

The book area checklist

Use the following suggestions as a checklist for developing your book area.

Most of the ideas can be adapted on a smaller scale for use in the home as well as the pre-school or daycare setting

Location: Choose a peaceful location for your book area, with good natural light and well away from the noisier areas of the setting.

Furniture: Make the book area comfortable with cushions, beanbags and throws. If budget will allow, how about a small sofa or comfy armchair?

Book storage: Display as many books as possible with their covers facing outwards. Avoid putting too many books in a single book box so the children can sort through them easily.

Codes: Introduce a code for different categories of books (poetry, story, information and so on). Code the books with a coloured label or letter.

Special collections: Introduce a low table for one-off collections (such as a selection of books by one author), picture books you have recently shared with the group and other special books.

Wall displays: Organise wall space near the 'special collections' table for displaying the children's book-related mark-making and artwork alongside the books that inspired it.

Spark interest: Spark interest in a particular book by making an enticing poster or mobile linked to the theme of the book. Pose questions in displays to encourage discussion.

Other resources: Make space in the book area for comics, catalogues, book bags, story boards, puppets, CD players and other activities linked to books.

Role play settings: Turn your book area into an exciting set – such as an underwater scene linked with *The Rainbow Fish* or a library or bookshop role play setting.

The children's interests: Make sure the books reflect your children's changing needs and interests. Check Early Years magazines and websites for new titles and authors to try.

The whole setting: Place relevant books in different parts of the setting, such as books about vehicles next to a toy garage. Organise provision for an outdoor book area.

Observation: Observe the children as they use the book area. Are they able to use the space effectively? Which aspects work well and which aspects could be improved?
