



Activity: Connected home corner



A home corner that includes technology that children experience in their daily lives can create a space for lots of questions, and provide you the educator with a lot of information about how children use or see technology used in their house. This can be an open-ended space, or you can create a more purposefully-framed play experience by focussing on sending messages and using connected devices to send messages and images to each other. In testing, educators aligned this to send mail or connecting tin cans and scaffolding this into real world experiences for children, such as mum texting a friend to come over and play.

As part of this space, we can model and talk about making sure we ask a parent before we use technology and that we don't watch videos or go on apps unless our parents, or a trusted adult, has helped us.

Readiness

Children are ready for this activity when they are enjoying pretend play or role playing experiences. You can facilitate the discovery of how digital things can be useful by engaging in conversations such as:

- “We can talk to Grandma on the computer because she lives far away in Italy.”
- “Mum uses the phone to do her work.”

Other Playing IT Safe activities to further explore how digital things can be useful include:

- Make a digital thing to keep you safe.
- GPS and tracking.

Description

Part 1: Plan the space

Create a home corner that encourages children to engage with technology as part of role play and provokes them to think about how digital technology is connected in a network. Here are some ideas about how to do that:

- Include either wooden, cardboard or donated types of technology in your home corner. Make sure there are a few different types. For example, a desktop computer, a laptop on the kitchen table, smartphones, tablets, a “smart home” device.
- You can use yarn to connect the different devices in the home corner. On the yarn, hang a paper clip or bulldog clip—or something that can slide along the string—and attach pieces of paper to these. Then explain to children that this is how we “send messages” from phones to computers or tablets, and back again.

- You can extend this into older forms of technology networks, e.g. building tin can phones with string connecting two tin cans.

Part 2: Have conversations

- Use the prompt questions below as a way to start conversations with children about appropriate ways to use technology and keep safe while doing it.

Resources required

Yarn. Cardboard. Broken/disused technology.

Open-ended play

You can support the learning by:

- Allowing children to openly explore and play, while you ask questions and help them to explain their understanding of the digital world in their home.
- Scaffolding and enhancing the experience by drawing on the children's play and what they say.
- Focussing on the understanding that digital networks connect us to many things.

Prompts

The type of questions you could ask on this topic are:

- Who is using that phone/computer/tablet? And, what are they doing with it?
- What are you doing with that piece of technology?
- Who are you talking to on that phone? Where are they?
- If we want to look at videos or visit a website, who do we need with us?
- Why does that phone have a password on it?
- If we saw something on technology that we didn't like or made us feel strange, what should we do?

Learning statement

<Child's name> has demonstrated an understanding that when they talk on video chat they are talking to their grandparents who are on another phone in another country far away. They have understood that the internet is on many different devices and those devices help us "speak" to each other. When they were playing in the home corner and using the technology, they demonstrated an understanding that digital networks connect us to other people.

Alignment

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

This is evident when children:

- Understand the concept that the "internet" and "world wide web" connect people all over the world.
- Identify when or how they have used digital networks to communicate and connect with others.

