

**Top Tip from our Speech and Language Therapy Partners:**

Use positioning words, for example in, on, under, over, beside, behind, in front when you

Are making and playing in the den. If you repeat these words often this will boost your

child’s understanding of them.

This is best:

Indoors or Outdoors

**“The fun is in the journey, not the end result!”**

**How this benefits your child:**

This is likely to involve moving things, lifting, going in and out and thinking about where to put things. These actions will involve multiple areas of your child's brain working together to make this a rich learning experience. They will also be using muscles and developing hand eye coordination and possibly fine motor skills (strength in the fingers and hands). In thinking and being creative your child is developing their attention skills. You may be able to identify other types of learning as well and perhaps a development in skills over time as the dens change and develop.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Make this simpler...*** Start by making a den inside using only furniture and fabric/sheets. Remember to encourage your child to still take the lead. Then you can add additional elements to your den.
* If your child is finding it difficult to think of ideas of how to build a den look at pictures and videos of dens to support your child’s thought process.
 | **Make this more challenging...*** Encourage your child to create signs for the den.
* Explore looking at homes for animals and create animal dens and bug houses.
 |

**Materials**

You may need:

* Old sheets, clothing or fabric you may have in the house.
* Chairs and other moveable furniture
* Tarpaulin
* Pegs, string, different types of rope
* Boxes
* Sticks, leaves and other found objects.

**Tips to support your child:**

You could start by asking your child what they think would be good things to make a den with. If they are not sure, you can help them get started and then perhaps they will come up with ideas of what to use. Try and have an open mind and let your child make suggestions, use these if you can even if this feels a bit strange, it will boost your child's confidence. You know your child better than anyone and will be able to judge how much support to give…watch carefully and give your child a bit of time and space to try out their ideas. Your child might want to revisit this experience the next day and maybe several times, they will be learning something new each time. Perhaps you can tell your child about making dens when you were wee?

**The basic idea:** Make a den using things you have around the garden or house. Sheets, clothes racks, pegs, boxes are all useful. You could start by making a small den for a teddy or toy using sticks and leaves and other bits and bobs you have and move on to a den big enough for your child.

Early Years Home Learning

**Movement and Coordination**
**Dens**