



Communication 2-3 years

Did you know?

Your child learns best through activities and experiences that engage all the senses.



How can you help?

- Read books with your child as often as you can. Talk about the pictures. Let them fill in parts of familiar stories.
- Make time to listen to your child when they are telling you something. Stop what you are doing and get down to their level.
- If your child's sentence is muddled don't correct them but repeat back to them how they could have said it.
- Join in play with your child, following their lead.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes, pausing for them to fill in missing words.
- Your child is still learning new words and hearing them many times will help them learn them quicker.
- Don't correct words that are not said correctly, as with muddled sentences just repeat back the word said with the correct sounds.
- Play games that take turns such as simple pairs, lotto or catching a ball.
- Restrict the amount of TV your child watches. Make sure that your child has plenty of opportunities to interact with you, the rest of the family and friends.
- Talk about and involve your child in everyday situations such as shopping, cooking or cleaning. Your child will enjoy these more when they are given a role to play and are included in conversations as they happen.

What I like

- Singing songs.
- To ask questions beginning with 'who', 'what' and 'why'..

What I can do

- I can put lots of words together and have a conversation with you.
- I am beginning to be able to talk about things that happened in the past as well as things that are happening now.
- I can understand questions that you ask beginning with 'who' and 'where' and I'm beginning to understand 'why' questions.
- I am learning the meaning of words that describe size such as 'big' and 'little', colour such as 'red', 'yellow' or 'black' and position such as 'in', 'on' or 'under' and I use these to tell you about things.

- I can listen to longer stories and enjoy familiar ones where I can join in.
- I am beginning to understand about emotions and may be able to tell you how I am feeling, if not I will do soon.
- I may still have difficulty making some sounds but you should be able to understand me most of the time. Other people may find it more difficult.

Communication 3-4 years

Did you know?

As your child develops speaking and listening skills they build the foundations for literacy and learning. Your child needs varied opportunities to interact with others and to use a wide variety of resources for expressing their understanding.



How can you help?

- Read books with your child as often as you can. Talk about the pictures. Let them fill in parts of familiar stories. Read favourite books frequently.
- Make time to listen to your child when they are telling you something. Stop what you are doing and get down to their level. Have a special time to talk about their day.
- If your child's sentence is muddled don't correct them but repeat back to them how they could have said it.
- Join in pretend play with your child, following their lead. Let them be the 'mum' or 'teacher'.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes, pausing for them to fill in missing words.
- Introduce games with rules, such as 'snakes and ladders'.
- Your child is still learning new words and hearing them many times will help them learn them quicker.
- Don't correct words that are not said correctly, as with muddled sentences just repeat back the word said with the correct sounds.
- Restrict the amount of TV your child watches. Make sure that your child has plenty of opportunities to interact with you, the rest of the family and friends.
- Talk about and involve your child in everyday situations such as shopping, cooking, and cleaning. Your child will enjoy these more when they are given a role to play and are included in conversations as they happen.

What I like

- Playing with others

What I can do

- I am using longer sentences and beginning to link sentences by using 'and', 'but' and 'because'.
- I can talk about events in the past and present.
- I can retell stories.
- The number of words I know is continuing to grow.
- I may still have a problem with some sounds but most people understand me most of the time.
- I can understand questions beginning with 'why'.
- I may still make some mistakes with grammar, for example saying 'mouses' instead of 'mice'.
- I can carry out a sequence of actions or instructions.

- I can join in games with rules and understand taking turns and sharing.
- I can listen to longer stories.
- I am beginning to understand simple jokes.
- I am beginning to form friendships.

Communication 4-5 years

Did you know?

As your child develops speaking and listening skills they build the foundations for literacy and learning. Your child needs varied opportunities to interact with others and to use a wide variety of resources for expressing their understanding.



How can you help?

- Continue to spend time looking at and reading books together. Talk about new words and their meanings.
- Make sure you give your child time to talk, your child is trying to express more complex ideas and may need more time to respond to questions while they are getting their words sorted out before they speak.
- Repeat back to your child what they said but reword it into a correct sentence rather than correcting them.
- Play games with sounds and rhymes. This will help with developing reading and writing skills.
- Play board games to develop listening, turn taking and following rules. These can also be good for showing examples of good social language.
- Make sure you set a good example of social language by using words such as 'please' and 'hello' at appropriate times so that your child can use these words and recognise when they are needed.
- Involve your child in everyday routines.
- Encourage imaginative play and join in pretend games with your child.
- Make sure you know what your child is learning at pre-school or school and reinforce with games, books and activities at home. This will help them learn new words more easily and allow them to practice and use language associated with their learning more often.
- Be aware of when you are using expressions such as 'pull your socks up', make sure you explain the meaning. This can be fun for children to learn at this age.

What I like

- Telling jokes with my friends, although they may not always be funny.

What I can do

- I can listen to what you are saying whilst carrying on with what I am doing.
- My sentences are much more complex and adult like.
- I can have more detailed conversations with you, including talking about the past, present and future.
- I can understand more complex instructions including using sequences like first and last.
- I can plan games with my friends.

- I can listen to longer stories.
- I can play games with rules and take my turn with a larger group of people.
- I like to play imaginary games with my toys and with my friends.
- I'm beginning to understand when you use expressions such as 'shake a leg' but you will need to explain these when you first use them.

Mathematics 2-3 years

Did you know?

Every day brings opportunities for your toddler to learn about numbers, shape, space, sorting and matching.



How can you help?

- Make the most of dressing, bedtime, shopping and other everyday activities to count stairs, buttons, cups, or anything else. Talk about lots, one more or less and how many.
- When singing counting rhymes and songs, such as Five little ducks, act it out using your fingers or objects that your toddler can see and touch.
- Help your toddler sort coins by shape or size, big and little, on to plates or into bags, purses or jars.
- Play hide and seek games and talk about where you found them - in, on or under?
- Give your toddler different sized containers to fill and empty at bathtime.
- Point out shapes, patterns and numbers when you're out shopping or at the park. Talk to your toddler about things being round, pointy, having corners, or being the same or different.
- Play skittles or hopscotch and give your toddler objects that are different weights to throw. Talk about how heavy or light they are, and how far or high they can throw them.

What I like

- To play with lots of interesting objects, so that I can explore their weight, shape and size.
- To hear you talk about simple shapes, sizes and patterns, so that I can learn how to recognise and use the words myself.
- Playing with blankets and boxes that I can hide in, on and under.
- Filling different containers with sand or water.
- Counting steps, jumps etc

What I can do

- Say some numbers in the right order.
- Recognise that things are different shapes and sizes.
- Give you one or two objects when you ask me to.

Children develop at their own rates and in their own ways. The above is typical ranges of development. If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your GP or health visitor for advice.

Mathematics 3-4 years

Did you know?

Your child is starting to use and understand words such as in, on, under, round and tall.



How can you help?

- Use junk modelling, such as empty boxes and tubes to explore 3D shapes. Use large boxes that your child can get into.
- Make an obstacle course with your child and use words such as under, over and through.
- Use a wheelbarrow or bag to move objects. Talk to your child about things being lighter or heavier than each other.
- Read stories, like Goldilocks and the three bears and talk about size such as big, bigger and biggest.
- When you're out encourage your child to look out for numbers, such as on cars, houses, buses and post boxes.
- Play pretend games, such as at the cafe, shop or on the bus and use money or count things together.
- Play games such as hopscotch and What's the time Mr Wolf?
- Begin to introduce adding and taking away, such as building sandcastles and knocking them down.
- Sing counting songs and rhymes such as Ten green bottles and count it out on your fingers.

What I like

- Using real objects.
- Trying out new ideas.
- Helping you with everyday jobs.

What I can do

- Count to three.
- Say some numbers in the right order.
- Start to recognize shapes and describe them.

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Mathematics 4-5 years

Did you know?

Your child is learning when they are watching you using maths and maths language in everyday ways.



How can you help?

- Collect everyday items, like milk bottle tops, which your child can sort into colours or sizes and count.
- Let your child help to pay for things in shops when you're paying with coins.
- Talk about time, such as "How long does it take to get to the park?".
- Let your child help you at home when you're using numbers, such as measuring ingredients for cooking or measuring for DIY.
- Go on a shape hunt and point out all the shapes you see, such as square windows or round wheels.
- Together, look at numbers on cars, houses, buses or road signs.
- Count how many things you see, such as lampposts.
- Play games that involve moving counters backwards and forwards while counting, such as snakes and ladders.
- Play card games where you have to match things, like snap.
- Play games such as skittles, where you keep score and count how many are knocked down.
- Use estimates in everyday activities, such as asking "How many cakes will we need if Granny and Grandad come to tea?".
- Hide objects and use clues to help your child to find them, such as "It's on top of the table, next to the remote control".

What I like

- Using real objects and solving real problems.
- Helping you with everyday jobs.
- Having time to investigate problems and try out new ideas.

What I can do

- Talk about shapes.
- Count things like claps, steps or jumps.
- Use my fingers to show a number.
- See and point out numbers around me.

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Physical Development 2-3 years

Did you know?

Rough and tumble play helps your child to know their own strength and control their body movements.



How can you help?

- Provide large pieces of paper to make marks on, or go outside and use chunky chalks on your path or patio.
- When out and about, have fun jumping in puddles and playing marching games.
- Play catching or hitting a balloon or beach ball, or play Simon Says games
- Do the actions to Row, Row, Row Your Boat, this will help strengthen your child's arm muscles.
- Encourage your child to help you add and stir in ingredients when you're cooking a sauce or making a cake and to spread their own butter on their toast.
- Provide toys to wind-up, bubble wrap to pop, water toys to squirt and raisins to drop into a small container. These actions use the thumb and first finger and will help strengthen your child's pincer grip.
- Introduce containers with screw lids, this will strengthen their wrist muscles.
- Encourage your child to stack, roll and carry food tins, this will support their coordination.
- Use boxes to play posting games.
- Encourage your child to snip play dough or shred paper.
- Encourage your child to wash their dolls face and tummy using an anti-clockwise movement, this will support their writing skills later on.

What I like

- Helping with jobs around the house.
- Playing running and ball games outside.

What I can do

- Take apart and put together large construction toys.
- Jump on the spot with two feet.
- Walk downstairs.
- Throw a small ball overarm without falling.
- Walk with an adult for more than 15 minutes.
- Turn pages of a book one at a time.
- Draw vertical lines.
- Snip with scissors.
- Feed myself using a fork.
- Drink from an open cup.
- Put on some of my clothes.
- Pour from a small jug.

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Physical Development 3-4 years

Did you know?

The most advanced level of movement, is the ability to stay completely still.

How can you help?



- Encourage your child to dress and undress themselves, even with clothes that have zips and buttons.
- When out and about, encourage your child to run up and down hills.
- Play whole body action rhymes such as Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
- Play tennis with a balloon and fly swat or cardboard tube.
- Encourage your child to help with sweeping the floor, hoovering, carrying toy boxes and shopping bags.
- Give your child objects to stir in a saucepan such as conkers, corks and rice, which they can scoop and pour into different size containers.
- Rip up paper together, this will strengthen your child's wrist movements.
- Draw patterns in mud with your child.
- Make up fun movements for your child to copy.

What I like

- To run, jump, skip and hop outdoors.

What I can do

- Climb up and jump off a low object.
- Negotiate space successfully when playing chase and stop games.
- Respond to music by moving my body rhythmically.
- Catch and kick a large ball.
- Cut along a line.
- Draw horizontal and vertical lines and a circle.
- Put most of my clothes on myself.
- Use a tissue to wipe my nose.
- Wash my own hands with soap and dry them myself without help.
- Feed myself with a spoon and a fork and pour my own drink.

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Physical Development 4-5 years

Did you know?

Children at this age should be active daily for at least three hours, spread throughout the day.



How can you help?

- Give your child small coins to post through a slot, kitchen tongs to pick up small objects, or a food baster to blow a ping-pong ball into a goal.
- When outside, encourage your child to carry buckets of sand, gravel, adult watering cans and push a wheelbarrow.
- Play tug of war games and go on wheelbarrow walks with your child.
- Play hopping and crawling races, or dance outside with scarves and streamers.
- Play Hop Scotch and create targets to throw balls at.
- At the park, encourage your child to put their tummy on a swing seat and swing.
- Make an obstacle course to go under, over, and through using things like boxes, duvets, cushion, air beds and tables.
- Play musical bumps and musical statues.
- Encourage your child to dress themselves, when you are not in a hurry.
- Encourage your child to help lay the table, empty the dishwasher, peg out the clothes and wash the car.
- Practice large arm movements by letting your child help with cooking, mixing, rolling pastry, icing, scooping and scraping out the bowl.
- Encourage your child to hang their head upside down from the edge of the sofa.

What I like

- To challenge myself with only a little support.
- To push the boundaries and take risks.

What I can do

- Climb well.
- Jump on and off a low object.
- Adjust my speed and change direction to avoid objects while running.
- Throw, catch and kick a ball.
- Copy simple movements and simple constructions.
- Cut a circle.
- Draw simple, recognisable pictures.
- Dress myself most of the time, for instance put on my own coat and do up the zip.
- Use a knife and fork.
- Hold my own weight using my arms.

Children develop at their own rates and in their own ways. The above is typical ranges of development. If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your GP or health visitor for advice

Reading 2-3 years

Did you know?

At this age, children are beginning to connect the idea of stories with books. Reading together will introduce your child to new words and increase their vocabulary. It's also a lovely way to relax and spend time together.



How can you help?

- Use books in a variety of situations like in the car, in the bath, joined to your buggy, in the garden or in the kitchen.
- Try using a cookery book when you're making cakes with your child.
- Turn off the TV and radio as too much background noise is distracting for both of you.
- Look at books with flaps to lift and sound buttons to push.
- Read stories with lots of repetition as your child will like to join in. Leave a gap if there is a phrase they know well so they can say it.
- Sing and say lots of rhymes and songs and do the actions together. Most libraries run sessions where you can meet other parents and learn some new rhymes as well as enjoying your favourites.
- Read some books that are not stories so you can talk about facts, especially if your child is interested in something like animals or cars.
- If you're telling your child a story about something that really happened, like when you went to the seaside, see what they can remember and ask them to help you to tell it in the right order.
- Make books about things your child is interested in by cutting pictures out of magazines together.
- Make a visit to your local library part of your regular family routine. You can borrow an amazing variety of books, it's free and easy to join and children can have their own library card.

What I like

- To interact with books by lifting flaps or pressing sound buttons.
- To be independent and choose my own books.
- To hear about myself in a story that you've made up or that really happened.
- To hear familiar stories again and again.

What I can do

- Look at books on my own and turn the pages myself.
- Point to pictures in a book when you say "show me" because I can understand lots of words.
- Connect real objects with pictures in books.
- Recognise familiar books by what is on the cover.
- Tell stories to myself by looking at the pictures in a book.
- Listen to longer stories and join in with ones I know well.

Children develop at their own rates and in their own ways. The above is typical ranges of development. If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your GP or health visitor for advice.

Reading 3-4 years

Did you know?

Your child is beginning to understand how stories work and that the words on the page mean something.

Reading together will help them start to make sense of those words and recognise some letters.



How can you help?

- Use books in a variety of situations and match them to what your child is doing. For example: You could have a book about transport with your child's box of cars.
- Read stories with lots of repetition as your child will like to join in and tell you what is going to happen next.
- Point to words as you read them.
- Make up voices for the different characters in a story.
- When you finish a story, ask your child to tell you what happened. You could draw pictures together or dress up and act it out.
- Make books about things your child is interested in by cutting pictures out of magazines together.
- Make up stories about your child, or about when you were little, or about your child's favourite toy.
- Read poetry and stories that rhyme and pause so your child can say the rhyming words.
- Let your child see you reading.
- Let your child listen to stories on CD. You can borrow audio books from your local library.
- Visit your local library and help your child to find books they'd like to borrow. It's free and easy to join and children can have their own library card. Most libraries also run storytime sessions where you can both be introduced to some new stories as well as listening to old favourites.
- Point out words and phrases on shops and signs when you are out and about. Children can recognise familiar words really quickly.

What I like

- To hear about myself in a story.
- To catch you out when you make a mistake in a story I know well.
- To find information in books about things I am interested in.

What I can do

- Listen to longer stories.
- Join in with stories I know well and talk about what is happening.
- Tell you what might happen next in a story.
- Answer questions like "what's happening in the picture?".
- Retell stories I know well.
- Look at books on my own.

Children develop at their own rates and in their own ways. The above is typical ranges of development. If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your GP or health visitor for advice.

Reading 4-5 years

Did you know?

Your child is starting to read for themselves but they still need your support. By encouraging your child to read to you, being an enthusiastic listener and talking about new words and their meanings, you'll help them develop their reading skills.



How can you help?

- Use books in a variety of situations and match them to what your child is doing. You could take a book about insects to read when you're at the park.
- Make up voices for the different characters in a story.
- Point to words and grammar as you read. By pointing out the speech marks, your child will understand why you use a different voice when they appear. Just don't do it all the time and spoil the flow of the story.
- Speak to your child's teacher about how they sound out words and use phonics to encourage children to read simple words. And then follow their advice when you're reading with your child.
- Read poetry and stories that rhyme and pause so your child can say the rhyming words.
- Let your child listen to stories on CD. You can borrow audio books from your local library.
- Visit your local library and help your child to find out information about something they're interested in such as animals. It's free and easy to join and children can have their own library card.
- Point out words and phrases on shops and signs when you are out and about. Children can recognise familiar words really quickly.
- Let your child see you reading.
- Make up a story together while you're in the car or on a bus. Take it in turns to add to the story and try making it funny or spooky.
- It's great to introduce new stories and your child may have school reading books but make sure you still read your old favourites together. Your child will be able to read them confidently to you now.
- Create a book with your child by folding pieces of paper in half and encouraging them to write letters or words on each page and add their own pictures.

What I like

- To read books and join in when you read to me.
- To hear about myself and my family in a story, especially if it's funny.
- To catch you out when you make a mistake in a story I know well.

What I can do

- Read words and use my knowledge of phonics to sound out words I don't know.
- Understand stories and make up my own, based on stories I know.
- Tell you what might happen next in a story.
- Answer questions like "what would you do?"

Time to Talk

Pre-School/ Reception

Did you know?

Children learn best when they are playing - so have fun! In this leaflet you will find activities for quality time, meal times, activities for when you are out and about and for bed time.



Quality Time Activities



Blowing Bubbles

Blowing bubbles helps to develop the muscles used in talking. Children of all ages love bubbles, you can use shop bought bubbles or make your own.

- Make the bubble mixture together.
- If you are outside let your child chase and catch the bubbles.
- Try adding food colouring to the bubble mixture and press paper on to the bubbles, to see patterns.

Bubble recipe

- 600 ml of water
- 150 ml of washing up liquid
- 2 tablespoons of glycerine
(available from the chemist)



Moving to Music

Everybody enjoys listening to music whether it is nursery rhymes, classical, pop or music from around the world. Moving to music is a great way for your child to express themselves.

- Talk to your child about their movements as they move to the music. Ask if they can curl up small or stretch tall.
- Let your child choose music and show them how to use the CD player.
- Play lots of different kinds of music and talk about what they like or don't like. Sing action rhymes and songs and help your child to copy the actions.

Playing games

Playing games with your child can be fun and will help them to learn about taking turns. Choose a game that doesn't take too long.

- Use a tray of objects and remove one while your child closes their eyes. Ask them to guess which object has gone.
- Put picture or number cards face up, turn one over and see if they can remember which picture it was.
- Play a game with a pack of cards, guess whether the next card will be higher or lower.
- Play snap or picture dominoes.

Fun with play dough

Children enjoy playing with play dough and it is cheap and easy to make.



- Encourage your child to help you make the play dough and follow the recipe together. As you heat the ingredients describe the changes that are happening. Talk about how you made the play dough, what you did using words like first, next, after and last.
- Give your child a cup cake tin or an empty egg box so that they can divide the play dough equally. Cut up straws, these make great candles for a play dough cake. Give your child plates, so that they can share with their teddies.
- Let your child use children's scissors or a pizza wheel to cut the play dough.

Play dough recipe

- 3 cups of sifted flour
- 1 ½ cups of salt
- 6 teaspoons of cream of tartar
- 3 ¼ cups of boiling water
- 3 tablespoons of cooking oil
- Food colouring

Mix all the dry ingredients together in a saucepan. Mix in the wet ingredients (except for the food colouring) and stir until there are no lumps. Cook on a high temperature for three to four minutes until dough forms.

You can add food colouring to change the colour, knead the dough to work the colour in. Store it in an airtight container.

Messy play

Children love to get messy and use all of their senses to explore the world around them. Let your child know it's okay to be messy. It's a good idea to try this before bath time!

- Give your child objects such as sieves, beakers, spoons or potato mashers, to use in some mixture.

- Bury things like shells, pebbles, plastic dinosaurs or animals, in the mixture for your child to find.
- Fill a washing up bowl or bucket with any of the following mixtures and let your child explore: jelly, cooked pasta, cooked rice, mashed potato, gloop (mix cornflour or custard powder and water until it is stiff, it will become more liquid when handled).

Meal Time Activities

Cooking

When you are cooking with your child, start by making sure they can reach the table and that all the ingredients are ready. An apron will help to keep them clean. Always watch your child



if they are using a knife or are near heat.

- Go to the library to find a children's recipe book.
- Choose something to make together and go shopping for the ingredients.
- Children enjoy pretend cooking. Use play dough to make cakes to share with their teddies and dolls.
- Choosing how to decorate cakes or pizzas is fun.
- Talk to your child about how things change when you heat them up or cool them down such as when making cakes or jelly.
- When cutting up fruit for a snack, talk about how many pieces you have.

Pizza recipe

Ingredients:

- Pitta, naan or half a baguette
- Tomato sauce
- Mixed dried herbs
- Cheese
- Your child's favourite toppings, such as ham, mushrooms, sweetcorn and tuna.

Method

1. Spread the tomato sauce over the bread.
2. Sprinkle with the herbs.
3. Top with the grated cheese and any other toppings your child likes.
4. Bake in a preheated oven 200 C or gas mark 6 for 5-10 minutes.

Washing hands



It is really important for children to learn how to wash their hands and it can be fun too.

- If your child is able to wash their hands without help they may like to help a younger brother or sister, although they may still need watching.

- Praise your child if they wash their hands without being told.

Sing "this is the way we wash our hands" to the tune of "Here we go round the Mulberry bush" as this will make the task fun.

This is the way we wash our hands

Wash our hands, wash our hands

This is the way we wash our hands

On a cold and frosty morning.

Eating together



Having meals together helps children to understand how to take turns and join in the conversation. Turn off the television or radio as this will encourage everyone to talk.

- When setting the table give your child more or less knives and forks than they need. Let them work out if there are too many or too few.

- Talk about who sits where and use words such as opposite.

- While you eat your meal, talk about what your child has been doing that day.

Washing up

Make washing up or stacking the dishwasher into a game for your child. Keep it fun and take the opportunity to chat.

- Talk about what you are doing while your child watches you. Use words like scraping and rinsing.

- Stack the dishwasher together. Ask questions like "where shall we put this bowl?"



- Let your child press the 'on' button.

Here's an activity you can do outside

- Give your child a bucket or bowl of water and big brush (paint brushes are good) and let them paint patterns on the patio or walls of your house. Or give them soapy water and sponges and let them wash your outside furniture.

Bed Time Activities

Make bedtime fun

Having a clear routine at bedtime will help your child to settle down more easily.

- Children need to know what happens at night, so keep your routine the same.
- Encourage your child to learn to dress and undress by themselves.
- Lay their clothes out on the bed, to make it easier for them to dress.
- Sing this to the tune of "Here we go round the mulberry bush" while your



child is getting undressed.

This is the way we take off our socks

Take off our socks

Take off our socks

This is the way we take off our socks

When we're getting ready for bed

Music

Using calm music as part of your child's bedtime routine can help them to relax.

- Make up silly songs together while your child is getting ready for bed.
- Take it in turns to sing the next word.
- Choose gentle music to help your child relax.
- Talk about the pictures in a nursery rhyme book together, as you enjoy the songs.

You could play nursery rhyme or song CDs or sing and say rhymes

together. Why not change the words to practise rhyming words? For example:

Hickory Dickory down

The mouse went into town

He saw the streets

He bought some sweets

Hickory Dickory down



Stories

Sharing books and stories at bedtime is fun and will help your child settle before sleeping. Find a quiet, cosy place to snuggle in. Children love to hear their favourite stories over and over again.

- Children love stories about things they like such as dinosaurs, teddies, trains and characters from TV.
- When you read a story, ask your child what they think will happen next.

You can borrow books from the library, all the books are free, for more information go to <https://www.devonlibraries.org.uk>

Bath time

This is a great way for your child to look at different objects to understand shape and size.



You could use these ideas in the bath, or even in a washing up bowl.

- Count how many cups or spoonfuls of water it takes to fill a jug or a cup.
- Use containers to talk about half full, empty, too much, too little.
- Cover objects with a flannel or bubbles for children to guess what they are.
- Freeze a small bath toy in a plastic cup of water and ask your child to guess what will happen if you put it in warm water. Watch together as the ice melts.
- See how many ways you can find to stop the water running out of a sieve.

Suggestions for toys: Spoons, wooden blocks, sieves, funnels, plastic pots, a variety of brushes, droppers, water pistols, plastic bottles, a variety of sponges, straws, empty plastic drinks bottles, plastic cups, jugs, ladles/spoons, egg cups, whisks, a variety of plastic containers such as yoghurt pots and bath books.

Out and About Activities

In the garden



Children enjoy having the space to run about, explore and play. Don't let the rain put you off, just wear wellies.

- Plant seeds with your child and measure them as they grow.
- Ask what they can see in the garden. Encourage them to ask questions.
- Explore under the bushes and plants for insects.
- Let your child use a camera to take pictures of what they see.

Back in the house

- Use the fruit and vegetables from the garden to make a meal with your child, they can help by washing off the soil.
- Talk about what your child saw in the garden. Ask them to draw or paint it.
- Refer to pictures, books and the internet to name insects.

Going on a journey

Children can go on a journey whether you're just popping to the post box or travelling on holiday. Look out for familiar or new things when you are out and about.

- Choose something, like dogs, count how many you see.
- Collect things as you walk along, such as leaves and talk about them.
- Look at road signs and ask your child to guess what they mean.

Back in the house

- Encourage your child to draw a picture of what they saw on their journey.
- Later on ask your child to tell you what they remember from their journey.
- Look at a map of your local area and talk about how you get from your house to the park.
- Help your child to draw a map, it could be a treasure map.

At the park

Children love to move around in a large space, to run, jump, climb and swing. Don't let bad weather put you off. Children don't mind rain or cold if they have the right clothes on.



- Your child will love doing silly walks with you, use small steps, strides, tiptoe, jump or hop. Try putting together a routine.
- Pretend to be different animals, things or people such as a rabbit, a plane or a soldier.
- Take turns making shapes with your bodies.
- Encourage your child to try new ways of moving.

Back in the house

- Use your hands and bodies to make shadow shapes on the wall or cut out paper shapes and see if your child can guess what they are.
- Play, Follow My Leader.

Going shopping



Help your child to enjoy going shopping. Try the ideas below. Try the ideas below.

- Let your child have the money to pay for something they have chosen such as their comic.
- Plan an outing to pick your own fruit and vegetables so that your child can see how the food grows and what it looks like.

Back in the house

- Sort the shopping into different kinds of food.
- Make a shopping list with your child. You could make it with pictures.
- Let your child help you to sort paper, plastic and cans for recycling.
- Give your child a shopping bag and a variety of tins and boxes so they can play shops.

Going on a picnic

You can have a picnic anywhere, even inside if you spread a cloth or blanket on the floor.



- Take a camera and encourage your child to take photos.
- Talk to your child about which foods they like or dislike. Ask them to help share out the food. Is there enough or too much.
- Encourage your child to choose healthy foods and to drink lots of water

In the house

- Talk to your child about what you need for the picnic and where you are going.
- Let them help make sandwiches and choose what food to take.
- When you get back talk about the picnic.
- Make a book with the photos or drawings and talk about what you did.

If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your GP or health visitor for advice.

Time to Talk Toddlers



Children learn best when they are playing - so have fun! In this leaflet you will find activities for quality time, meal times, activities for when you are out and about and for bed time.

Quality Time Activities



Blowing Bubbles

Blowing bubbles helps to develop the muscles used in talking. Children of all ages love bubbles, you can use shop bought bubbles or make your own.

- Encourage your child to try blowing the

bubbles themselves.

- Talk about what happens as they blow.
- Ask your child to see how many bubbles they can blow with one puff.
- Count the bubbles as you blow.
- See who can blow the most bubbles.

Bubble recipe

- 600 ml of water
- 150 ml of washing up liquid
- 2 tablespoons of glycerine (available from the chemist)



Moving to Music

Everybody enjoys listening to music whether it is nursery rhymes, classical, pop or music from around the world. Moving to music is a great way for your child to express themselves.

- Let your child take the lead and join in with the way they move.
- Put actions to songs or rhymes.
- Try clapping to the rhythm of a tune together.
- Make a shaker together by filling a small water bottle with rice or pasta. Let them shake it in time to the music.
- Get a saucepan and a wooden spoon and let your child tap different rhythms while you sing nursery rhymes with them.

Playing games

Playing games with your child can be fun and will help them to learn about taking turns. Choose a game that doesn't take too long.

- With your child, take turns to post objects down tubes, into a shape sorter or put pieces into a puzzle.
- Put some toys, such as cars, on a tray. Let them pick out the red ones.
- Sing as you tidy up together, to make it fun.
- Get a pack of snap cards, and encourage your child to find two the same.
- Play picture dominoes.
- Cut out pictures that go together such as a bat and ball and encourage your child to find the matching pairs.



Fun with play dough

Children enjoy playing with play dough and it is cheap and easy to make.

- Get your child to help make play dough. They like to mix and when it's cool enough, they can help you knead the dough.
- Give your child some things so they can poke holes and make patterns in the play dough.
- You could try hiding small objects in the play dough for your child to find.
- Add rice or sand to the play dough to make it feel different.
- Put out rolling pins and cutters for children to make play dough cakes.

Play dough recipe

- 1 cup of plain flour
- 1/2 cup of salt
- 1 tablespoon cream of tartar
- 1 tablespoon of oil
- 1 cup of boiling water mixed with food colouring
- Mix together and knead until smooth, it will keep in a sealed container in the fridge.

Messy play

Children love to get messy and use all of their senses to explore the world around them. Let your child know it's okay to be messy. It's a good idea to try this before



bath time!

- While your child plays with some mixture talk about how it feels and smells. Use words like rough, smooth or sticky.
- Talk about the patterns they make.
- Add colours using washable paint or smells such as vanilla or perfume.
- Fill a washing up bowl or bucket with any of the following mixtures and let your child explore: jelly, cooked pasta, cooked rice, mashed potato, gloop (mix cornflour or custard powder and water until it is stiff, it will become more liquid when handled).

Meal Time Activities

Cooking

When you are cooking with your child, start by making sure they can reach the table and that all the ingredients are ready. An apron will help to keep them clean. Always watch your child



if they are using a knife or are near heat.

- Let your child help you cook for as long as they wish, but be prepared to lose your helper half way through.
- Children love to stir and mix and if helped, can cut up some foods.
- Let your child decorate cakes or biscuits, look in your local supermarket for things to use.



Washing hands

Children like to wash their hands themselves. Make sure they can reach the sink, taps, soap and towel.

- Talk about making your hands clean.
- If you're using liquid soap, show your child how to squirt it.
- Show them how to rub their hands together to make bubbles. • Talk about the shapes and colour of the bubbles, the smell of the soap and if the water is hot or cold.

It often helps to let a child know what is coming up next. Do this by letting them know that dinner will be ready soon, so that they have enough time to wash their hands. Talk to them about what you are going to eat.

Eating together

Having meals together helps children to understand how to take turns and join in the conversation. Turn off the television or radio as this will encourage everyone to talk. Children love to help and meal times are a great way to involve them.

- While your child helps you lay the table, talk about how many people will be eating and how many knives and forks you need.
- Let your child make placemats for the family by decorating a piece of paper or card.
- You can cut pieces out to make a pattern, or cut pictures out to stick on, or just use crayons to draw pictures or patterns.

- If your child has a favourite toy at the table, you could lay a place for them too.

Washing up

Make washing up or stacking the dishwasher into a game for your child. Keep



it fun and take the opportunity to chat.

- Children enjoy helping, so let them wash things that don't break.
- Praise them for helping you, although you may need to wash the things again!

Let your child wash up toy plates and cups after a teddy bears picnic.

This is a good activity to do in the garden. First play at picnics, perhaps you could have lunch or a snack outside, and then give your child a washing up bowl to do the washing up.

Bed Time Activities

Make bedtime fun

Having a clear routine at bedtime will help your child to settle down more easily.

- Children need to know what happens at night, so keep your routine the same.
- Snuggling up together for a story, away from the TV and dimming the lights, helps children settle down.

Storytelling

Toddlers love to hear stories about themselves. You could tell a story with your child having the adventure, it doesn't have to be complicated, it can just be about something they have done, like a trip to the park

Music

Using calm music as part of your child's bedtime routine can help them to relax.

- Talk to your child about their favourite music. Snuggle up on the bed and listen together.
- Sing along to their favourite bed time nursery rhyme together.
- Look at the pictures in a nursery rhyme book together.



Stories

Sharing books and stories at bedtime is fun and will help your child settle before sleeping. Find a quiet, cosy place to snuggle in. Children love to hear their favourite stories over and over again.

- Let your child help you make up a story and decide who's in it, where they'll go and what they'll do.
- Let your child point to the pictures in the book as you read.

You can borrow books from the library, all the books are free, for more information go to <https://www.devonlibraries.org.uk>

Bath time

This is a great way for your child to look at different objects to understand shape and size. You could use these ideas in the bath, or even in a washing up bowl.



- Talk about what happens when your child squeezes a sponge.
- Fill different containers with water and then pour the water out. Talk about the containers being full and empty.
- Give your child a straw to blow bubbles in the water, add bubble bath and let them use a whisk or add drops of food colouring and talk about how the water changes.

Suggestions for toys: Spoons, wooden blocks, sieves, funnels, plastic pots, a variety of brushes, droppers, water pistols, plastic bottles, a variety of sponges, straws, empty plastic drinks bottles, plastic cups, jugs, ladles/spoons, egg cups, whisks, a variety of plastic containers such as yoghurt pots and bath books.

Bath time songs and rhymes

Everyone loves to sing in the bath and singing helps your child to hear rhythm and rhyme. Choose songs that have a lot of rhythm so that your child can clap or splash along while you sing. Here are some ideas to try out:

- Rub-a-dub-dub
- Row, row, row your boat
- 1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive
- It's raining, it's pouring

You could match the toys your child is playing with in the bath with the rhymes or songs you're singing.

Out and About Activities

In the garden

Children enjoy having the space to run about, explore and play. Don't let the rain put you off,



just wear wellies.

- Let your child dig and play in soil so they can explore how it feels. Use words like smooth, rough, hard and soft. Add water to the soil and talk about the difference this makes.
- Plant seeds or bulbs. Talk about what the plants need to grow and let them do the watering. **Be careful** as some seeds and bulbs are poisonous.
- Look for insects and talk about what they look like. Children love to use magnifying glasses or bug boxes. You could go to the library and get out a book on insects. Then they can find out more about what they have seen in the garden. Always make sure your child puts living creatures back where they found them.

Going on a journey

Children can go on a journey whether you're just popping to the post box or travelling on holiday. Look out for familiar or new things when you are out and about.

- Try counting red cars as you go.
- See how many sounds you can hear on your trip, see if your child can copy them.



- Point out what you can see, hear and smell.
- Give your child a camera so that they can take photos of things they like on the journey. You can print the photos off and help your child to stick them in a book or on paper. Look at the finished book or paper together and use them to talk about where you've been

At the park

Children love to move around in a large space, to run, jump, climb and swing. Don't let bad weather put you off. Children don't mind rain or cold if they



have the right clothes on.

- On a sunny day get your child to spot their shadow, chase your shadow and

jump on it. Look at shadows on the ground, ask if they know what they are.

- Encourage your child to make their shadow tall or short
- Talk to your child about the different ways they can move as they go around the park such as crawling, climbing and jumping.
- You could play Simon Says or a Stop/Go game where the children only move when you say go and have to stop when you say stop.

Going shopping

Help your child to enjoy going shopping. Try the ideas below. Remember young children put things in their mouths so be careful what you give them.



- Talk about what you need to buy and ask your child to remind you at the shop.
- Talk about anything and everything you see such as packets, meat, fish, fruit and vegetables.
- Ask your child to tell you when they spot items they know and recognise.
- When you get back you can play shops: Save empty packets and give your child a shopping bag. Ask them to go and buy different items.



Going on a picnic

You can have a picnic anywhere, even inside if you spread a cloth or blanket on the floor.

- Let your child choose a doll or teddy to take to the picnic. Encourage them to pretend to feed their toy when you're sitting down to eat.
- On the way, talk about what you can both see and encourage them to walk part of the way.
- Encourage your child to look at and touch natural things around them such as trees, grass and stones.
- Children love collecting things, so set out to find as many different leaves as you can. Always make sure your child does not pick things unless it is okay to do so.

If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your GP or health visitor for advice.

Writing 2-3 years

Did you know?

Your child is beginning to make more sense of their marks, they can draw pictures and say what their scribbles mean.



How can you help?

- Give your child lots of two handed activities, like stirring and whisking, so that they can choose which will be their dominant hand for writing.
- Put lots of different sized containers in the bath for your child to fill and pour.
- Give your child different things to cut and snip. They may find this difficult at first but you can help by holding the paper for them.
- Play simple card games like pairs and lotto where your child needs to pick up and turn over the cards.
- Help your child use tweezers or tongs to pick up and move small objects from place to place, such as putting a raisin in each section of an ice cube tray.
- Give your child empty plastic bottles for them to screw and unscrew the lids.
- Put hair gel, bath cream, corn flour and water or paint in a sealed, plastic bag and let your child make marks in it with their finger.
- To say thank you or happy birthday, encourage your child to draw a picture or make a card and sign their name.
- Point at the words when you are reading with your child.

What I like

- Drawing and painting.
- Playing with finger puppets and small toy people, animals and vehicles.
- Joining in with the actions to rhymes and songs.
- Helping in the garden by digging, pushing the wheelbarrow, planting and watering.

What I can do

- Start to hold my pencil or crayon the right way with a tripod grip.
- Control my left or right hand better - I'm starting to become left or right handed.
- Handle small objects.
- Run, jump, climb and swing along a bar.

Children develop at their own rates and in their own ways. The above is typical ranges of development. If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your GP or health visitor for advice.

Writing 3-4 years

Did you know?

Your child needs to practise making small marks using a pencil or crayon. Shoulder and arm muscles are developing and using their hands and fingers to make different movements will help them to strengthen their wrist, hand and finger muscles.



How can you help?

- Play throwing and catching games together.
- Let your child help you around the house, pegging out clothes (the family's or their toy's), using a dustpan and brush, washing up, wiping the table and squeezing out the sponge as they clean the windows.
- Cook together - let your child peel and chop, mash up food, put cake mixture into cases or spread butter on bread.
- Have lots of different materials to cut and stick so your child can make pictures, patterns and models.
- Build with blocks and interlocking blocks, like Lego, to make towers and buildings.
- Let your child cut out pictures from magazines, comics, catalogues and old cards.
- Make people, animals and other objects from play dough.
 - Use tweezers to pick up different objects

What I like

- Making cards and sending messages to my friends and family (or Father Christmas) and making lists.
- Drawing and painting pictures and patterns.
- Cutting and sticking.
- Making my own books.

What I can do

- Start to know that writing means something and I'm saying what my marks mean.
- Recognise my name and some familiar words and signs.
- Write some letters in my name and other familiar words, like dad.
- Dress and undress myself and I am beginning to fasten and unfasten zips and buttons.
- Concentrate and sit still for longer.

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Writing 4-5 years

Did you know?

Your child is able to write letters with more control and needs to practise this skill by writing for a purpose, such as cards and menus. They will naturally be using their left or right hand more when writing.

How can you help?

- Get a notepad for your child to write or draw in when you're out and about.



- Make a fan with your child by folding paper into a concertina.
- Make maps of where you're going or where you've been or treasure maps.
- Help your child to write the words to go with photos or pictures and make them into a book.
- Do jigsaws with your child (up to 30 pieces).
- Help your child make masks and hats so they can act out stories they know.
- Write party invitations together or play cafes, your child can write the menu and write down what each person wants to eat.
- Show your child how to use tools such as screwdrivers and spanners.
- Set up suitable computer games such as one from CBeebies, so that your child can learn to control a mouse.
- Play ball games with your child, throwing and catching or use bats and balls.

What I like

- To put my name on things.
- Playing games on the computer.
- Jumping, hopping, skipping, climbing and being outside.
- Dancing to music.
- Making models.

What I can do

- Know the difference between writing and drawing and that writing has meaning.
- Tell the difference between letters and words.
- Write my own name.
- Try to spell familiar words.
- Concentrate and sit still for longer.

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Writing tips

Did you know?

Your child needs to practise making small marks using a pencil or crayon. Shoulder and arm muscles are developing and using their hands and fingers to make different movements will help them to strengthen their wrist, hand and finger muscles.



How can you help?

- Play throwing and catching games together.
- Let your child help you around the house, pegging out clothes (the family's or their toy's), using a dustpan and brush, washing up, wiping the table and squeezing out the sponge as they clean the windows.
- Cook together - let your child peel and chop, mash up food, put cake mixture into cases or spread butter on bread.
- Have lots of different materials to cut and stick so your child can make pictures, patterns and models.
- Build with blocks and interlocking blocks, like Lego, to make towers and buildings.
- Let your child cut out pictures from magazines, comics, catalogues and old cards.
- Make people, animals and other objects from play dough.
 - Use tweezers to pick up different objects

What I like

- Making cards and sending messages to my friends and family (or Father Christmas) and making lists.
- Drawing and painting pictures and patterns.
- Cutting and sticking.
- Making my own books.

What I can do

- Start to know that writing means something and I'm saying what my marks mean.
- Recognise my name and some familiar words and signs.
- Write some letters in my name and other familiar words, like dad.
- Dress and undress myself and I am beginning to fasten and unfasten zips and buttons.
- Concentrate and sit still for longer.

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