

# The Best Childrens Kitchen Play Set Options with Guide

Nothing fires up a child's imagination quite like role play where they can mimic what they see the adults of the house doing. A [kitchen play set](#) is exactly the right toy to provide fun activities in a child's bedroom or playroom.

Kitchen play sets provide excellent value for money for the price you pay for them and remain a favourite toy for years. From simple designs to sophisticated interactive accessories, they are one of the most versatile gifts any child could get.

Check out our summary of the top options to suit your family, home and lifestyle. Then, we answer every question you may have about play kitchens and why they are so popular.

## Play kitchen for a small space

Sometimes, space is at a premium and you need a play kitchen that will fit into a tight gap. The clever design of the [Hooga Kids Wooden Play Kitchen](#) provides hours of fun and opportunities for imaginative play but takes up very little room. It's suitable for children over three years of age.

At only 39cm wide, it will fit into most bedrooms and playrooms and is made from safe and sustainably sourced materials. There are so many features to delight little minds and keep little hands busy. Kids will love to move the hands on the clock and the knobs on the oven, use utensils in the pans and add a little salt and pepper to their tasty dish. There is even a rail to hang a tea towel.

## Play kitchen for a toddler

Toddlers are at a golden age of imaginative play and playing at cooking is one of their favourite pastimes. The kid's wooden play kitchen by [Signature](#) is perfect for toddlers and pre-schoolers from the age of three years. It stands at 83cm high so that children can access the features at the top of the kitchen - a clock with hands that they can move around and a microwave oven.

It's made from high-quality MDF wood finished in a warm grey or white colour and has a removable sink in stainless steel in case you want to add in a little water play. There's no harm in encouraging a love of washing up from an early age! There are plenty of interactive features to occupy busy little fingers including clicking knobs on the oven and taps that turn.

## Portable play kitchen

A weekend away does not mean that kitchen play has to stop! A portable play kitchen is an ideal play companion for holidays, stays with family or even camping breaks. It can also be moved easily into the garden to make the most of playing outside on a fine day.

The utensil rack detaches and fits neatly inside the 'oven' which doubles up as a storage space. Everything your child needs for play cooking is included. Kids will love the frying pan, fried egg, pizza and salt cellar. All in all it's a great choice for busy little fingers and kids that like to play at cooking no matter where they are!

## All singing play kitchen for older kids

There are so many interactive features on this play kitchen that it's hard to know where to start! There is plenty to appeal to older kids (and grown ups for that matter) which makes it great value for money and an

investment that will last for years. The [Signature Deluxe Kids Wooden Play Kitchen](#) has a fridge and freezer featuring an ice maker, a microwave oven, a traditional oven and a sink with taps.

The double hob and oven knobs click and the ice maker has both sounds and lights. It comes with a set of 10 stainless steel utensils and a telephone so that you can phone your order through to the kitchen. There's plenty of space and activities - enough to keep two or more children occupied at the same time.

## Play kitchen with lots of accessories

Children love to fiddle with things! From a young age, they delight in putting things in and taking things out of cupboards, stacking things and moving things around. With the [Tender Leaf Play Kitchen](#), they will be spoiled for choice because it is bursting with kitchen accessories.

You'll find the usual range of accessories that you would expect to find in a play kitchen. There are plates, cooking utensils and a utensil holder. Then things start to get really exciting! Children and adults will love the rack of herbs and fish dish with garnish. It encourages children to explore more sophisticated dishes and can help to establish lifelong healthy eating habits. The soap dispenser teaches hygiene in fun way.

It's completed by charming little details like the hand-crafted wicker baskets, the chalkboard and the printed gingham fabric pot holder. The modern, Scandi design made from sustainable rubberwood and painted in non toxic contemporary colours would look great in any playroom or bedroom.

## Our complete guide to play kitchens

There is a wide range of play kitchens for you to choose from so to get you started we've compiled a handy guide. It will give you all the information you need before you place your first order.

### How play kitchens help with learning

Children's kitchen play sets encourage imaginative play and role play which both underpin how kids learn. At first, it may simply be about opening and closing doors and twisting knobs without there being any purpose. However, the simple act of moving the accessories around helps kids refine [fine motor skills](#).

As your child grows older, they will enjoy role play where they can prepare a meal for you - they will copy what they have seen you do in the kitchen. Here are some ways in which they learn:

- **Imitation.** Children learn a lot from imitation and, in a kitchen, they can be a parent preparing a meal for the family, a waiter or a head chef.
- **Vocabulary.** There are so many words associated with cooking. Nouns like fruit, meat and fish; verbs like cook, stir, chop, fry and adjectives like delicious, hot and cold.
- **Healthy food choices.** It's never too early to learn that fruit and vegetables are healthy and to practice the different ways in which they can be prepared.
- **Teamwork, sharing and co-operation.** When more than one child is playing with the kitchen, they will need to take turns and listen to the opinions of others.
- **Organisation and planning.** Making a pretend meal requires a child to follow a series of steps in a particular order.
- **Basic cooking and hygiene skills.** Children learn that some foods must be cooked, others can be eaten raw and some foods are stored in the fridge. They also learn about different ways of cooking.
- **Problem-solving.** If a utensil goes missing, the child will have to hunt through all the cupboards, fridge and oven to find it.

- **Creativity and imagination.** Children can think up meals and choose the way in which they will prepare them.

## What to look for in play kitchens?

Before you get carried away and place an order for a play kitchen, here's a checklist of what you should be looking for.

- **Size.** Where will you put the kitchen and will it fit? Many kids like to play with kitchens until well into their primary school years so it could be in your home for a long time.
- **Sustainability.** Is the kitchen made from natural and sustainable products with non-toxic paints? Many parents would prefer to avoid plastic.
- **Delivery.** Will the kitchen be delivered by the shop and what is the price of delivery?
- **Assembly.** Will the kitchen need to be assembled by you and, if so, how complicated is it?
- **Removable sink.** Does it have a removable sink? This makes water play a lot easier.
- **What is in the kitchen?** Is there a fridge, freezer, oven, microwave or sink?
- **What is included?** Do you get play food to cook with, pots and pans or utensils as part of the package?
- **Durability.** Is it strong enough to stand up to several years of play?

## Wooden vs plastic play kitchens

You have a choice of buying a play kitchen that is made from plastic or wood. Whilst there are some advantages to plastic kitchens (they are cheaper and lighter) wooden kitchens for children are becoming increasingly popular. Here's why:

- **Sustainability.** Most wooden kitchens are made from sustainably sourced material and are therefore less damaging to the environment.
- **Style.** Wooden kitchens look sleeker and more stylish and parents like the look of them in their home.
- **Realistic.** Plastic kitchens tend to be in bright colours and look very unlike an actual adult kitchen. Wooden kitchens are more realistic.
- **Safety.** The quality of wooden kitchens is usually better. They are very well made and do not have loose bits that can peel and fall off.
- **Durability.** Plastic kitchens are cheaply made and things can snap and break. Wood is a durable material that lasts.

## What age are play kitchens for?

The description of most play kitchens stipulate that they are suitable for children over the age of three. This means that they are aimed at older toddlers, pre-schoolers and children of primary school age.

Buying a more sophisticated play kitchen is often a good plan. As your child grows older, they will develop different ways of playing with the kitchen that requires more complex cognitive skills and fine motor skills. Children up to the age of 10 years have happily enjoyed play kitchens especially if there is a younger sibling to join in.

## Where should you put a play kitchen?

Because these toys are so versatile, they work almost anywhere in the home. Many parents locate them in a playroom because this is where all the toys are kept and it is the area of the house where children spend the most time playing.

The living room or lounge is another option. Wooden play kitchens in particular look so chic that they fit in with stylish decor and do not look out of place.

Of course if you have room, the obvious place to locate the play kitchen is your own kitchen! This encourages your child to copy the food preparation techniques that you are using and they can join you in preparing a meal for the family.

Some kitchens are suitable for use outdoors but you need to check that the materials will stand up to the elements. Very few will withstand rain but if you have a play house in the garden this is another option.

## **What do you need to go with a toy kitchen?**

Toy kitchens need things to go in them. It is tempting to use real food but the reality is that this is going to get very messy and could potentially be dangerous. Play food is a much better idea, especially for younger children. Start by checking what utensils and/or food is included in the price of the kitchen. Here are some other ideas.

Tea sets with a tea pot, cups, saucers, and perhaps a milk jug or a sugar bowl are always a great idea and are available in a range of designs. Toy electrical kitchen gadgets are adorable and there seems to be no limit to what is available. You may choose a toy electric kettle, a toaster, an electric mixer or even a coffee machine so that your little one can prepare your morning cappuccino.

The choice of toy food accessories is also seemingly endless. Who can resist a basket containing a collection of wooden play fruit or vegetables, wooden play eggs or [charcuterie](#). Or, how about a fresh fish crate or a crate of cheese and dairy products.

For special occasions, a wooden [birthday cake](#) complete with candles and a knife to separate the slices is nearly as irresistible as the real thing!

## **Sources**

[Hand Skills](#) - NHS