



# The Foundation Years at Home

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## Making and using collections

Collections of simple everyday things that can be found easily around the home are wonderful starting points for encouraging young children to explore and investigate. They can be fun to put together, cost very little and can be used in all sorts of interesting and exciting ways.

The sorts of objects you might want to include in one of your collections will be different from the toys and resources we usually think of as appropriate for young children. This is not a problem. When choosing what to put in your collections just make sure that the things are clean and safe for children to handle and play with.

You can start your collection with things you already have around the home. Depending on the collection, other good sources of interesting things are charity shops, markets and car boot sales, garden centres, kitchen and household shops, builders merchants, the local park, country or seaside.

When you have created your collection think about what you could store it in. Having an interesting box to open adds a lot to the excitement of opening up a collection to explore it. It is also a good idea to talk with your child about the importance of keeping the things in the collection together in one place rather than letting them get spread out and lost.

Use a collection as an interesting way to start a conversation with your child. Explore the collection together and listen to what your child has to say about the different things in the collection – what they are, where they might come from, what you might do with them. You can help the conversation along by asking simple questions such as:

‘I wonder what this could be?’

‘How do you think this might work?’

‘What could we do with this?’

### Collections you could make

- **Toys** - try putting together a collection of toys that move in different ways, or toys that make a noise.
- **Shoes** – include shoes of different sizes, made of different materials, with different fastenings and for different purposes.
- **Hats** – collect together hats used for different purposes and made of different materials.
- **Bags** – collect together bags of different shapes and sizes, colours and materials.
- **Tools** – you could make a collection of kitchen tools that are used for different purposes such as squashing, shaping or measuring.
- **Outdoor collection** – fabric, rope, masking tape, garden wire, clothes pegs – great for joining things together to make a den.
- **Natural things** – look for leaves, grasses, twigs, bark, seed pods, cones and pebbles. You could add some interesting and unusual natural materials from pot-pourri collections.
- **Smelly things** – a collection of scented soaps, old perfume bottles and scented candles.
- **Moving things** - make a collection of wheeled vehicles.
- **Colour** - create a collection of fabric and paper samples or paint shade cards.
- **Sorting things** - use a collection of buttons that can be sorted in lots of different ways.