

DOLL'S HOUSE

The Doll's House is the most significant small world activity and should be available at all times. It represents a real house with a variety of rooms, including a bathroom. Careful consideration should be given to the location and positioning of this area in order to optimise its potential.

The figures and dolls used in the Doll's House should reflect the diverse society in which we live and represent different family structures, including extended family members, such as Grandparents.

Socially and emotionally, the area supports children to explore the different roles of people within families and communities.

The Doll's House affords children opportunities to control events, play out and make sense of their home experiences and the world around them. This enables them to work through and better understand feelings and emotions.

CURRICULAR & DEVELOPMENTAL

Health & Wellbeing

Children have the opportunity to take control of their play, to make decisions and exercise choice.

Through re-enacting and exploring 'real-life' experiences, children can better prepare for and understand significant life changes and events.

Manipulation of small resources and figures supports the development of fine-motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination.



Literacy

Through the naming of different rooms, pieces of furniture and discussion of their function and purpose, children can explore new vocabulary and develop their language skills.



Children can explore both real and imaginary situations through expressing the thoughts, feelings and emotions of others whilst playing in-role.

The Doll's House affords possibilities for children to develop understanding surrounding the rules of conversation, as they learn to take turns, listen and respond appropriately.

Maths & Numeracy

The development of maths skills such as sorting, matching, categorising and sequencing can be supported through collecting and organising the objects and furniture relevant to each room.

Arranging furniture and working out the capacity of space available in each room can help children to develop spatial reasoning. For example, the tall wardrobe might not fit in the attic space.

The Doll's House affords opportunities for the development and use of positional language, including the description of where rooms or objects are located. For instance, *"the bedroom is above the kitchen"* or *"grandad is sitting on the chair in front of the TV."*



Other

Through collaborative play, children can learn to share, care and play fairly, developing an understanding of the importance of taking responsibility and showing consideration for others.

Imaginative play in the Doll's House enables children to talk about and explore the different roles that people play in the daily lives of families and communities.



ROLE OF THE ADULT

The Doll's House can represent a window into a child's life and provide insights into their home experiences. Therefore, it's important that practitioners value the intimacy of this play and sensitively observe children, remaining aware of their questions and enquiries.

As an area, the Doll's House can sometimes be overlooked. Practitioners should regularly monitor, refresh and renew resources to ensure that children have the opportunity to enjoy high-quality provision. Remember, Doll's House furniture and objects should be in good condition and any broken items should be replaced.



ROOM STRUCTURE & LAYOUT

Ideally, the Doll's House should be near the Home Corner, preferably in a secluded area with adequate space where children can play without being interrupted. It should not be located in a busy, high-traffic area, or narrow walkway.

The Doll's House itself should be raised off the floor and positioned on a low table or unit that will allow easy access to all rooms.

Positioning the Doll's House near the Home Corner provides opportunities for children to mirror observed play. The area enables children to re-enact their own experiences on a smaller scale, supporting children who may find the busier Home Corner overwhelming, or who may prefer to engage in more solitary forms of play through which they can lead and control the narrative on their own terms.



This positioning takes into consideration children's developmental stage and can support the building of confidence in cooperative role-play and social interactions.

RESOURCE IDEAS

Various Dolls	Representative of different family structures and cultures
Bedroom Furniture	Bed, bedside table, duvet, pillow, cupboard, drawers
Kitchen Furniture	Cabinets, sink, cooker, fridge
Living Room	Sofas, armchairs, cabinets, lamps, TV
Dining Room	Table & chairs
Bathroom	Toilet, shower, bath, sink, cabinet
Books & Pictures	Illustrating different types of home and family life
Supplementary	Pets, garden items: artificial grass, swing
Storage/Basket	To store supplementary resources not currently in use

REFLECTION POINTS

- How often are observations made in the Doll's House area for a child's PLJ or for Daily Responsive Planning? Given the valuable insights into a child's life that this area can provide, practitioners should consider the significance of observations that can be recorded.
- A common question regarding the Doll's House is *"should it be set up for each session, or should items be left in the basket for children to set up themselves?"* Whilst there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer, it's worth considering the benefits of setting up the Doll's House. This can support children to play in the passing and express feelings and emotions. For example, picking up a doll to re-enact an argument observed at home. This re-enactment may have been lost if the child had to set up the house prior to play.
- Consider the number of people and the amount of furniture in the Doll's House. Are there enough beds for the people or are there too few/many? To what extent is the Doll's House over or under-resourced?