

HOME CORNER

The 'home' experience is something all children have in common that is relevant to their own lives and is inclusive of different backgrounds, cultures and family structures.

As an essential feature of all Early Years settings, the Home Corner must be available at all times, as it supports children to explore and make sense of their immediate world.

The Home Corner is a symbolic representation of the home environment and should include somewhere to eat, sleep, cook, sit and wash. This enables children to model their home routines, explore different roles and recreate the experiences they have at home.

Whilst it should be linked to other forms of role-play, given its significance in supporting children's connection between the early learning environment and their home, it must not be replaced.



In order for children to enjoy the full benefits and available experiences, the area must be set up and fully resourced for the beginning of every session. It's worthwhile considering ways to involve children in this process.

Remember, this is the children's space, therefore, consideration should be given to when and why adults enter the Home Corner. When invited in to play or entering to provide support, it's important to remain mindful of the impact an adult's presence can have on children's play.

CURRICULAR & DEVELOPMENTAL

Health & Wellbeing

Children have the opportunity to develop relationships with others, make friends and be part of a group. This supports learning around sharing, taking turns, negotiation, cooperation and managing conflict.

Through 'playing-out' concerns, worries or problems, children can work through their own experiences in a way that helps them to better understand and regulate emotions.

Dressing dolls, managing fasteners and engaging with other 'home-like' activities, affords children the opportunity to practice and develop their fine-motor skills.



Literacy

The Home Corner is a rich environment for language acquisition. Children can engage in conversations with peers, listen to others, and use both new and existing vocabulary to express needs, ideas and emotions, or mimic conversations overheard at home.



Resources such as message pads, calendars, and shopping lists provide opportunities for mark-making and writing. This enables children to explore and develop understanding regarding the purpose and meaning of writing within real-life contexts.

Early reading skills are supported through rich experiences that enable children to explore and engage with a variety of texts within their role play.

Maths & Numeracy

The area offers possibilities for children to match, group, count, pair and sort resources. Through experiences such as setting the table with cutlery and crockery, children can engage with concepts such as one-to-one correspondence.

Children can explore concepts relating to number, measure, time, shape, money and information handling by using real-life objects within their play experiences.



Other

The Home Corner provides opportunities to reflect on cultural and religious celebrations, as well as family traditions. Through role-play, children can explore routines and scenarios that reflect their own home life, including family meals or caring for younger siblings.

By engaging in pretend scenarios that differ from their own home experiences, children broaden their social awareness and appreciation for the diversity of family structures, traditions and ways of life.

Children can engage with technology through their role-play experiences, using objects such as the washing machine, cooker, and timer to develop an understanding of their purpose in daily life.



ROLE OF THE ADULT

Practitioners should set up the space to ensure that it is welcoming, homely, clean and cosy. This can be achieved using soft lighting, natural tones and a variety of textures. Displaying photos of children and their families can support a sense of belonging.

Ensure that resources are frequently refreshed and renewed in order to reflect current interests. For example, linking clothing items, objects and decorations to match the seasons, weather, and different cultural festivals or celebrations.

Foster and support children's awareness, knowledge and understanding of different family structures.

Maintain a consistent team approach regarding the transportation of resources to and from the Home Corner, remaining mindful of ways that this can support and enhance children's play experience.



ROOM STRUCTURE & LAYOUT

Whilst it is preferable to position the Home Corner in a quiet, peaceful area, this is not always achievable depending on the layout of the setting. Careful consideration should be given to other areas that would benefit from being nearby, such as the Doll's House or Dressing-Up.

Ideally, the Home Corner will have defined areas such as a kitchen, living room and separate bedroom. Remember, children live in a variety of home types, all of which can't possibly be recreated.

Consider the available space and number of children in the setting when planning the size and layout of the Home Corner. Space can be better utilised through the creative use of furniture as boundaries, barriers and dividers.

RESOURCE IDEAS

When considering essential resources, remember that the Home Corner must represent a place to: cook, eat, wash-up, sit and sleep.

Cook	Cooker, kitchen cupboards, pots, kettle, utensils
Eat	Table, chairs, crockery, cutlery
Wash-Up	Sink, washing machine
Sit	Child-sized seating
Sleep	Child-sized bed & bedding, cot, storage (bedside drawers)

There should also be:

Real and relevant household items: lamps, mirrors, rugs, welcome mat, plants, telephone, vacuum cleaner, art work, family photos

Reading materials that are in context and linked to current interests: newspapers, magazines, brochures, leaflets, recipe books

Maths & Numeracy opportunities: analogue or digital scales and clocks, money, telephones, measuring spoons/jugs, timers

Items to wear that relate to daily life: sleepwear, hats, coats, bags, purses, slippers, scarves and shoes

Writing materials: diaries, calendar, notepads

Pictures, photos and items which reflect different lifestyles, families and cultures

Only one baby in the home, unless there are twins in a family or a visitor arrives with a baby

A selection of clothes for the baby, which are designed to fit

Loose parts: corks, wooden pegs, pinecones, curtain rings, and wooden discs

REFLECTION POINTS

- What kinds of things can practitioners do or include that will support children to understand and value different cultures, religions and family structures?
- How can the Home Corner be replenished and maintained in order to ensure that it is inviting and appropriately resourced? Are there real-life resources?
- Are reading and writing materials available to help extend learning? How do these connect with current interests throughout the playroom?
- In what ways do the resources provided support children to develop an understanding of purposeful and relevant maths concepts?

TOP TIPS & IDEAS

Don't be tempted to over-resource. More isn't always better. For example, if there's only space for two people at the table, it only needs two plates.

Loose parts provide children with richer opportunities for imaginative role play in the Home Corner compared to wooden, plastic, or knitted items designed to represent food.

