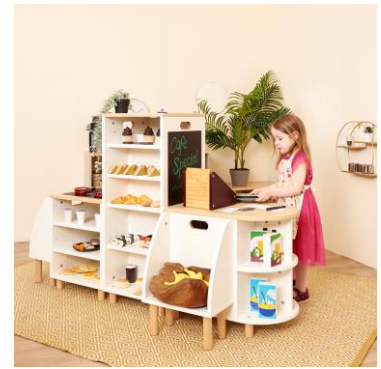


Ideas and Inspiration for Adaptable Role Play Spaces

Modern Living Role Play Units (EL46824)



The power of role play in early years and beyond – Reasons to make space

Role play is a key area in early childhood development. It offers children the chance to explore the world, express themselves, and develop important skills in a fun and meaningful way. Through role play, children:

Develop social and emotional skills

Taking on different roles helps children to understand emotions and different viewpoints, negotiate and compromise, take turns, and build relationships.

Use their imagination and creativity

Role play gives children the opportunity to create their own stories, solve problems, and think critically.

Expand vocabulary and become effective communicators (linked to early oracy skills)

Children experiment with language, learning new words and phrases in a natural way. They practise communicating in different ways by taking on various roles in their play.

Build confidence and test out real-life concepts

Acting out every day experiences can help children feel more comfortable and in control during real-life situations. Whether they're running a café, caring for a pet, or fixing a car, role play helps children make sense of their world and allows them to test run and play out various scenarios.

A flexible space that adapts to your setting

One of the best things about the Modern Living Role Play Units is their flexibility. They can be arranged to create different role play spaces or learning areas, making them a great fit for any setting.

Against a wall (linear set up)

Perfect for smaller spaces, this layout keeps everything accessible while leaving room for other activities and learning areas.

360-degree set up

Position and join the units together to create an interactive space where children can engage with others from different sides, encouraging collaboration and conversations.

Standalone role play stations

Set up the units as service counters for a shop, café, or reception desk. Having different stations allows for various types of role play at the same time and encourages children to interact from different perspectives.



Communication, language and literacy through role play

Role play naturally supports the development of vocabulary and communication skills. Children engage in conversations, describe what they are doing (their actions), and practise narrating familiar or new stories. These all support in the building of strong foundations for literacy and future life.

Ways to support language development in role play

Introduce new words

With the flexibility of the different units and various configurations available, different themes can be created. Introduce new words relevant to each theme, for example, 'prescription' in a pharmacy, 'stylist' in a hair salon, 'ingredients' in a café, 'vaccination' in a doctors or 'calculator' in a bank.

Encourage conversations

Encourage conversations and discussions by playing alongside the children and asking open-ended questions such as 'What would you like to order today?' or 'How can I help you?' Include telephones in your role play so that the children can make/take phone calls in their play or talk to a friend.

Support storytelling

Provide props and books related to the role play theme to spark children's ideas.

Print in the environment

Display different types of print in the different role play areas for children to look at and discuss. These could include posters, menus, calendars, or charts.



Encouraging early mark making and writing

Mark making in role play gives writing a real purpose. Children might:

- Take 'orders' in a café.
- Write shopping lists.
- Design posters for a hair salon.
- Create patient records in a doctor's surgery.

Ways to utilise the chalkboard surfaces on some of the unit surfaces:

- Write menus, price lists or special offers for the day.
- Create signs or draw/write the opening times.
- Sketch ovens, hobs or other imaginative details onto the chalkboards to be used in the role play.

By embedding literacy into role play, children see reading and writing as meaningful, enjoyable, and useful in everyday life.



Role play themes and bringing them to life

Role play can transport children into different worlds, helping them make sense of real-life experiences. Here are some themes and simple ways to set them up:

Vets or Doctors Surgery

- **Units** - Create examination stations and shelves for cages, animal carriers and accessories such as leads and food bowls. For the doctor's surgery, you could add scales, books about the body on the shelves or medication cabinets.
- **Props** - Provide props such as toy animals, pet carriers, bandages, clipboards for pet records, and stethoscopes. For a doctors surgery provide x-rays, and other medical equipment such as pretend medicine bottles and thermometers.
- **Mark making** - Children can write appointment cards or record symptoms on clipboards or recordable devices.
- **Waiting rooms** - Why not create a waiting room with soft furnishing, sofas and magazines?



Role play themes and bringing them to life

Hairdressers/Barbers

- **Units** – Provide units with shelving and chalk boards to display the different products used and on sale such as shampoo, conditioner, brushes and other hair accessories. On the chalkboards, write down opening times, styles or prices.
- **Props** - Provide props such as brushes, empty shampoo bottles, pretend hair straighteners and hairdryers, headbands, clips, and mirrors.
- **Mark making** – Leave out an appointment book, empty diary or calendar for the children to write in. Encourage children to design a sign with the opening times on.
- **Other furniture** – Set up a waiting area with magazines and realistic sofas and soft furnishings.



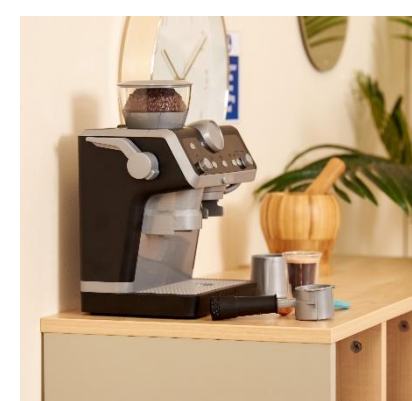
Role play themes and bringing them to life

Shop/Supermarket

- **Units** – Provide units with different shelving and display space. Add chalk board units to display special offers or to turn into weighing scales etc.
- **Props** – Consider resources such as a cash register and scanner, play money, baskets and trolleys, bags for carrying shopping, empty food packaging and price labels.
- **Mark making** – Encourage children to display daily offers, prices and opening times on the chalkboards.

Café/Restaurant

- **Units** – Provide units with chalkboards that can be turned into hobs and other cooking appliances such as fridges or ovens and others that can become tables or bagging areas.
- **Props** – Include menus, tablecloths, cups and plates, pretend food, coffee machine, pizza oven and cutlery.
- **Mark making** – Children can write down or draw the opening times, menus and advertise daily specials.



Role play themes and bringing them to life

Workshop/Offices/Construction Site

- **Units** – Provide a variety of units that have shelving space for tools or stationery and ones that could act as workstations.
- **Props** – Include pretend tools, toy cars, stationery, artificial plants, a variety of bricks, hard hats, high vis vests and pretend or old keyboards and laptops.
- **Mark making** – Encourage children to write orders on order forms, memos or to do lists.
- **Jobs** – Introduce 'fixing jobs' like repairing broken items or give children challenges such as creating safety posters.

Remember that adding real-world items makes play more meaningful. Try collecting everyday objects like old telephones, keyboards, old phone books, magazines, photos and packaging to add authenticity.



Creating meaningful and engaging role play experiences

By using the TTS Modern Role Play Units creatively, early years practitioners can create dynamic, ever-changing role play environments that support learning across multiple areas. Adapt the space, introduce new themes that may follow the interests of the children or centre around something being taught. Encourage language-rich interactions to ensure that role play remains an exciting and valuable part of the early years experience.

To maintain children's interest, remember to refresh and change the set up as required:

- Move the units around to create new play spaces.
- Introduce new themes according to the children's interests and experiences. Swap out and display new signs and props.
- Use the different types of units and shelving to encourage children to reach, stretch, and crouch – this supports their physical development as they explore the space.

By making small changes, you can keep role play exciting and full of possibilities!

