Small world is an important aspect of children’s play, aiding many areas of development. Imaginative skills are supported allowing the child to express thoughts and experiences into their play, whilst exploring the world in which they live. Small world also offers the opportunity for children to build on their language skills, expanding their vocabulary and their understanding. This type of play not only supports a range of areas for development, but also benefits the child’s independent play skills.

## Imagination

Children use their own experiences of the world to build on their imaginative skills. Small world play offers the opportunity for children to act out these experiences in a controlled way. Small world environments allow children to act out daily routines or past events such as putting a doll to bed or driving a car, however it also allows them to experiment with fantasy play and incorporate their own ideas

## Building Language Skills

Small world supports a breadth of language skills including building vocabulary and understanding. Children are able to learn new words and practise using them in context. Expressive language skills can be encouraged through a small world experience, allowing the child to narrate their play and talk about what is happening. Positional language will often be a factor in this type of play, as a child move the people in, on and under objects.

## Independent Play

## Small world play offers the opportunity for children to access independent play. They may play alongside other children but they tend to be engrossed in their own play. This is important in giving the child time alone to gather their thoughts and express their ideas without any input from others. Independent play is vital in gaining self confidence and awareness of a child’s self.

## Problem Solving Skills

Problem solving skills are key due to the nature of the play. Scenarios can often change and adapt, enabling the child to think of new ideas or ways to extend the play. Resources are a range of sizes and scales meaning a doll may not fit into a small world car. This can lead a child to display a range of emotions and use their problem solving skills to fix the problem and continue the play successfully.

## Cause and Effect

Children will often learn a great deal about cause and effect through small world as they have a great deal of control over the play. This allows them to experiment with different actions, leading them to understand different outcomes. This allows a safe environment for the children to practise cause and effect without great consequences.