

# Cleaning Up

## This is Not a Hat!

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**Time Needed:** 5-15 minutes

**Arts Focus:** Theatre

**Age Range:** 4-8

### Mini-Lesson Description:

In this lesson, learners will combine the daily task of cleaning with theater and play. This activity encourages learners to imagine that each item that needs to be put away is something different than what it is. This lesson is meant to bring creative thinking to routine and responsibility for picking up our messes.

### Key Concepts:

Creative Thinking; Pantomime; Imagination; Theatre; Clutter; Community; Collaboration; Shared Space.

### Materials Needed/Prep:

- A space where you play (bedroom, kitchen, porch, classroom...)
- A mess (toys on the floor, books off the shelf, dishes that need to be put away....)

### Step-by-Step:

1. Introduce the idea of taking care of shared space together: *"When our home is a mess, it can make it hard to find things or move around. We all live here together, so it helps if we work together to care for the space we share. It can make us feel calmer and more in control when we can find what we need and have room to move or do what we want to do. But we can clean up and also have fun!"*
2. Explain: *"We're going to imagine that all the stuff that needs to be put away is something other than what it really is."*
3. Pick up an object and pretend to use it as something else. For example: *"This is not a hat. This is a phone!"* Pantomime using the hat as a phone.
4. Hand the hat to the learner(s) so they can turn the hat into something different. For example: *"This is not a hat. This is a bowl of soup!"* Pantomime using the hat as a bowl of soup, then put the hat where it belongs.
5. Continue taking turns until everything has been put away!

### Variations and Next Steps:

- Instead of naming the pretend object, show what it is through pantomime and have the learner(s) guess.
- Create challenges. For example: no repeating imaginary objects or the imaginary object has to be something you'd use in a specific place or way (for example: the kitchen, outdoors).
- Add more details or tell a story about the imaginary object.