

Dressing Up Ideas for Educators

Dressing up is a popular way to encourage children (particularly reluctant readers) to engage with reading, to swap reading recommendations and to celebrate what children are reading at home.

Making Dressing Up Inclusive

- Celebrate the book choice – avoid rewarding best costume if children are bringing costumes from home.
- Just 3 items – invite children to create a character using 3 items from home or school.
- Host a school dressing up rail or costume swap.
- Provide options for children who prefer non-fiction – model how costumes could reflect favourite facts or be the author using costumes or props.
- Focus on the habit – invite children to come to school in the clothes they find comfiest to read in, or their pyjamas.

Dressing Up Alternatives

- Role on the wall – invite the children to draw round each other and invite them to modify the silhouette to create the outline of their character. You could just display these lifesize characters or invite children to create a profile by writing actions on the arms, feelings on the heart, ideas or thoughts on the head and key phrases in a speech bubble.
- Spend time thinking about how the children would like the classroom reading area to be organised – how can they share their recommendations? Make simple tools available such as labels, post it notes, notebooks for scrapbooks. Decide with the children what they want the atmosphere/ display to be like.

Whether they are wearing a badge or a full costume -try these fun games to encourage older children to swap their reading recommendations.

- **Create a quick-fire recommendation** by asking children to describe their books in two minutes, then swap partners and reduce the time by 30 seconds. Repeat until each child has a 30 second summary.
- **Hot Seating** – interview the child as their character or as the subject matter or author of a non-fiction book.
- **Human Library** – Prepare by creating 30 second summaries. Divide the children in half and create an inner and outer circle – children in the outer circle are borrowing from the 'library', the inner circle need to sell their book recommendation to the outer circle. After 30 seconds move the outer circle round 1 place. Repeat several times – ask children to choose the book they'd like to borrow then swap the circles.
- **World Book Day Party** – Create a party set-up (food table, dance floor, seating area) put some music on – invite your children to enter the party as their character or book. Where would they spend the party? Who would they talk to? Who might they avoid? You could support the children with introductions or asking questions. At various moments freeze the party and ask the children what they're doing and why.