**Top tips for dens at home**

Making a den – and playing in it – is a favourite activity for children of all ages. Dens are really easy to make with things you have at home.

**Why are dens so much fun?**

Children enjoy small spaces they can hide in and where they can create their own little worlds. Dens give a feeling of cosiness and can be a lovely place for you to snuggle up with your child. They can be helpful places for your child to relax and have a bit of downtime.

**Things your child can use to make a den**

Your child can make a den with all sorts of things:

* chairs and tables with sheets or blankets draped over them
* cardboard boxes (sometimes supermarkets and other shops will let you take them away)
* clothes driers, pegs and sheets
* washing lines, pegs, tablecloths and shower curtains
* bamboo canes, brooms and brushes with long handles (to make a frame)
* golf umbrellas and cushions.

Your child might need your help finding things they can use to make a den. They might want you to help them make it but try and let them do as much as possible themselves – they will learn more that way.

**Things your child can add to their den**

Here are some things that can be used to decorate or add to a den:

* piles of cushions and pillows
* fairy lights
* flags, tea towels and scarves
* shoe boxes
* a picnic table and camping stools
* things from the kitchen like pots and pans
* teddy bears, other soft toys and dolls.

**Things your child can do in their den**

Your child will probably have plenty of ideas for playing in their den. In your child’s imagination it could be almost anything – for example:

* a hiding place
* a base camp
* a shop
* a magic cave
* a rabbit’s burrow
* a dungeon.

Making the den might be what interests your child the most. Don’t worry if they lose interest after they’ve made it, or if they take it apart.

**Joining your child in their den**

If your child invites you to come into their den to play, you can follow their lead, but try not to take over. They might like you to join them for a snack or tell stories. Or they might just want you to visit, admire their den and then leave them to it.

**Making a den outside**

Dens are great fun to play in outside. A space in a bush or under a hedge can easily make a den. Or your child can make a den outside using a lot of the same things they would use inside. Sturdier materials like waterproof cloth or groundsheets can be good outside, too.