

A Parent's Guide to Promoting Learning and Development at Home



Literacy

"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.



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.

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Promoting Reading

Activity	How adults can support	Learning (DfE, 2013)
Listening for Sounds	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
Story and Rhyme Time	Try creating a cosy reading den space together using blankets and chairs. 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? Encourage your child to talk about their favourite book, pages and characters.	Anticipates phrases in rhymes and stories Enjoys an increasing range of books
Letter Detective	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. 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.	Begins to show an interest in print in books and print in the environment Links sounds to letters
I Spy	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
Musical Statues	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)
Pretend Play	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
Writing for Purpose	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
Name Writing	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
Sensory Writing	Before encouraging your child to use a paper and pencil to write new letters first encourage them to try forming the letters by; - Tracing the letter in the air with their finger - Drawing it on your back - Using their finger to create the letter in a baking tray filled with sensory materials such as salt, flour or lentils.	Uses some clearly identifiable letters
Storytelling	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. 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.	Develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

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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)
Number Hunt	Hide numbers around the house and/or in the garden Encourage your child to find these, match similar numbers and order numbers. You can also use objects that can be counted and then matched to the numeral	Match numerals Number recognition Order numbers Match numeral and quantity
Pretend Shop Play	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 Have mark making resources available to encourage writing of words and numbers Play with your child, allowing them to lead and swap roles	Organise and categorise objects Number recognition Money has value Uses everyday language related to money e.g. cost, change, price, total
Number Songs	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 Sing together and use actions wherever possible .	Uses number names Develops understanding of number and counting forwards and backwards Use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting
Number Lines	Provide number labels and number lines for children to use and refer to in their play You can use string (never leave your child alone with this) with pegs that your child can explore by moving numbers around.	Number recognition Order numbers

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Promoting an Understanding of Numbers

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

Promoting an Understanding of Shape, Space & Measure

Activity	Top Tips	Learning (DfE, 2013)
Positional Games	Use toys to talk about the position: where is...? behind, inside, on top, in front of	Positional language
Heuristic Play (Natural Objects)	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
Pattern Play	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).	Notice shapes and patterns in pictures Recognises, creates and describes patterns
Exploring shape	Set up shape hunts inside and outside Encourage building using blocks, construction kits, recycled materials. Model correct shape language. Discuss the properties of shape e.g. a dice has 6 faces Feely bag of different shaped objects for guessing from the feel	Identifies shapes accurately Uses mathematical terms to describe shapes
Exploring Weight	Cook using spoons, cups and kitchen scales Discuss weight e.g. mine is heavier, are they the same weight ? Use a sand timer to measure 2 minutes of teeth brushing	Uses language of weight/time/capacity/measure
Exploring Time	Discuss times of the day/ make a timeline e.g. morning, before snack time, 5 minutes time. Talk about yesterday, today, tomorrow.	Understands some talk about present, past and future
Exploring Measure	Use objects (non-standard measures) to measure length e.g. the chair is 6 spoons long, the flower pot is 2 sticks high Provide standard measures too e.g. rulers, tape measures for exploration Opportunities to explore space with their bodies e.g. crawling in spaces	Orders by length
Exploring Capacity	Provide different sized containers for filling and pouring in the bath, water/sand play. Model language e.g. empty, full, half full/ empty	
Matching & Sorting Games	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

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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.

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).*



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).*

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)*

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Understanding the Word Aspect: People and Communities

Activity	Top Tips	Learning (DfE, 2013)
Using Pictures And Artefacts (objects of cultural or historical interest)	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	Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members
	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	Spotting similarity and differences and change over time
	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	
Story	Use story time to develop sequencing ...many books aimed at young children have plenty of references to time passing	To develop chronology and sequencing
	Read stories that challenge stereotypes, for example where all family types are discussed as opposed to a traditional nuclear family	now about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions
	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	To develop chronology and sequencing
	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	To spot objects from the past and develop historical imaginations



Understanding the Word Aspect: The World

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

Understanding the Word Aspect: Technology

Activity	Top Tips	Learning (DfE, 2013)
Story	Look at a range of interactive storybooks, those that have lift the flaps or moving parts	To recognise how technology is used for particular purposes
Technology and Play	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	To understand how to control technology for a purpose
	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.	

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"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)

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Promoting Exploration and Use of Media and Materials

Activity	Top Tips	Learning (DfE, 2013)
Mark making	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 Provide a range of painting activities 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 Explores what happens when colours are mixed
Design and Create Models and Collages	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 Understands that different media can be combined to create new effects.
Exploring malleable materials	Allow children time, space and freedom to explore different malleable materials e.g. playdough, cornflour, custard powder, sand, mud Use these materials without tools for children to understand their properties e.g. by squeezing, pressing, pulling, rolling, pinching, poking, stretching, tearing. 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 Describes the texture of resources Uses various construction materials Manipulates materials to achieve a planned effect.
Explore Music	Play a variety of music from classical to pop Sing familiar nursery rhymes and songs and introduce new ones. Play sounds from around the world Move, clap and dance to music	Builds a repertoire of songs Moves rhythmically Moves from spontaneous movement, to copying and planning movement to music
Making musical instruments	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 Use instruments to sound out syllables in words e.g. names, building up to playing along to songs	Taps out syllables Taps out rhymes



Promoting Opportunities to Be Imaginative

Activity	Top Tips	Learning (DfE, 2013)
Music & Movement	Resources to stimulate spontaneous movement e.g. fabrics, scarves, feathers, ribbons Add music of varied sound and tempo	Expresses self through physical action and sound.
Pretend Play	Provide the opportunity for meaningful imaginative role play with other family members clothes or costumes that suggest a character and specific movement response 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. Pretends that one object represents another Create simple representations of events, people and objects
Small world play	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 Create simple representations of events, people and objects
Imaginary Worlds	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. Make puppets using ideas from above and from socks, bags etc. Allow your child to experience performance by staging made-up productions of stories, puppet shows and dance.	Pretends that one object represents another Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play. Create simple representations of events, people and objects
Story telling & Scribing	Encourage children to create their own stories and tell these to you to scribe. Then act these out together. 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. Create simple representations of events, people and objects
Sharing stories and rhymes	Tell 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.
Explore music & sound	As described in previous table	Expresses self through physical action and sound.