



# A Parents' Guide to Promoting Early Learning and Development at Home: Supporting Families During the Coronavirus Pandemic and Beyond

**POSTER VERSION**

Edited by  
Debra Laxton  
University of Chichester

## Introduction to the Poster Guide

Following significant demand for the original, detailed parents' guide to promoting early learning and development at home, we have developed these posters.

We hope that providing a less formal, easier to read format will enable more families to access the information.

Based on feedback from the original guide given by educators, we believe that the posters will also be useful for early years training and CPD in settings.

The guide aims to help parents and educators understand more about child development and behaviour by reflecting on the areas of learning from England's Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (DfE, 2017).

A range of learning opportunities are highlighted. These ideas show how play and positive interactions can promote effective learning in a fun and informal way.

More information about Early Childhood is freely available on the internet from the Early Years/ Early Childhood MESH Guide (Laxton & Leask, 2017).

## Interactions: Top Tips

- **Take** a little time to observe. What are the children playing? What are the roles and intentions?
- **Consider** whether you need to enter the play, and for what purposes (such as offering suggestions, introducing new ideas or vocabulary, managing the noise or behaviour, extending the activity through additional resources).
- **Try** to play on the children's terms by taking on a role that they suggest, and following their ideas and interests.
- **Participate** alongside and imitate a child's actions to signal that you are in tune and start a playful interaction..
- **Offer** your own ideas when you are sure that they are consistent with the flow of the play.
- **Avoid** asking closed questioning and allow the child to initiate talk
- **Try** not to direct the play. Instead, be alert to the qualities of play, and to the knowledge and skills that children are using and applying.

(Adapted from DCSF, 2009 )



## Helping Children Learn



## Interactions

*Positive interactions inspire learning and support development and encourage children to reach beyond their limits.*

*With attuned, responsive parents children make the most progress in their learning.*

*This does not mean pushing children but understanding what they can do and helping them with their next steps.*

*It means being a partner with children, enjoying the power of their play and curiosity and the thrill of finding out what they can do together.*

(Adapted from DCSF, 2009 )

## Learning Through Play

Play nourishes every aspect of a child's development. It forms the foundation of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional skills. These skills support children in being ready for school and their future lives.



## Play and Learning



Children need the freedom to explore and play. A child's development is influenced by their exploration, thinking, problem-solving and language expression during play.

## How Children Learn

- Through rich and varied play opportunities
- Being with other people
- Being active
- Exploring new experiences
- Talking to themselves
- Communicating to someone who responds to their ideas
- Representing ideas & experiences
- Meeting challenges
- Being shown how to do things
- Practising, repeating & applying skills
- Having fun



These characteristics are crucial to learning and development. How children engage with experiences is key to enjoyment and outcomes.

| Characteristics of Effective Learning  |
|--|
| <p><b>Playing and exploring – engagement</b></p> <p>Finding out and exploring<br/>Playing with what they know<br/>Being willing to 'have a go'</p>   |
| <p><b>Active learning – motivation</b></p> <p>Being involved and concentrating<br/>Keeping trying<br/>Enjoying achieving what they set out to do</p> |
| <p><b>Creating and thinking critically – thinking</b></p> <p>Having their own ideas<br/>Making links<br/>Choosing ways to do things</p>              |

| Area of Learning and Development                  | Aspect                                  |
|---|---|
| <b>Prime Areas</b>                                |   |
| <b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b> | Making relationships                    |
|   | Self-confidence and self-awareness      |
|   | Managing feelings and behaviour         |
| <b>Physical Development</b>                       | Moving and handling                     |
|   | Health and self-care                    |
| <b>Communication and Language</b>                 | Listening and attention                 |
|   | Understanding                           |
|   | Speaking                                |
| <b>Specific areas</b>                             |   |
| <b>Literacy</b>                                   | Reading                                 |
|   | Writing                                 |
| <b>Mathematics</b>                                | Numbers                                 |
|   | Shape, space and measure                |
| <b>Understanding the World</b>                    | People and communities                  |
|   | The world                               |
|   | Technology                              |
| <b>Expressive Arts and Design</b>                 | Exploring and using media and materials |
|   | Being imaginative                       |

(Image taken from Early Education, 2012, p. 5)

- **Parents & Carers are the most important feature** of a baby's world. They would rather be held by and play with you than any toy or resource. As they get older they become more interested in the world around them and in manipulating objects but you remain the most significant thing in their lives.
- **Enjoy your time with your baby** and build a trusting, loving bond that lasts a lifetime.
- **Be sensitive and responsive to your baby's needs**
- **Provide a routine** that meets these needs. This is how they learn to trust you and others.
- **Hold your baby often and always to feed them.** Give your baby your full attention and put any electronic devices to one side so neither of you are distracted when feeding. Babies quickly work out that they prefer the faces of their main carers.
- **Baby massage** can be relaxing for parent and child (you can find some useful videos on YouTube)
- **Talk to your baby about anything and everything** as you share the world around you.
- **Babies quickly learn to 'talk' back** and will turn take in conversation if you allow them the time and respond to their coos and babbles.
- **Exaggerate your facial expressions and use a sing song voice.** Babies will find this easier to tune in to and begin to understand.
- **Play interactive games with your baby** e.g. peek-a-boo



## Ideas to Promote Holistic Learning & Development of Babies



- **Be positive around your baby, smile and show joy.**
- **Sing to them**
- **Dance with them.**
- **Read books and tell stories** from the earliest opportunity.
- **Mirror games** – babies are fascinated by reflections and enjoy exploring. Eventually they learn they are separate to you and they recognise their own face.
- **Babies respond to contrasting colours** (black and white, chequerboard) and bright colours, sound and light. Be alert to noticing these and other things that interest them e.g. moving trees so you can respond and extend their interest.
- **Tummy time** – as part of the daily routine give your baby plenty of opportunity for physical exercise.
- **Playful, relaxing bath times.** Initially sing and soothe and then add playful objects for exploration and fun.
- **Introduce interesting safe objects** that they can grasp and chew to allow sensory and motor development.
- Once your child is able to sit up and manipulate objects **create and provide a treasure basket.** These are an amazing resource of natural objects recognizing the sensory limits of plastic toys (You can find some useful, detailed information online).
- **During weaning allow your child to explore the food** – this is a sensory experience and often the start of mark making. When ready give them a spoon to start the journey to independence.

The acquisition of language and communication skills are fundamentally important in supporting children to be confident, capable individuals with the potential of becoming independent and successful adults.

Language is a complex life skill that most of us learn and use naturally throughout our daily lives without conscious thought. We use the spoken word to process thoughts, share ideas, feelings and experiences.

## Communication & Language



Many skills are required for communication to be successful; the ability to encode or decode messages, maintain attention and listen.

Language is the tool that enables communication and can be the spoken word or non-verbal communication in various forms including facial expression, sign language and the written word.



## Promoting Communication & Language

| What to do  | Top Tips   |
|---|--|
| <b>Value talk</b>   | Being an active listener, fully engaging with what your child has to say and showing you value their contribution encourages them to talk, promotes positive relationships and confidence.                                     |
| <b>Wait, watch &amp; wonder</b>                               | Children will often initiate conversation if given the time, pondering, e.g. using "I wonder" thoughts, is less threatening than asking direct questions. Children are more relaxed and more likely to respond (Fisher, 2016). |
| <b>Thinking time</b>  | Young children need time to process before responding. Count to 10 slowly before prompting them.   |
| <b>Foster positive attachments</b>                            | If your child feels safe and comfortable and knows you care about them they are likely to want to talk to you.   |
| <b>Avoid asking too many questions</b>                        | Instead hold a conversation. When you do ask questions make <i>sure</i> these are open and purposeful. Children are more likely to respond in more detail.   |
| <b>Allow children to lead play and follow their interests</b> | Engaged, excited learners will want to tell you about their play and exploration.  |
| <b>Use a sing song voice with babies</b>                      | This makes it easier for babies to separate sounds in words and enables them to tune in to what you are saying.  |
| <b>Turn technology off</b>                                    | Model putting your own devices to one side. Face-to-face conversations are vital for developing speaking and listening skills and are really rewarding.  |



## Promoting Communication & Language

| What to do                        | Top Tips  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Use commentary</b>             | Model language by talking about what your child is doing.   |
| <b>Use Gestures</b>               | Together with spoken language, gestures capture interest and support understanding.   |
| <b>Repeat children's language</b> | Using correct pronunciation, word order and extending vocabulary by repeating words, models correct language in a sensitive and positive way.   |
| <b>Follow interests</b>           | If you talk about what your children are interested in, they are likely to be more motivated to speak.  |
| <b>TV Time</b>                    | Limit the use of TV and watch together as much as possible. It is an excellent way to spark off conversations and learn new words when an adult can reinforce.  |
| <b>Quiet times</b>                | It's really important to remember that children need quiet time when you turn off background noise and have time just to play. This is really important for listening and language development.                         |
| <b>Imaginative Play</b>           | When children take on a role they express themselves with ease as they get lost in the play.  |
| <b>Use technology</b>             | Keep in touch with relatives or friends they are separated from at this time e.g. e-mail, send photos, video chats to keep in touch and use it as an opportunity to ask your child what they might want to ask and say. |
| <b>Explore photos</b>             | Talk about the differences and similarities – this exercise is great for sharing stories, which are so vital for communication development. For instance, See if you can find a similar photo of when you were young.   |



*“Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food” (DFE, 2017)*

Exercise is essential to maintaining mental and physical health. It is important to be inventive and find ways for children to partake in vigorous physical activity using outdoor places, gardens and the indoors dependent on the space available.

## Physical Development



### Physical activity for early years (birth – 5 years)

Active children are healthy, happy, school ready and sleep better



BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL SKILLS



MAINTAINS HEALTH & WEIGHT



CONTRIBUTES TO BRAIN DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING



IMPROVES SLEEP



DEVELOPS MUSCLES & BONES



ENCOURAGES MOVEMENT & CO-ORDINATION

### Every movement counts

Aim for at least **180** Minutes per day for children 1-5 years



PLAYGROUND



JUMP



CLIMB



MESSY PLAY



THROW/CATCH



SKIP

**Under-1s** at least 30 minutes across the day



OBJECT PLAY



DANCE



GAMES



PLAY



TUMMY TIME



SWIM



WALK



SCOOT



BIKE

**Get Strong. Move More. Break up inactivity**

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

## Promoting Moving and Handling

| Activity                            | Top Tips  |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Animal Moves</b>                 | Discuss how different animals move to encourage your child to move in different ways such as. jumping, running, sliding   | Move freely and with pleasure and confidence in a range of ways  |
| <b>Balance &amp; Control</b>        | Provide ways to promote balance e.g. put a line of tape on the carpet or on a plank on the ground in the garden. You can increase the challenge by suggesting they try backwards, sideways, tiptoes... Stopping and starting games e.g. musical bumps Balance on one leg. Use stopwatches to excite | Gain increasing control and co-ordination of large movements.<br>Moves with increasing confidence in a range of ways appropriate to their age. |
| <b>Dancing</b>                      | Encourage children to use their imagination when moving to a variety of music genres e.g. turning, twisting, freezing, stretching, curling, landing and pivoting  | Travels with increasing confidence and skill.<br>Improves negotiation of space   |
| <b>Long and High jump</b>           | Make this a competition and/ or encourage them to improve their personal best. Measure the length they jump using standard and non-standard measures (see mathematics section). High jump can be from two feet together and a leap frog jump.   | Gain increasing control and co-ordination of large movements.  |
| <b>Assault and obstacle courses</b> | Create these inside or out. Consider what you can use to encourage your children to move in different ways and challenge their capabilities. Allow children to create their own courses.  | Travels with increasing confidence and skill around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment.                                 |
| <b>Using tools and equipment</b>    | See the Literacy (Writing) and Expressive Arts and Design (Exploring and using Media and Resources) posters. Woodwork is great and children are so careful with real tools!   | Develop the capability to handle equipment and tools effectively.  |



## Promoting Health and Self-Care

| Activity                            | Top Tips   | Learning (DfE, 2013)  |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Recipes, Menus &amp; Cooking</b> | As appropriate to the age allow children to make choices about snacks from a range of healthy options and explain in appropriate terms what healthy foods are and why.<br>Create a menu for the week and model/ discuss having a balance of food type  | Eats a healthy range of foodstuffs and understands need for variety in food.  |
| <b>Workout &amp; Yoga</b>           | There are some great YouTube videos specific to children to motivate them. Always try to join in.  | Shows some understanding that exercise can contribute to good health  |
| <b>Time to let them try</b>         | Take time to slow the pace and nurture independence and improve social skills e.g. dressing and feeding themselves, managing small responsibilities e.g. water plants, lay the table.<br>Allow your child to think for themselves by making choices and decisions.<br>Value your children's input, encourage them to voice their thoughts, opinions and ideas. | They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs with growing success   |
| <b>Toilet Training</b>              | Look up tips online. There is some really helpful advice.  | To become dry and clean during the day and then the night.  |
| <b>Hand-washing</b>                 | Model how to properly wash hands.<br>Allow your child to explore hand-washing<br>Use a timer or sing 'Happy Birthday' to manage at least 20 seconds.   | Talks about ways to keep healthy and safe   |
| <b>Personal safety</b>              | Talk to your child throughout daily activities about how to keep safe:<br>Managing tools and equipment safely<br>Stranger danger<br>Road safety<br>Sun safety<br>Safe relationships  | Shows a developing understanding of safety when tackling new challenges, and considers and manages some risks. talk about ways to keep healthy and safe |

## Top Tips to Promote Positive Behaviour

1. **Build a loving relationship**
2. **Focus on the positive:** Provide specific praise that highlights what your child does well. They will be likely to repeat this. Rewards can be useful to support key behaviours e.g. toilet training but the value of a warm hug or valued word should not be underestimated.
3. **Be a positive role model:** Remember children observe and copy the actions and behaviours of those closest to them.
4. **Be realistic:** know that what you are expecting your child to manage is appropriate for their age and capability. Be aware that this changes e.g. when tired or hungry, your child is less likely to manage their feelings as well as at other times.
5. **Make boundaries clear:** discuss them. Have consistent expectations of behaviour related to these.
6. **Reasonable consequences:** These can support understanding of appropriate behaviour. Remember positives MUST outweigh negatives for the child to feel nurtured, valued and to have a positive self- image
7. **Remain calm and in control:** This should prevent escalation.

## Personal, Social & Emotional Development



*“PSE involves helping children:*

- *to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others*
- *to form positive relationships and develop respect for others*
- *to develop social; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings*
- *to understand appropriate behaviour in groups*
- *to have confidence in their own abilities”*

(DfE, 2017)

## Attachment Matters

Being cared for and loved by sensitive, responsive adults enables secure attachments to develop.

Attachments impact on children's:

- Self-image - how they think about themselves
- Resilience – the ability to overcome challenges
- Relationships – trusting others & making friends
- Confidence - to be curious and play & explore
- Behaviour – ability to regulate emotions
- Academic - short and long term achievements



## Promoting self-confidence

## Helping children learn about & manage feelings

| Activity                        | Top Tips   | Learning (DfE, 2013)  |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Fostering Attachments</b>    | Openly show your child love and affection. Be sensitive, consistent & responsive to changing needs<br>'Tune in' so you understand your child's point of view and can be genuinely empathetic   | To trust you and other adults<br><br>To separate from you knowing you will return and others will substitute the care they need |
| <b>Listen &amp; Value</b>       | Value your child's input however insignificant it may appear to you. This makes a difference to the child who feels acknowledged and empowered.  | Confident to speak to others about own needs, wants, interests and opinions.  |
| <b>Realistic expectations</b>   | Allow your child to succeed by providing realistic, consistent boundaries that are clearly explained. Challenge your child within their limits and they are likely to strive to achieve. Too high expectation can mean your child moves to a panic zone that is overwhelming and demotivates | Can describe self in positive terms and talk about abilities  |
| <b>Positive Role Model</b>      | Demonstrate your confidence and share times you are unsure – It shows it is okay to feel this way.<br>Children learn how to behave and what to expect from you.<br>Praise your child, children need to hear much more praise than criticism to be confident, strong learners.                | Welcomes and values praise for what they have done  |
| <b>The old and the new</b>      | Children love repeating positive, familiar experiences, but they need new experiences too.   | Explores through play with developing confidence and independence   |
| <b>Exploration and no wrong</b> | Allow children to play freely often. When there are no strict rules and you can't do it wrong e.g. block play, play dough, it allows the child to engage with and increase confidence.   | Can select and use activities and resources with help and later growing independence  |



| Activity  | Top Tips   | Learning (DfE, 2013)  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>The Language of Emotion</b>                                  | Model the language of emotions to discuss how you feel and to comment on how they and others may be feeling<br>Encourage your child to talk about how they feel.<br>Use visual prompts e.g. simple emoticons, drawing faces, stories to aid understanding  | First to express feelings, then identify them, then manage feelings and finally empathise with how others may feel.                   |
| <b>6 steps to conflict resolution</b><br><br>(High/Scope, year) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions</li> <li>2. Acknowledge your child's feelings</li> <li>3. Gather information</li> <li>4. Re-state the problem</li> <li>5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose 1 together</li> <li>6. Be prepared to give follow up support</li> </ol> | To negotiate and resolve conflict with increasing independence<br>talk about how they and others show feelings                        |
| <b>Puppets, dolls and soft toys</b>                             | Use puppets and soft toys to model conversations and to encourage your child to talk (it is often easier for them to talk 'through' something else).<br>Use these to address sensitive issues as they arise  | Development of empathy<br>Develop an understanding that own actions can affect others<br>Talk about how they and others show feelings |
| <b>Routines</b>   | Try to provide a routine<br>Within the routine allow for calm, quieter times<br>Within the routine ensure children have opportunities to explore sharing<br>Allow children to help where appropriate e.g. making beds.   | To feel safe and secure<br>Time to reflect<br>Can take turns and share resources  |
| <b>Use stories, mirrors and photos</b>                          | Stories often have a moral or a journey of emotion within them.<br>Discuss the feelings and why the characters may have those feelings.<br>Pull faces in the mirror together that reflect emotions and talk about these.   | Talk about how they and others show feelings  |
| <b>Pretend Play</b>   | Provide opportunities to dress up and act out scenarios - children will have the opportunity to explore feelings and experiences and feel safe to do so.   | Talk about how they and others show feelings  |



“Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest” (DFE, 2017)

Children imitate the adults around them. Reading books and writing shows children the value of these skills.

## Literacy



Speaking and listening skills are vital for the development of reading and writing. Share conversations, songs and books with children to encourage these skills.

Children will give meaning to marks they make using their imagination before they are able to form recognisable letters.

## Promoting Reading

| Activity                    | How adults can support   | Learning (DfE, 2013)  |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Listening for Sounds</b> | Set a timer for one minute and sit outside, open the window or walk around a room. What sounds can your child hear? Can they imitate any of these sounds?  | Listen attentively in a range of situations   |
| <b>Story and Rhyme Time</b> | <p>Try creating a cosy reading den space together using blankets and chairs.</p> <p>When reading rhyming books, encourage your child to join in by pausing to see if they can complete the rhyme . Can they also think of a rhyming nickname for each family member?</p> <p>Encourage your child to talk about their favourite book, pages and characters.</p>   | <p>Anticipates phrases in rhymes and stories</p> <p>Enjoys an increasing range of books</p>                     |
| <b>Letter Detective</b>     | <p>Encourage your child to become a detective by hunting for letters, such as the first letter in their name. Look inside books during the bedtime story, recipe books, or on the front of post which arrives through the door.</p> <p>Create a word search for your child containing a familiar letter, name or simple words. Ask your child to say the sound of the letters aloud when they find them.</p> | <p>Begins to show an interest in print in books and print in the environment</p> <p>Links sounds to letters</p> |
| <b>I Spy</b>                | Play 'I spy with my little eye' with your child to help them hear the initial sound in words. To make this game easier gather a selection of objects or toys starting with the same sound for your child to choose from. For example, a scarf, saucepan and snake.   | Hears and says the initial sound in words   |
| <b>Musical Statues</b>      | Place letters familiar to your child on the floor. Play music and ask them to dance. When the music stops say a sound and see if they can run to the matching letter. If you have access to an outside area, you adapt this game by placing the letters on fences or walls where they can run to each letter or aim at them with balls.  | Links sounds to letters.  |



## Promoting Writing

| Activity                   | How adults can support   | Learning (DfE, 2013)   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Pretend Play</b>        | Provide your child with writing materials and tools when they are engaging in imaginative play. For example if they are pretending to be a doctor, provide them with a notepad to encourage them to pretend to write a prescription. Allow daily access to materials which you have already in the home for making marks. For example, old notepads or diaries, pencils, paint, post-it notes, adult pens and chalk.   | Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint               |
| <b>Writing for Purpose</b> | Build in opportunities for your child to write for a specific purpose. This could include writing letters to family and friends, a shopping list for the weekly shop or a thank you card.  | Write in meaningful contexts   |
| <b>Name Writing</b>        | Together, choose a special place where their name is displayed for them to see every day. This could be their bedroom door or where they eat their meals for instance. Ensure the first letter in their name is written as a capital letter and all remaining letters in their name are in lower case. Encourage them to write their name on any artwork they are proud of to promote the purpose of name writing. Try making a string washing line inside and writing the letters in their name on pieces of paper for them to hang with pegs in the correct order. | Writes own name  |
| <b>Sensory Writing</b>     | <p>Before encouraging your child to use a paper and pencil to write new letters first encourage them to try forming the letters by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tracing the letter in the air with their finger</li> <li>-Drawing it on your back</li> <li>-Using their finger to create the letter in a baking tray filled with sensory materials such as salt, flour or lentils.</li> </ul>   | Uses some clearly identifiable letters                                       |
| <b>Storytelling</b>        | <p>Encourage your child to tell you stories. Make a storytelling hat together out of paper or cardboard and take it in turns to wear the hat and become the storyteller.</p> <p>As part of the bedtime story routine, tell your child a story about the events of the day featuring themselves as a character. When they are used to this process encourage them to create their own story for their day.</p>  | Develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. |

## Mathematics

*“Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measure” (DfE, 2017).*

Children need to explore Mathematical concepts in playful ways from an early age. Children build key foundations, develop mathematical thinking and a positive attitude that allows them to become Mathematicians.



### Promoting an Understanding of Numbers

| Activity                 | Tips   | Learning (DfE, 2013)  |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Number Hunt</b>       | Hide numbers around the house and/or in the garden<br>Encourage your child to find these, match similar numbers and order numbers.<br>You can also use objects that can be counted and then matched to the numeral   | Match numerals<br>Number recognition<br>Order numbers<br>Match numeral and quantity   |
| <b>Pretend Shop Play</b> | Discuss the idea of creating a shop with your child and set up the chosen shop , price objects in low amounts and use real coins<br>Have mark making resources available to encourage writing of words and numbers<br>Play with your child, allowing them to lead and swap roles | Organise and categorise objects<br>Number recognition<br>Money has value<br>Uses everyday language related to money e.g. cost, change, price, total |
| <b>Number Songs</b>      | Source number songs online to have a variety and allow familiarity to build before adding a new song. Sing them over and over so your child gets to know them<br>Sing together and use actions wherever possible .   | Uses number names<br>Develops understanding of number and counting forwards and backwards<br>Use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting  |
| <b>Number Lines</b>      | Provide number labels and number lines for children to use and refer to in their play<br>You can use string (never leave your child alone with this) with pegs that your child can explore by moving numbers around.   | Number recognition<br><br>Order numbers   |

## Promoting an Understanding of Numbers

## Promoting an Understanding of Shape, Space & Measure

| Activity   | Top Tips  | Learning (DfE, 2013)   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Use everyday situations to develop mathematical language &amp; thinking</b> | <p>Count in everyday situations e.g. the stairs, building.</p> <p>Spot numbers in the environment e.g. house/ bus numbers</p> <p>Play games that encourage counting and number recognition</p> <p>Talk about birthdays - dates and months</p> <p>Use snacks as opportunities to discuss amounts and sharing e.g. half, fair, more, less</p> | <p>Number names in sequence</p> <p>Develop an interest in numerals</p> <p>Make comparisons between quantities</p> <p>Recognise numerals of personal significance, sequencing</p> <p>Solve mathematical problems</p>  |
| <b>Writing Numerals</b>  | <p>Encourage mark making in number writing and representations</p> <p>Encourage number writing for a purpose in play e.g. football numbers, car registrations, taking the register</p>  | <p>Number recognition</p> <p>Experiment with symbols/ marks representing ideas of number</p> <p>Match numeral and quantity</p>   |
| <b>Hand/ Finger Play</b>   | <p>Encourage children to match their fingers and or toes to numbers</p> <p>Put hands behind backs and count together, one, two, three, four, five. Bring out hands with the correct number showing</p>  | <p>Estimates how many objects they can see and checks by counting them</p> <p>Ordering number names</p>  |
| <b>Small World Play</b>  | <p>Provide resources and model counting</p> <p>Count groups of objects in different layouts</p> <p>Provide small world play from familiar stories, giving reasons for counting and encourages number talk</p>   | <p>Use language 'more' and 'fewer' to compare sets of objects</p> <p>Organise and categorise objects</p> <p>Knows that a group of things changes in quantity when something is added or taken away</p> <p>Know that numbers identify how many objects are in a set</p> |

| Activity                                | Top Tips  | Learning (DfE, 2013)  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Positional Games</b>                 | Use toys to talk about the position: where is...? behind, inside, on top, in front of .....   | Positional language   |
| <b>Heuristic Play (Natural Objects)</b> | Provide children with a range of age appropriate objects e.g. buttons, shells, fir cones, milk bottle lids and various containers to explore  | Understands mathematical concepts e.g. size, shape, sorting, properties                         |
| <b>Pattern Play</b>                     | Take opportunities to observe and explore patterns such as drawing and bead threading, Point out patterns around the house e.g. shapes and colours on bedding (red flower, purple square, red flower, purple square).   | <p>Notice shapes and patterns in pictures</p> <p>Recognises, creates and describes patterns</p> |
| <b>Exploring shape</b>                  | <p>Set up shape hunts inside and outside</p> <p>Encourage building using blocks, construction kits, recycled materials.</p> <p>Model correct shape language.</p> <p>Discuss the properties of shape e.g. a dice has 6 faces</p> <p>Feely bag of different shaped objects for guessing from the feel</p> | <p>Identifies shapes accurately</p> <p>Uses mathematical terms to describe shapes</p>           |
| <b>Exploring Weight</b>                 | <p>Cook using spoons, cups and kitchen scales</p> <p>Discuss weight e.g. mine is heavier, are they the same weight ?</p> <p>Use a sand timer to measure 2 minutes of teeth brushing</p>   | Uses language of weight/time/capacity/measure   |
| <b>Exploring Time</b>                   | <p>Discuss times of the day/ make a timeline e.g. morning, before snack time, 5 minutes time. Talk about yesterday, today, tomorrow.</p> <p>Use objects (non-standard measures) to measure length e.g. the chair is 6 spoons long, the flower pot is 2 sticks high</p>                                  | <p>Understands some talk about present, past and future</p> <p>Orders by length</p>             |
| <b>Exploring Measure</b>                | <p>Provide standard measures too e.g. rulers, tape measures for exploration</p> <p>Opportunities to explore space with their bodies e.g. crawling in spaces</p>   |   |
| <b>Exploring Capacity</b>               | Provide different sized containers for filling and pouring in the bath, water/sand play. Model language e.g. empty, full, half full/ empty  |   |
| <b>Matching &amp; Sorting Games</b>     | Provide a wide range of natural objects and materials as well as general toys that motivate children to naturally match, sort and categorise  | Categorise objects according to properties such as shape or size                                |



## Understanding the World

This is a colourful area of learning that is filled with opportunity. Use your home and available outdoor spaces to help children engage with the world around them. Provide activities that engage them and promote curiosity. They need to investigate objects from the past and present. Talk to children about their families, places they walk to and objects they find.



**Technology:** *children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes (DfE, 2017).*

**The World:** *children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes (DfE, 2017).*

**People and Communities:** *children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions. (DfE, 2017)*

## Understanding the Word Aspect: People and Communities

| Activity  | Top Tips  | Learning (DfE, 2013)   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Using Pictures And Artefacts</b><br>(objects of cultural or historical interest) | <p>Go through a photograph album or look at pictures online – sequence those pictures in age order to begin an understanding of the sequence of time</p> <p>Make a picture narrative of the day to understand sequencing and to develop words relating to the passing of time. As you proceed through a day take some pictures, and then by downloading a simple animation app, you can make a film of your day</p> <p>When outside look at the different types of houses and see if you can spot houses that are older, look at different characteristics of houses and think about how they compare to a modern house</p> | <p>Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members</p> <p>Spotting similarity and differences and change over time</p>   |
| <b>Story</b>  | <p>Use story time to develop sequencing ...many books aimed at young children have plenty of references to time passing</p> <p>Read stories that challenge stereotypes, for example where all family types are discussed as opposed to a traditional nuclear family</p> <p>Make picture cards of your favourite stories and then try and place them in the correct order, or after reading a story, try and recount all the important events</p> <p>Go out on a walk with a digital camera and take pictures of curious or old objects that are encountered on the walk. Use these as a basis for a simple story</p>        | <p>To develop chronology and sequencing</p> <p>now about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions</p> <p>To develop chronology and sequencing</p> <p>To spot objects from the past and develop historical imaginations</p> |



## Understanding the Word Aspect: The World

| Activity                             | Top Tips  | Learning (DfE, 2013)  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Home activities</b>               | <p>Do a daily weather check and log the weather</p> <p>Travel with Barnaby Bear to different geographical locations using BBC Bitesize clips</p>  | <p>Children observe changes in their environment</p> <p>To understand how different environments are similar or different</p> |
| <b>Garden or exercise activities</b> | <p>Make a log of change over time by noting changes in the garden – spring flowers. Log and name different plants</p> <p>Go on a minibeast hunt in the garden</p> <p>Make a very simple picture map of a favourite play park</p> <p>Make a plan of your house</p> <p>Using a digital camera take pictures of different street furniture that you pass</p> | <p>Children make observations of plants and animals</p> <p>To know about features of your own environment</p>                 |

## Understanding the Word Aspect: Technology

| Activity                   | Top Tips  | Learning (DfE, 2013)   |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Story</b>               | <p>Look at a range of interactive storybooks, those that have lift the flaps or moving parts</p>  | <p>To recognise how technology is used for particular purposes</p> |
| <b>Technology and Play</b> | <p>Challenge children to manoeuvre a toy in a more precise manner. A remote-control car can be a good way to do this – construct a pretend car park out of toy bricks and ask children to park in different spaces. This can be accompanied by the use of directional language</p> <p>Encourage children in their play to switch and click play materials so they can understand that they can make things happen. E.g. use play phones, play walky-talkies, play supermarket cashiers.</p> | <p>To understand how to control technology for a purpose</p>       |

*“Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities:*

*art,  
music,  
movement,  
dance,  
role-play  
and design and technology”*

(DFE, 2017)



## Expressive Arts & Design



By encouraging children to experiment and use skills to explore a wide range of media and materials we promote their ability to explore and understand their world and make links between their experiences.

Being imaginative is a creative process. Play and creativity are intrinsically linked.

(Compton et al., 2010)



## Promoting Exploration and Use of Media and Materials

| Activity                                     | Top Tips   | Learning (DfE, 2013)  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Mark making</b>                           | Provide a range of implements e.g. pencils, feathers, fingers, chalk to explore making marks on a range of materials e.g. paper, soil, sand<br>Provide a range of painting activities<br>Provide natural and manufactured objects e.g. feathers, shells, leaves, ice, mini-beasts, for children to touch, explore, talk about and draw.  | Experiments with blocks, colours and marks<br>Explores what happens when colours are mixed  |
| <b>Design and Create Models and Collages</b> | Use available materials e.g. fabrics, recyclable materials, boxes, tubes, cartons, bottle tops, card, paper with a range of separating and joining tools e.g. scissors, string, glue to make model   | Uses specific tools safely for appropriate tasks<br>Understands that different media can be combined to create new effects.   |
| <b>Exploring malleable materials</b>         | Allow children time, space and freedom to explore different malleable materials e.g. playdough, cornflour, custard powder, sand, mud<br>Use these materials without tools for children to understand their properties e.g. by squeezing, pressing, pulling, rolling, pinching, poking, stretching, tearing.<br>Then use materials with tools. Allow children to observe you using and exploring available tools so they can make choices about what to use and when. | Explores and experiments with a range of media through sensory exploration<br>Describes the texture of resources<br>Uses various construction materials<br>Manipulates materials to achieve a planned effect. |
| <b>Explore Music</b>                         | Play a variety of music from classical to pop<br>Sing familiar nursery rhymes and songs and introduce new ones.<br>Play sounds from around the world<br>Move, clap and dance to music  | Builds a repertoire of songs<br>Moves rhythmically<br>Moves from spontaneous movement, to copying and planning movement to music  |
| <b>Making musical instruments</b>            | Use recyclable materials alongside other resources e.g. elastic bands, rice and pasta to make a variety of instruments e.g. drums, shakers, stringed instruments<br>Use instruments to sound out syllables in words e.g. names, building up to playing along to songs  | Taps out syllables<br><br>Taps out rhymes   |



## Promoting Opportunities to Be Imaginative

| Activity                            | Top Tips  | Learning (DfE, 2013)   |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Music &amp; Movement</b>         | Resources to stimulate spontaneous movement e.g. fabrics, scarves, feathers, ribbons<br>Add music of varied sound and tempo   | Expresses self through physical action and sound.  |
| <b>Pretend Play</b>                 | Provide the opportunity for meaningful imaginative role play with other family members<br>clothes or costumes that suggest a character and specific movement response<br>Resources and props to stimulate symbolic play e.g. boxes, blocks, fabrics that can represent whatever your child wants them to be   | Expresses self through physical action and sound.<br>Pretends that one object represents another<br>Create simple representations of events, people and objects    |
| <b>Small world play</b>             | Provide resources for children to play imaginatively with such as small figures, animals and resources to extend the imaginative play and creative thought.   | Expresses self<br>Create simple representations of events, people and objects  |
| <b>Imaginary Worlds</b>             | Encourage your child to use their interests to create imaginary spaces e.g. dens can become homes or caves, small world resources like water toys can lead to pretend underwater spaces being created.<br>Make puppets using ideas from above and from socks, bags etc.<br>Allow your child to experience performance by staging made- up productions of stories, puppet shows and dance. | Pretends that one object represents another<br>Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play.<br>Create simple representations of events, people and objects |
| <b>Story telling &amp; Scribing</b> | Encourage children to create their own stories and tell these to you to scribe. Then act these out together.<br>Over time, repeating this activity regularly can lead to children telling complex stories, acting these out and eventually wanting to write their own stories.  | Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play.<br>Create simple representations of events, people and objects  |
| <b>Sharing stories and rhymes</b>   | Tel your child stories and rhymes introduced in a range of ways, including traditional and modern ones as well as made up songs and stories by adults.  | Expresses self through physical action and sound.  |
| <b>Explore music &amp; sound</b>    | As described in previous table  | Expresses self through physical action and sound.  |



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This document and other information related to SKIP for Early Years Educators can be freely accessed and downloaded from:

<https://www.skipforeyeducators.co.uk>

