic Play: Symbolic Play

- **"Loose Parts":** Open-ended materials that can be used and manipulated in many ways
 - Rocks
 - Seeds, Leaves, and other Plant materials
 - Feathers
 - Bottle Caps
 - Beads
 - Buttons
 - Shells
 - Tin Cans (no sharp edges)
 - Small plastic containers
 - Cutlery
 - Clothes pins
 - Etc.

Dramatic Play: Dramatic Play Centre

- **Definition:** Small area in the classroom where children can take on different roles and act them out
- **Uses in Early Childhood Education**
 - Open-ended play time
 - Children who arrive early and stay late at school
 - Children who have completed their work
 - Promote all types of academic skills

Dramatic Play: Dramatic Play Centre

Dramatic Play Centre Materials

- Clothes
- Wrappers
- Accessories (e.g., jewelry, hats, wigs, sunglasses)
- Bags
- Mirror
- Household accessories (e.g., bouquets of flowers, pictures)
- Dolls and accessories (small pieces of fabric)

Dramatic Play Centre Theme Ideas

- Market
- Office
- Airplane
- Train
- Car Park
- Doctor's Office
- Food-is-Ready
- Village
- Fix-It Centre
- Farm
- Fishing
- Movie Set
- Outer Space
- Radio Station
- Voting Station
- Play Kitchen
- Play Living Room

Dramatic Play: Dramatic Play Centre

- **Teacher's Role**

- Determine the nature of the Dramatic Play Centre. Try to relate it to topics currently being covered in other subjects.
- Gather relevant materials and organize them well in the Dramatic Play Centre
- Introduce the Dramatic Play Centre to the children. Discuss the setting (what else children could make to add to the centre), characters, and plot.
- During play time, visit the children in the Dramatic Play Centre. Ask questions to:
 - Guide their play to more in-depth themes
 - Have children describe their play (fosters oral language)
 - Understand how to best join in the play
- Model dramatic play
- Rotate materials and/or themes every few weeks