

Making Dreams Come True and Learning Too



As each New Year starts we are typically drawn to setting goals for our future and looking for ways to turn our dreams into reality. The celebration of a new beginning can be a fantastic way to encourage children to use their imaginations and look to what the future can hold for them, particularly in relation to their career path.

Through activities designed to encourage children to think about who they are now and who they would like to be in the future, they are able to develop a strong sense of identity, interact with the world around them, and learn the importance of contributing to their community. These outcomes link back to the Early Years Learning Framework's key pillars of Being and Becoming.

Being – “If you want to be a mermaid you can imagine” – Jazmine

Becoming – “When you keep planting plants you become a gardener” – Olivia

It is important for young minds to be exposed to all the wonderful opportunities available to them, and encouraged to look at which roles they favour based on their interests and talents, rather than perceived expectations (Professor Rachel Gali Cinamon of Tel Aviv University). This can be achieved through storytelling, inviting emergency services professionals to childcare centres to talk about their roles, or taking children on excursions to local businesses or farms.

With the knowledge of what is out there, children can begin to think about which jobs appeal to them and why, and use their sense of imagination to put themselves in the role. Children can engage in activities such as drawing or painting a picture of their dream job, or creating costumes to represent what they would like to be. The use of role play is also extremely beneficial, allowing children to explore different aspects of identity, communicate with others and connect with and contribute to their world.

Participation in these activities allows children to achieve a range of learning outcomes outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework, including:

- Children Have a Strong Sense of Identity – Explore aspects of identity through role play, and Explore different identities and points of view in dramatic play
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children are Confident and Involved Learners – Use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas
- Children are effective communicators

Even from an early age, exploring future opportunities through play based learning encourages children to be more confident in who they are and what they want, and to work toward their goals.

As well as welcoming 2015, this month we celebrate Make Your Dreams Come True Day on the 13th of January to recognise what we can accomplish when we dream big, work hard and use a little imagination.