Playthings to Stir Imagination

Costumes
Old jewelry, purses, shoes, jackets
Second hand store - uniforms, halloween costumes
Accessories - walkie talkies, badges, name pins, hats from any profession, medical scrubs, glasses, wigs, mustaches, beards, capes, tiaras, colorful toy weapons (* for safety reasons, just never buy a weapon that resembles a real one.)

Stuffed Animals
All shapes and sizes and types
Play school, wedding, “work,” train station, airport

Household (Safe) Tools
Pots, pans, whisks, wooden spoons, empty food/cereal boxes, calculators, type writers, measuring tape

Forms
Out of date checks, restaurant order pads, driving logs

Musical Instruments
Keyboards, shakers, tambourines, castanettes, kazooos, drums, guitars, or any music maker

Art Supplies
Multiple colored paper, paints, markers, crayons, pipe cleaners, buttons, scissors, glue sticks, stickers, glitter, old magazines to cut up, grains (corn, beans, pasta), yarn, leaves for tracing or rubbing

Building Blocks
Classic Legos, Connectagons, Magnatiles, Bristle blocks, Marble runs, Wooden blocks

“Worlds”
Train tracks, cars, houses, trees, roads, barns, animals, fences, stores, amusement parks, zoos, cities, ocean, habitats for animals

All these can be created from a mixture of toys and household supplies. Use picture books of places and spaces as references. For example, we used blue painter’s tape to create roads. We used construction paper and toilet paper rolls to create stores, houses and garages along the way. Another example is we created an ocean placing a large picture book out to reference. Kids gathered shells, plastic fish, bath toys, etc.

Tactiles
Sand, play dough, clay, rice, pasta, water in a basin, water with bubbles, (i.e. place tactile in a bin and hide objects in sand)

Discovery toys
Dinosaur digs, Snap circuits, nature exploration supplies - nets, binoculars, microscopes, magnifying glass, bug examination containers, science/chemistry kits

Puzzles
Age-appropriate size, number of pieces (challenging but not too challenging)
Older (8 years and up) - Rubix’s Cube

Picture and Nonfiction books
Can set the scene for play, establish characters or settings for play

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