



Post Office Play Day

Give children a dramatic play opportunity and explore communicating through letter writing.

START

- The goal of this activity is to give children a dramatic play opportunity where they can explore the world of the post office: letter writing, posting, delivering, and receiving.
- Set up the table with the letter-writing materials.
- Set up a separate area with the mailbox, so the children have to travel to pick up and deposit the letters. The recycled junk mail can go into the mailbox for more props if needed.
- Introduce this activity by asking Who likes to get letters? Do you know how they get to your house? Who would like to play Post Office? We can write lots of letters and deliver them!

NEXT STEPS

- Suggest that the children sit at the table and “write letters.” This can consist of many levels of mark making, from crayon scribble drawing to actually writing out letters. Whatever the level is, make sure the children are supported for their efforts by saying things like the following: Wow, you made so many interesting shapes, who are you writing to? Tell me about your letter! Nice writing!
- Talk with the children about what goes on the envelope: address, return address, and stamp, and remind them to put the letter in. Getting the letter to fit can be a challenge, sometimes requiring folding and refolding—another great fine-motor activity.
- Ask if anyone is ready to go to the post office and drop the letter into the mailbox. Next, see who wants to be the mail carrier to pick up the mail and deliver it.
- Once the stage is set, allow the children to play. You can intervene if there are problems sharing or taking turns, or if the children seem unsure about what to do with the props. You can also model the activity by writing a letter, asking if the mail carrier could pick it up, and then waiting for a reply. You can even suggest that one of the children reply to your letter.

MATERIALS

- * Letter-writing materials: pencils, crayons, and markers; recycled paper, greeting cards, and envelopes; stickers for stamps
- * 2–5 mailbags (can be cloth shopping bags or homemade paper bags)
- * Mailbox (can be a cardboard carton with a hole cut into it for dropping mail in)
- * Recycled junk mail

Learning Guideline:
English Language Arts:
Use emergent writing skills to make letters in many settings and for many purposes.

Tip Sheets:
Imagine, Write

(continued on side 2)



(continued from side 1)

FINISH UP

- Make sure each of the children had an opportunity to be the mail carrier, or use any of the props that they wanted to.
- Ask the children if they enjoyed “writing” their letters. Have them talk about who they wrote to and who they heard from.
- Have the children help clean up the materials and put all of the extra mail into the mailbox.

EXPAND YOUR ACTIVITY

- Find a large carton that the children can decorate and use for a mail truck. One child can “drive” while another delivers and picks up mail.
- As a group activity, the children can take the junk mail and practice writing each other’s names on it, and their own for the return address. Then they can post it in the box and have the mail carrier pull it out and deliver it to the children.

TAKE IT HOME

- Children can create a mail-sorting shelf by lining up shoe boxes or 8½ x 11” envelopes with letters of the alphabet written on them. They can then sort the mail alphabetically or by some other grouping that they choose. Younger children can sort by color. Envelopes can be colored yellow, blue, red, or green.
- Visit your local post office and talk with your child about all that you see. Introduce your mail carrier to your child someday as he or she comes to your neighborhood. Does your child have any questions to ask? You can talk with your child about all the different kinds of things a mail carrier does during a day, as well as all of the interesting people and animals the mail carrier might see!

BOOKS

- *My Mother the Mail Carrier/ Mi mamá la cartera* by Inez Maury
- *Wipe Clean Early Learning Activity Book* by Roger Priddy
- *Cat Can’t Write: A Cat and Dog Story (Learn to Write Readers)* by Rozanne Lanczak Williams

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