

## Home Corners for Two Year Olds

The home corner is often the most popular area of any setting where toddlers will spend much of their time stirring, pouring, filling, emptying containers, cooking, dressing up and taking on an assortment of roles. Home corners are simple enough to set up with the usual child sized kitchen furniture of a cooker, table and chairs and some plastic fruit but to truly capitalise on the vast outcomes role play has offer it is important to consider carefully the resources on offer and the role of the adult so that impact and levels of involvement remain high and learning inevitable.

### Why is domestic play important?

Research underpins the importance of imaginative play on a child's development. Role play develops a child's imagination. It supports cognitive development, improves social skills, grows children's creativity and problem-solving skills and offers opportunities for 2 year olds to explore and understand events that they have observed or experienced in real life.

When a 2 year old engages in role play they are developing language, hand eye co-ordination, practicing social skills and building their confidence.

### Supporting and extending language and communication

Encourage two year olds to interact with their peers in the home corner by prompting them to show other children what they are for example stirring in the pot or asking a friend if they would like some of the drink they have made.

Develop sharing skills by supporting children to give the extra tea cup to another child or pass the wooden spoon they are no longer using.

Support quieter / shy children by playing alongside them, taking cues from them and following their lead.

### Role of the adult

**Interact** with the children, take on a role and be aware of potential learning

**Provide** resources that enable children to explore their own ideas and follow their interests

**Extend** the play by adding enhancements and props that foster curiosity, creativity and motivation such as adding cornflakes in cereal boxes to pour and stir in large silver mixing bowls or offering new baby resources

**Explore** children's ideas. Don't dictate the play!

**Model** and reinforce language, make comments and ask open ended questions

**Build** relationships, allow children to make decisions and choices

**Value** children's efforts and use specific praise e.g. 'Well done, you gave David the doll. You shared the doll.'

**Use** observations to inform additions to extend play

## Top tips for resourcing effective home corner:

- Create an enclosed space by using furniture and walls to create a 'little room'
- Low level, open storage units for easy access
- Remember less is more. Don't overload the resource boxes with props.
- Increase sensory experiences by adding cornflakes, conkers, dried pasta and use adult sized utensils
- Dress ups – add fabric pieces, materials, scarves and saris alongside giant pegs (to fasten fabrics together), hats, bags, sunglasses in a basket or hanging off a hat stand
- Extra props – keys, phones, keyboards, suit cases, cleaning props (sponges, cloths, washing up liquid), baking props (muffin trays, paper cup cake cases, rolling pins, weighing scales), baby props (dummies, nappies, changing maps, bibs, potty, towels) cooking (real pots, pans, mixing bowls, whisks, wooden spoons, colanders, shop sticks), note books, pens, story books, magazines...

**In role play a 2 year old will be an onlooker, play solitary, engage in parallel play or co-operative play depending on their developmental stage. It is our job as practitioners to be sensitive to where the child is at and know when they are ready to engage in the next stage of play and support this.**

### Diversity

To reflect the variety of race and cultures in your setting and local environment provide specific props - fabric / materials that reflect different cultures, food, different tools and equipment

Dolls and clothes representing different races/cultures. Aim for at least 3 different races.

### Involving parents

Toddles love helping with the chores at home. Give them an extra sponge, brush to do the sweeping, cloth to wipe windows and let them exert their growing determination for independence!

Research shows that practitioners who are more tuned in to a 2 year old's interests during play are more able to support and extend children's language more effectively. This is even more successful when the practitioner uses knowledge gained in previous experiences and shared discussion with parents.

Children learn from experience, from what they see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Engaging in imaginary play enables two year olds to absorb experiences and helps them make sense of the world around them.

### Reflection:

- Do you have resources that promote the developments of characteristics of effective learning?
- Are practitioners tuned in to 2 Year old's thinking and play and get involved in the flow of child led ideas?
- Do you support healthy nutrition in the home corner?
- Are photos of children in their own homes with their families on display?