

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).

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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)

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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

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

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

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

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

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- **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.