

PLAYING RESTAURANT

Instruction Card

One of the core emotional needs that all children have is their need for spontaneity and play.¹

Free play is fundamentally important for children's optimal development as it allows them to explore, express themselves and develop a sense of adventure while emphasizing the value of having fun, rather than taking everything seriously.

There are different types of free play and each one is valuable in its own way.

Think, for example, how much fun can be had goofing around with friends in a swimming pool, climbing a tree, or playing on a playground.

However, researchers say pretend play holds special benefits because it is imagination-driven.

When children pretend, they combine spontaneity with mental effort. This is a potent combination because it trains children to be adaptable mentally, as well as emotionally.

As a result, pretend play prepares children for life in two ways:

- **First**, pretend play develops a variety of practical school readiness skills that help lay a solid foundation for academic success,² and
- **Second**, it also helps children to grow into adults who are more resilient to stress and less vulnerable to developing mental illness because of their increased adaptability and sense of resourcefulness.

**According to therapists that specialize in schema therapy, children whose need for spontaneity and play isn't sufficiently met, are more vulnerable to developing into adults who are overly obsessive and rigid.³*

This month we're providing you with printed restaurant menus that are aimed at supporting pretend play.

One of the most popular imagination games amongst boys and girls alike is pretending to be customers, waiters or the chef at a restaurant.

To set the stage:

- Download the PDF file with menus and print the menu(s). (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)
- Laminate them or use plastic file pockets to protect them.
- Suggested props:
 - The printed menus
 - A whiteboard pen for checking off which food is being selected
 - Table(s) and chairs
 - Play food (or create your own food using drawings or playdough)
 - Plates, bowls, cutlery and napkins
 - Tablecloths and decorations (vases of flowers)
 - Chef hat and apron
 - Baking pans, pots and kitchen utensils
 - Cash register and phone
 - A tray for serving
 - A tub for carrying dirty dishes to the kitchen

Note:

Bear in mind that there is no right or wrong way to play imaginary games and you therefore don't need to include all the props on the list. When necessary, simply pretend. What's more, setting the stage is also part of the experience and the emphasis should be on having fun, improvising and coming up with plans and ideas.

References: 1. Ridner S, Schema Therapy: A framework for overcoming life traps. Published online: <https://www.cornerstoneofrecovery.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Schema-Therapy-Tri-Cities-1.pdf>. 2. Ginsburg K.R., et al. (2007). The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds. *Pediatrics*, Vol. 119(1), p. 182-191. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/119/1/182>. 3. Young J.E., Klosko J.S. & Weishaar M.E., (2003) *Schema Therapy: A Practitioner's Guide*. (Chapter 1) Available online: <https://www.guilford.com/excerpts/young.pdf?>

PLAYING RESTAURANT

Printable Menus for Pretend Play

BREAKFAST MENU

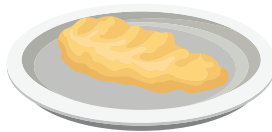
Cereal



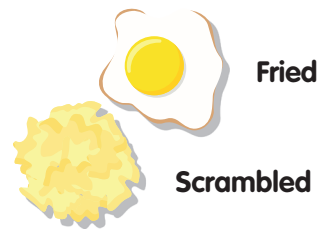
Yoghurt



Mealie pap



Egg



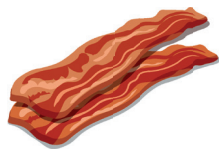
Boerewors



Banana



Bacon



Peach



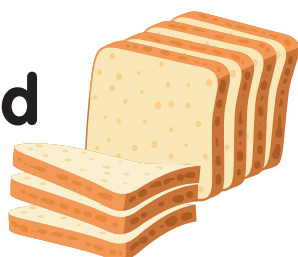
Baked Beans



Apple



Bread



Berries



PLAYING RESTAURANT

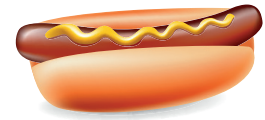
Printable Menus for Pretend Play

LUNCH MENU

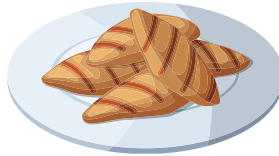
Salad



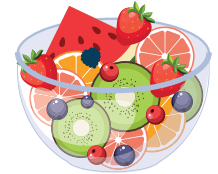
Boerewors roll



Chicken strips



Fruit bowl



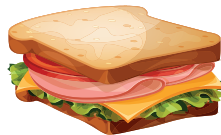
Hamburger



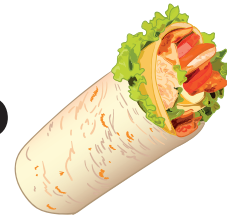
Soup



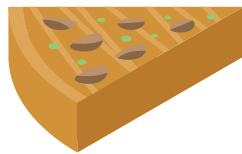
Sandwich



Wrap



Quiche



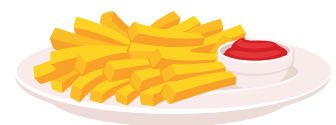
Samosas



Noodles



Chips



PLAYING RESTAURANT

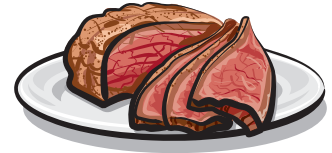
Printable Menus for Pretend Play

DINNER MENU

Roasted vegetables



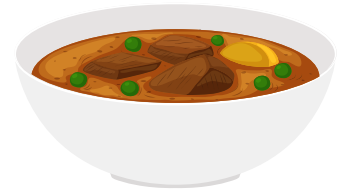
Meat



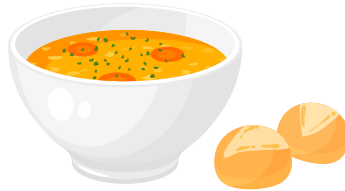
Rice



Stew



Soup



Fish



Curry



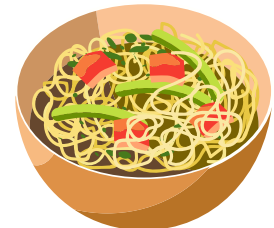
Roast chicken



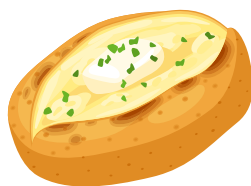
Lasagne



Stir-fry



Baked potato



Spaghetti Bolognese

