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Encourage estimation by asking questions such as, '*Will we have enough orange segments for everyone?*' There may be an opportunity to highlight a pattern, depending on how the children arrange the fruit.

- As the children's play draws to a conclusion, encourage the children to put all items back in the correct place. This promotes logic and reasoning about where things fit or are kept; this is a mathematical concept too as children have to judge how items correspond to the correct box or shelf, estimating capacity and the room that they have available.
- Let children put all the plates together and stack the cups etc.

Case study

Rose and Stan in the home corner with Grandad Jack

Rose (three years, six months) and Stan (two years, one month) are exploring the home corner. Rose has put four chairs at a round table; she takes four plates from the cupboard and begins to lay the table. Her key person Raj is nearby. Rose turns to Stan and says, 'Get the cups. We need four 'cos Grandad Jack and Murray are here.' Stan hands the cups one by one to Rose who places them alongside the plates.

'We need spoons,' says Rose. Stan collects three spoons from the cutlery basket and Rose places them alongside the plates. Rose realises that they need one more spoon and asks Stan to fetch it. Stan replies, 'All gone.'

Rose looks at Raj, who asks, 'What can we do about that problem?'

Stan picks up a fork and offers it to Rose who places it alongside a plate. Raj congratulates Stan saying, 'Stan you solved the problem.' Stan smiles.

Rose then places Grandad Jack on a chair and Murray the cat on another. She collects two teddy bears from the cosy corner and sits them on the other chairs. When this is done she says, 'They need a snack.' Rose takes the satsumas from the fruit bowl in the middle of the table. She counts 'one, two, three, four', as she lays them on the plates.

Rose looks across at Stan and offers him a satsuma, 'Stan, do you want one? We can share and have half each.' Stan takes the satsuma from Rose and Raj helps him peel and divide it in two.

Stan and Rose have used some mathematical language, they have counted, estimated and have even done some basic addition and subtraction during an activity that could easily have been written up during an observation as just role play with communication and language.