

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Activity: Picnic in the park

Role play, where children take on distinct roles they have observed, is a way for children to copy social experiences and reenact lived experiences.

It helps them to learn about themselves and the world around them, helping to make sense of it, while exploring and preparing for real life events.

This activity facilitates children's role play with families, babies, food and trips enabling them to act out familiar roles and transport items.



Learning aims

- Social and emotional development – interactions, social skills, empathy
- Communication and language – creating narratives, engaging in conversations
- Cognition and learning – explore new ideas, take risks
- Physical development
- Well-being.

Resources

- Range of food, plates, cutlery etc. (in addition to home corner resources)
- Dolls and associated resources, e.g. bottles, nappies
- Variety of bags including picnic bags and baby changing bags
- Picnic blankets.

Activity outline

1. Engage the children with the idea of going on a picnic, finding out their different experiences including who went, where they went, how they got there and what happened once they arrived
2. Encourage the children to identify roles to play, such as parents, siblings, cousins etc. and help them to plan their picnic together

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3. As children choose from the range of resources to take on the picnic, encourage them to articulate what they are taking and why to support their thinking and planning skills
4. When they are satisfied with the resources they are taking, find out where the picnic will be and how the children are going to get there. Perhaps the dad is going to drive the car, perhaps mum has the tickets for the train or maybe they are walking to the local park. Whatever the children decide, encourage them to take on the role of the character by using different voices or saying typical phrases to get everyone organised, which they may have heard in their family
5. Be a playful partner alongside the children to maintain focus and encourage role playing, such as identifying a problem (the car has broken down), adding new information ("Auntie wants to come along, is there room for her?") or reaching the destination
6. Once the family group have arrived at their picnic site, support the children to play their roles in getting the picnic set up such as laying out the blanket, passing round the food and keeping baby entertained with a toy
7. At the end of the picnic, remind the children that they need to go back home so that all the resources are returned ready for another adventure
8. The children will enjoy packing and transporting the resources so be sure to enable them to use a variety of different areas in the indoor and outdoor provision as their picnic places.

Extension ideas:

- Introduce travel and transport related resources including opportunities for children to role play being a bus or train driver.

NDNA products to support you with this activity

- [Continuous Provision](#) – online course
- [Understand the Value of Play in the Early Years](#) – online course
- [Your Essential Guide to Working with Children Under Three](#) - publication