

Waltham Forest Early Years Guidance

10 Top Tips to Maximise the Home Corner

The purpose of this guidance is to support early years practitioners to increase the language, social and children's imaginative development through the domestic role-play area.

The Home Corner

The home corner is often the most popular area of any setting where children 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 to set up with the usual child sized kitchen furniture of a cooker, table and chairs and some pretend food, but to truly capitalise on the vast outcomes role play has to offer, it is important to carefully consider the resources provided and the role of the adult, so that impact and levels of involvement remain high and learning inevitable.

Domestic role play allows children to feel secure because they are in an area where they feel like the expert!

Tip 1: Organisation

If possible, create a large, enclosed space by using rugs, furniture and walls to create a 'little room.' Add soft furnishings to make the area inviting and homely. Layout furniture to encourage social play. Use low level, open storage units for easy access, which encourage independence and choice making. Include a table and chairs for children to recreate experiences they see at home. If possible, place a mark making area near by so children can write shopping lists/cards etc. Organise resources into



baskets on shelves, or on the ground so children then can help themselves to the resources they want and direct their own play.

Tip 2: Keep It Real

Use as many real objects as possible, including pots and pans, mixing bowls, chopsticks, wooden spoons, rolling pins, cake tins, cutlery, utensils, cups, teapots, plates and bowls. If you can, provide real vegetables/fruits for children to cut and explore, providing them with sensory experiences.

Tip 3: Dress Up Resources

Keep your resources as open-ended as possible and try not to set them up in a way that you would like to play! Providing fabric pieces, materials, scarves and saris encourages children to use their imaginations when adopting different roles. Pegs/hair clips and hair scrunches are useful to pin fabrics together and support their fine motor skills. Hats and bags in a basket or hanging off a hat stand provide endless opportunities.

Tip 4: Open-ended Resources

Providing open-ended resources encourages imagination, creativity and problem-solving skills so children's play can be richer and more complex.

Consider adding conkers, corks, pinecones, stones, shells in the area for children to 'cook' with. If the resources are nondescript and simple, true open-ended play will evolve. Children will then bring their own unique culture into the play as their imagination takes over. If nothing is prescribed, then nothing will be wrong.

Tip 5: Maths

Rather than number lines, incorporate items such as wall planners, diaries, calendars, a working clock, a telephone, scales and TV remote, which set out numbers in different formats. Have recipe books in the area so children to have the opportunity to see measurements in written form. Children can pour, mix, tip and fill as they use the open-ended resources provided.

Tip 6: Reading and Mark Making

Magazines, books, comics and recipe books are great to add to your home corner. Think about including books from around the world so children can develop their understanding of the world around them, including recipe books from around the world.

Add pen pots, diaries, shopping list jotters, notebooks etc for children to write for a purpose, creating shopping lists, invitations, notes or other activities that are likely to arise from conversations in this area.

Tip 7: Cultural Identity

Add items to the home corner that reflect children's cultural identity. Ask families to contribute and share photos of the ways that people live, eat and use their homes, display photos of children with their families in their homes. Add empty packaging that reflect children's home life experiences. Use fabrics from different cultures to reflect the local community and diversity within the setting. Include dolls that represent different

racess/cultures/disabilities and equipment used by people of different cultures.

Tip 8: Enhancement

Home corners can be enhanced, for example, with decorations or relevant objects for religious events and cultural festivals, or to reflect children's current interests.

Tip 9: Link to Children's Interests

Use observations to adapt the area and develop children's play further. For instance, if children are interested in birthdays/parties, provide wrapping paper and paper plates etc. Think about how children can be encouraged to make links with other areas of the environment to enhance their own learning. They could make their own bunting, party hats, invitations and party bags!

Tip 10: Role of the Adult

The role of the adult is what the children want it to be! Remember, this is their safe space where they feel free to express themselves. Adults are most likely to play one of two roles: observer or whichever role the child has assigned. When observing, try not to intervene. Listen and reflect. Then, make the necessary enhancements to meet the children's emerging needs or interests. If you are playing in role, get stuck into that character! This is your chance to really model high-quality interactions and support children's communication and social development.

Further Information

- [Waltham Forest The Hub Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Early Excellence – Domestic Role Play in the EYFS](#)
- [Community Playthings – The Home Corner](#)

