

# Modern Living Range

Ideas and inspiration to support the different areas of learning and development



# Communication and Language

A home-like environment that encourages children to feel at ease when interacting and engaging in conversations.

- **Home scenarios** - The home corner encourages children to engage in role-play scenarios such as playing house, hosting a tea party, or acting out a family scene. This gives children the opportunity to use language creatively, weave stories into their play, and express themselves verbally.
- **Time to talk** - Why not add pretend phones into the home corner for added language and communication opportunities. Children can take turns making and receiving calls, and engage in imaginary conversations with family members, friends, story characters, or members of the community such as the doctor. Encourage children to listen, respond, and take on different roles in conversations. This allows them to experiment with different tones, vocabulary, language, and ways of expressing themselves.
- **Modelling** - As this area takes shape and evolves, it allows adults to actively participate with the children. It provides a great space for the modelling of roles and extending conversations. It can also be used for small group or adult-led activities e.g. sharing out food at snack time. In a home-like environment, some children may also feel more comfortable and find it easier to express their feelings and emotions.
- **A space for reflection** - The home corner offers practitioners a valuable space to observe children's interactions, communication methods, and the roles they assume. This provides an excellent opportunity to assess their capabilities and consider ways to further nurture their development.



## Personal, Social, and Emotional Development

- **Family role-play** - The home corner can be used as a space to encourage children to assume various family roles (parent, sibling, etc.). This fosters empathy, understanding of different family dynamics, and exploration of emotions. Displaying photographs of the children and their families adds a personal touch, prompting conversations about loved ones and personal experiences.
- **Pretend tea parties or mealtimes** - Host pretend tea parties or create scenarios around mealtimes and special occasions. These engaging activities promote sharing, cooperation, and turn-taking, teaching children valuable social skills. As they prepare for these events, they'll assume different roles and responsibilities, enhancing their negotiation and conflict resolution abilities.
- **In character** - Encourage children to experiment with different identities and perspectives by providing a variety of clothes, accessories, and props. This imaginative play stimulates their creativity and expands their understanding of various roles, professions, and cultures.
- **Rest and unwind** - Why not add a living space to the home corner where the children can relax, unwind, and recharge. Furnish the space with a seating area (e.g., sofa or beanbags), fireplace, soft cushions, blankets, and a weighted lap buddy (introducing the family pet). This tranquil area provides a sanctuary for children to manage their emotions, regulate their energy levels, and practise self-soothing techniques.



# Physical Development

- **Cooking and food preparation** – Whilst preparing for feasts, picnics or parties, children can explore with pretend or real foods, and use various kitchen utensils such as pots and pans. As they slice, dice, stir, and pour, they will gain strength and dexterity while developing crucial motor skills and hand-eye coordination.
- **Fine motor skills** - Develop nimble fingers in preparation for future tasks needed in life by providing a range of fasteners on clothing and different accessories. These may include buttons on clothing, zips on bags, shoelaces, or velcro straps. If you have a baby or doll in the home corner, provide clothes and hair accessories so that the children can practise their dressing and independence skills whilst playing with the dolls.
- **Different movements** - The home corner is a space where children can embark on a journey of movement and imagination. They may carry the laundry basket to the washer before putting a wash on, reach up to place dinner in the oven, peg clothes on the line, or crouch to retrieve items from the cupboards. A versatile playground for motor skills.
- **Gross motor skills** - The home corner isn't just about refining fine motor skills but offers fantastic opportunities for developing bigger movements too. By introducing props such as vacuum cleaners, sweeping brushes, and mops, children engage in activities that strengthen the larger muscle groups, including their core stability. Have you ever considered incorporating 'real life' scenarios into the play such as moving house? This not only exposes them to different experiences but inspires them to pack, unpack, sort, and transport boxes, fostering both physical development and imaginative play.



# Literacy

- **Everyday reading** – Develop a living space within the home corner that invites children to embrace reading as a natural part of everyday life. Furnish it with comfy seating, like a small sofa or cushions, and surround the area with a variety of reading materials. These may include TV magazines in the rack beside the sofa (ensuring they are appropriate for the age group), recipe books on the kitchen counter (including pictorial recipe cards) and take-away menus from different cuisines. This setup encourages children to explore a range of reading materials and prints while enhancing their literacy skills in the comfort of a home environment.
- **Writing for meaning** – Nurture budding mark makers and young writers within the home corner by introducing notebooks, shopping lists, post-it notes, celebration cards, and diaries. These resources provide opportunities for children to assign meaning to their marks in the context of the home environment. They might jot down important phone call notes, leave a message indicating a quick trip to the shop, schedule a dentist appointment on the calendar, write a birthday card for Granny, or add ingredients to their shopping list in preparation for a supermarket visit.



# Mathematics

- **Time** – You can introduce the concept of time and reinforce number recognition by incorporating a large clock on the wall in the home corner (with clear numbers displayed). This visual aid serves as a practical learning tool, allowing children to become familiar with the connection between numbers and the passage of time. Alternatively, you can add resources like egg timers or sand timers, sparking valuable discussions as children observe the passing minutes.
- **Numbers** – Numbers can seamlessly find their place in the home corner in numerous creative ways. Imagine old or toy telephones adorned with numbers, complete with a phone book featuring telephone numbers for children to dial. Will it be Goldilocks on 234516, or perhaps a call to the fire brigade on 999? Alternatively, children might decide to craft a house number to proudly display outside the home or invent a unique pattern or number of knocks to signal their arrival. Another engaging option is to introduce recipe cards, which can be pictorial for the youngest learners. This sparks numerical exploration as children calculate the required number, cupfuls, or spoonfuls of ingredients needed for their culinary creations.
- **Shape, size, and sorting** – The home corner provides a rich environment for exploring language related to shape and size. As children interact with various items like tins, packets, utensils, and more, they will often naturally engage in mathematical conversations. When using measuring cups, cutlery, and tableware, they begin to use words like longer, shorter, bigger, and smaller to describe their observations. Practical activities such as loading the dishwasher or organising the shopping further enhance their learning by offering opportunities to sort and categorise objects based on size, type, colour, weight, and other characteristics.



# Understanding the World

- **Cultural diversity**– Think about whether your home corner represents different cultures along with the lives of the children in your setting. Do the children have access to a range of fabrics, materials, and clothing? Is there a range of artifacts and familiar items in the area to facilitate play and discussion? Can you incorporate multilingual activities e.g. through stories, songs and books? The home corner is a place where children can explore and appreciate different customs, traditions and ways of life, fostering cultural awareness and understanding.
- **Eco awareness** – Why not add recycling bins into the home corner to teach young children about recycling and making eco-friendly choices. Use this opportunity to discuss the role of recycling centres, highlighting how they transform materials like glass, paper, and metal. Not only does this invite children to participate in recycling but also encourages them to think about different materials used in the home. Some children may also get creative and think of ways to reuse or repurpose different items such as boxes and packaging.
- **Weather and seasons** – As the year progresses, seize opportunities to enrich the home corner by enhancing it to reflect not only seasonal shifts but also significant events in the children's lives, such as the arrival of a new sibling, someone's birthday, or a festival. In the summer offer sun hats, sunglasses, and light clothing to align with sunny days. Have discussions about how these items may change in the winter months. Additionally, introduce postcards from locations across the world, inviting children to pin them to a corkboard or display them on the fridge before having discussions about them.



# Expressive Arts and Design

- **Home decorations**– Embrace the art of decorating and interior design, a home activity that often involves celebrations, festivals, or crafting cherished artwork. Provide the children with an array of materials so that they can make their decorations. Some children may get creative making bunting, cards, or banners for special occasions, while others may channel their creativity into crafting beautiful wall adornments, or ornaments, transforming the home corner into a vibrant, ever-changing canvas of imagination.
- **Food glorious food!** – In the home corner, children can step into the roles of chefs, bakers, and artisans. This imaginative space comes to life through its flexible setup and assortment of tools that encourage children’s creativity. Here, baking and cooking activities can become sensory experiences as children touch, smell and maybe even taste a variety of textures and ingredients. Whether they’re preparing pretend meals, real treats, or making culinary creations from playdough, this space fosters the joy of culinary exploration and sharing with friends.
- **Making music** – Enhance the home corner by introducing the enchanting world of music. Consider adding a radio or music player where children can delight in listening, singing, and dancing to their favourite songs and rhymes, igniting their enthusiasm for melodies. Diversify the musical experience by incorporating various genres, including tunes and songs that accompany celebrations. For those budding musicians, provide opportunities where they can create their own symphonies using pots, pans, and everyday items as impromptu instruments.

