



CREATIVE DRAMATICS PLAYTIME

Sharla Feldscher, founding sponsor

What is PTM's Creative Dramatics Playtime?

Our Creative Dramatics Playtime is a chance for children to engage in facilitated dramatic and imaginary play. Programs and activities focus on movement, pretending, stories, and games. Although there is a leader for the program, it is not a show but rather an opportunity for kids and adults to pretend and play together.

What is the difference between Creative Dramatics and Mainstage Theater Shows at PTM?

With PTM Mainstage shows, visitors watch a performer onstage and participate in the show from the audience. Although CD Playtimes are facilitated by theater staff, they are not performances. CD Playtimes also occur in an informal setting on the gallery floor. Playtime activities focus on exploring space, emotion, movement, and character rather than on one specific scripted story or play.

Why does PTM use Creative Dramatics?

Creative Drama interactions complement varied learning styles and support PTM's mission of learning through play. All interactions are open-ended and encourage imagination, physical movement, improvisation, creativity, and cooperation.

What is the format for the CD Playtime?

We have a variety of programs with activities reflecting a theme or subject; however, all CD Playtimes are loosely structured and may morph into general open-ended movement games, imaginary play scenarios, interactive story times, or other activities. Playtimes usually last 45-60 minutes with visitors welcome to come and go as they wish.

When do CD Playtimes occur?

The CD Playtimes are usually scheduled Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon. As with all PTM programming, the CD playtime schedule is subject to change due to staffing and theater show scheduling.

Young children are very imaginative and physically active. Creative Dramatics Playtime activities support natural play sequences and focus on the basic building blocks of drama including:

- Action/Movement/Pantomime
- Sensory Exploration
- Emotional Awareness/Empathy
- Stories/Storytelling
- Dramatic Play/Improvisation
- Character Exploration/Role Playing
- Interaction/Cooperation
- Puppets/Props/Costumes/Masks

Here are some simple CD games you can play with your child or class.

Cookie Charades

One at a time, players pick out an animal cracker, eat it, and pretend to be that animal for one minute. Variations:

- Players keep their cracker hidden, and other players guess the animal acted out.
- Players eat the crackers simultaneously and pretend to be animals together in a zoo.

Letter Play

Select several magnetic plastic letters or alphabet blocks and put them into a bag. Players pick out a letter and make their bodies into each letter shape. Start with simple letters first, and advance to more complicated letters. For older kids, challenge them to make the letters with a partner, use their hands to make letters, or spell simple words. Another fun game is for players to act out a motion or pretend to use an object starting with a specific letter. For example, **T: Touch toes**, swing a tennis racquet, crawl around and growl like a **tiger**. Older kids might also enjoy the “Super Silly Sentence” game where each (main) word in the sentence must begin with the same letter: “Sally sewed seven silk stockings somewhere south” or “Hamsters hate hot hamburgers”. Once kids have created several silly sentences, act them out for lots of laughs!

No Peeking!

Ask your child to close her eyes (or use a loose, soft, comfortable blindfold). Give your child items to identify using different senses. For example, hand her small toys to identify with her hands and sense of touch, or make different sounds and see if she can guess what they are: knocking on a table, shaking a box of rice or cereal, jingling keys, etc. Try flowers, teas, soap, or foods for scent identification. (Taste experiments can be fun, too, but are not always successful with picky preschool eaters!)

What If?

Start with a familiar story or fairytale. Foster a discussion about the story and ask open-ended questions about what may have happened before the beginning or after the end of the story. For example: “Where did Goldilocks go after she ran away from the three bears’ house?” Or, ask your child what would happen if a character landed in a different story: “Goldilocks ran through the woods and met Little Red Riding Hood. They walked together for a while until they saw Horton the Elephant. What do you think happened next?” Etc. Take turns adding to the narrative and act out the scenes together if desired. Ask your child to identify the emotions the characters might feel in certain situations and brainstorm together options for solving the problems they encounter. Making up stories together from scratch with your child as the main character is also a great way to play this game.