EYFS@RMS – Progression of Skills for the Home Corner

The home corner supports children to develop imaginative play, communication, social interaction, independence and understanding of the world through familiar experiences and role-play. Provision should evolve from exploring everyday objects to creating imaginative scenarios, negotiating roles and developing more complex narratives.



1. Explorers – familiar experiences

Babies / younger toddlers, as appropriate

- Explore familiar household objects and pretend-play resources.
- Investigate cups, plates, spoons, toy food and simple kitchen equipment.
- Copy familiar actions such as stirring, feeding a doll or holding a telephone.
- Explore everyday routines through sensory and exploratory play.
- Begin to notice and imitate the actions of adults and other children.
- Communicate wants, interests and experiences through gestures, sounds and emerging words.



2. Developing role-players

Typically 2–3 years

- Engage in simple pretend play based on familiar routines.
- Pretend to cook, eat, clean, shop or care for dolls.
- Use objects to represent familiar items and actions.
- Begin to imitate family roles and everyday experiences.
- Use words and short phrases to describe their play.
- Play alongside others and begin brief interactions around shared resources.
- Practise simple self-help skills, such as putting items away and using play equipment appropriately.



3. Purposeful storytellers

Typically 3–4 years

- Take on familiar roles, such as parent, baby, shopkeeper or cook.
- Develop simple pretend-play sequences, such as preparing food and serving a meal.
- Use language to communicate ideas, explain actions and respond to others.
- Begin to negotiate roles, share resources and cooperate with peers.
- Use props imaginatively and represent experiences from home and the wider community.
- Begin to recognise and explore routines, such as preparing meals, caring for others and keeping a home tidy.
- Develop independence through organising resources and helping to tidy the area.



4. Confident imaginative players

Typically 4–5 years

- Sustain imaginative play for longer periods and develop connected storylines.
- Take on and maintain roles, adapting them as the play develops.
- Negotiate roles, solve disagreements and work collaboratively.
- Use increasingly complex language to explain, question, plan and develop ideas.
- Create imaginary scenarios beyond direct personal experience, such as a restaurant, hospital, hotel or travel agency.
- Use writing, drawing, numbers and symbols purposefully within play, for example menus, shopping lists, appointment cards and labels.
- Apply mathematical skills through counting items, comparing quantities, sorting food and using money in pretend transactions.
- Reflect on experiences and use these to enrich and extend their play.

Progression of key skills

Skill	Emerging	Developing	Secure / extending
Imaginative play	Explores objects and imitates familiar actions	Uses objects in simple pretend scenarios	Creates and sustains imaginative storylines
Role-play	Copies familiar adults and routines	Takes on familiar roles	Maintains and adapts roles within complex play
Communication	Uses gestures, sounds and single words	Uses phrases and simple conversations	Explains ideas, negotiates and develops narratives
Social interaction	Plays alongside others	Shares resources and begins cooperative play	Negotiates roles, resolves conflicts and collaborates
Independence	Explores and handles resources	Uses resources for familiar purposes and helps tidy	Organises resources and manages play routines independently
Literacy	Enjoys books, pictures and familiar symbols	Recognises that marks and print carry meaning	Uses purposeful mark-making, lists, labels and menus
Mathematics	Explores objects and simple sorting	Counts, matches and compares items	Applies counting, number, measure and money concepts in play
Understanding the world	Explores familiar people and routines	Recreates familiar experiences	Explores different occupations, communities and ways of life

Adult role and provision

- Model and join in: Demonstrate simple routines, introduce roles and enrich play without taking over.
- Develop language: Introduce vocabulary such as stir, pour, prepare, serve, customer, ingredients, family, appointment and payment.
- Extend thinking: Ask “What do we need to prepare dinner?”, “How could we make a menu?” or “What might happen next?”
- Provide meaningful resources: Include dolls, cooking utensils, crockery, pretend food, dressing-up items, telephones, bags, books, writing materials and culturally diverse home resources.
- Reflect children's experiences: Adapt the home corner to children's interests and experiences, while avoiding assumptions about family structures, culture or home circumstances.
- Extend the theme: Transform the area into a café, shop, post office, hospital or travel agency when appropriate.
- Support inclusion: Offer accessible resources, visual prompts, communication aids and flexible roles to support children with SEND and children learning English as an additional language.
- Observe and respond: Notice how children communicate, cooperate, solve problems and develop stories, then plan appropriate next steps.

Links to EYFS areas of learning

- Communication and Language: listening, conversation, vocabulary, questioning and storytelling.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development: relationships, cooperation, self-regulation and independence.
- Physical Development: handling utensils, dressing dolls, fastening clothes and developing fine-motor control.
- Literacy: books, menus, shopping lists, labels, signs and purposeful mark-making.
- Mathematics: counting, sorting, matching, comparing, measuring and exploring money.

- Understanding the World: family life, occupations, community roles, routines and different experiences.
- Expressive Arts and Design: role-play, imagination, representation and creating stories.

Assessment reminder: Age ranges are indicative rather than fixed expectations. Children may demonstrate skills across several stages. Plan next steps from observations of each child's interests, communication, social development and level of independence, rather than expecting every child to progress at the same rate.