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What do we mean by drama in schools?

Drama in schools ideally includes:

- free and supervised periods for play
- drama lessons as part of the curriculum
- the use of drama to support learning in other subjects (learning in and across subjects)
- opportunities to create, perform and respond to improvised and rehearsed drama
- opportunities to create, perform and respond to professional theatre performances (including theatre visits to schools)
- participatory opportunities to work closely and creatively with actors and playwrights.

There is much confusion about what drama in schools should include. Drama should be seen by schools as much more than the performance of rehearsed plays or acting out stories in costume. It should also include opportunities for improvisation and learning in role regularly throughout the year and whole-class story arcs.

Some schools will include the provision of a specific play opportunities club, offering a range of roles as part of what they define as drama. To make drama in schools just about the performance of rehearsed plays would deprive many children of the rich experience of improvisation and play that can be offered through both learning in drama and learning through drama with professional practitioners.

Role play and prewriting is natural and essential to the all-round development of young children and a powerful educational opportunity is missed if children do not have an opportunity to