

Creating High-Quality Home Corners in Early Years Settings

Home corners are a staple in early years environments, offering children opportunities to engage in imaginative play, develop social skills, and build language. But what makes a home corner truly high quality? Let's explore key elements, real-life resources, and how adults can support language development.



Why Home Corners Matter

Home corners allow children to act out familiar scenarios, such as cooking, cleaning, or caring for babies. These are all actions that children may have first hand experiences of through their observations and interactions with adults at home. This type of role play helps them:

- Understand everyday routines.
- Practice problem-solving and negotiation.
- Develop vocabulary related to home life.

Real-Life Resources to Include

Authenticity is key. Instead of only plastic toys, add real or realistic items that children see at home:

- **Kitchen Items:** Wooden spoons, metal pots, real (safe) utensils, empty food containers, aprons, oven gloves.
- **Home Items:** Clocks, lamps, calendars, photos, plants, fridge magnets photo frames

- **Cleaning Tools:** Small dustpan and brush, washing up brush, empty washing up bottles, cloths and tea towels
- **Food Packaging:** Clean cereal boxes, packets, spice jars, or tins- these can represent cultural backgrounds
- **Role Play Accessories:** Old mobile phones (battery and sim card removed), notepads, shopping bags, magazines, newspapers, remote controls
- **Clothing Items:** Hats, jackets, bags, purses, jewellery

These resources make play more meaningful and encourage children to use language they hear in real life.



Supporting Language Development

Adults play a vital role in extending children's language during home corner play:

- **Model Vocabulary:** Use words like "ingredients," "recipe," "tidy," and "prepare."
- **Ask Open Questions:** "What are you cooking today?" or "How will you set the table?"
- **Introduce New Concepts:** Talk about healthy eating, family roles, or cultural traditions.
- **Narrate Play:** Describe what the child is doing: "You're stirring the soup. It looks delicious!"
- **Encourage Social Interaction:** Prompt children to share roles and negotiate: "Who will be the chef? Who is going to make the dinner?"



Cultural Diversity in Home Corners

When children see items, foods, clothing, and household objects that reflect their own culture as well as those of others, they feel valued and included. This representation helps create a sense of belonging and reinforces the idea that all cultures are important and respected within the learning environment. Diverse resources spark conversations and questions about traditions, languages, and lifestyles, helping children understand similarities and differences in a positive way.

Examples of Cultural Diversity in Home Corners

Food and Cooking Items

- Include empty packaging from foods representing different cuisines (e.g., pasta boxes, spice jars, rice bags, tortillas, cereal boxes, noodle packets).
- Add cooking utensils like chopsticks, a small tagine, or a bamboo steamer.



Textiles and Decor

- Use patterned fabrics or tablecloths inspired by different cultures (e.g., African prints, Indian block prints).

- Display family photos or posters of homes from around the world.

Role Play Accessories

- Add items like traditional tea sets (Chinese or Japanese), a samovar for Russian tea, or a cafetière for French coffee.
- Include culturally diverse dolls with different skin tones and clothing styles.

Celebration Props

- Incorporate items linked to cultural festivals (e.g., pretend mooncakes for Lunar New Year, Diwali diyas, or Eid decorations).

How Adults Can Support Language Development

- Introduce vocabulary linked to cultural items: “This is a tagine. It’s used in Moroccan cooking.”
- Ask open-ended questions: “What special food do you eat at celebrations in your family?”
- Share stories or books about different homes and traditions to spark conversation.

Diverse Dolls

- **Skin tone variety:** Include dolls with a range of skin tones to represent global diversity.
- **Cultural attire:** Add dolls dressed in traditional clothing from different regions (e.g., sari, kimono, dashiki, abaya).
- **Inclusive features:** Consider dolls with different hair textures, facial features, and accessories that reflect various cultures.
- **Representation of abilities:** Include dolls with assistive devices (wheelchairs, hearing aids) to promote inclusivity.



Resource List

Dolls with different skin tones	Jugs	Ironing board
Doll's clothes	Measuring scales	Iron
Buggy	Measuring spoons	Dressing up clothes reflecting diversity
Highchair	Clock	Hats
Doll's bed and blanket	Newspapers	Necklaces
Potty	Magazines	Bracelets
Baby bottles	Recipe books for a range of cuisines	Handbags
Units	Notebooks	Purses/ Wallets
Cooker	Pens	Play money/ cards
Saucepans	Phones	Dustpan and brush
Wooden spoons	Keyboards	Mop
Baking trays	Laptop	Family photos
Plates	TV screen	Mirrors
Cups	Camera	Calendar
Cutlery and utensils	Table	Flowers
Play food	Chairs	Plants
Rolling pin	Table cloth	Empty, clean familiar packaging- washing up liquid, soap, milk cartons, cereal packets
Cake cases	Mini sofa	
Oven gloves/ tea towels	Chairs	
Aprons	Cushions	
Kettle	Bean bags	
Toaster	Soft toys	
Lamp		



EARLY YEARS TEAM

	Rugs	
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