

Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home



Early Years Age Groups

Communication and Language

One of the most vital ways in which you can support your child's learning at home is through talking and listening.

- Take turns at talking about your day, modelling how to explain about what has happened and how to listen with interest.
- Play games such as 'I spy'. This can be done with colours until children are more familiar with their initial sounds i.e. 'I spy with my little eye something that is green'. The descriptive language can be changed to help widen children's vocabulary i.e. 'I spy with my little eye something that is tall/ big/ tiny/ smooth/ shiny etc'.
- Memory games such as the Shopping List game. Children have to remember and recall information and vocabulary. For example:

Dad: I went shopping and bought a wobbly jelly.

Child: I went shopping and bought a wobbly jelly and a red apple.

Dad: I went shopping and bought a wobbly jelly, a red apple and a yellow banana.

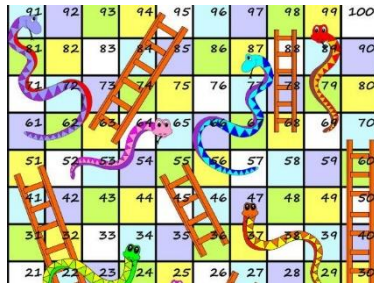
Child: I went shopping and bought a wobbly jelly, a red apple, a yellow banana and chocolate ice-cream.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Playing activities that encourage children to take turns, share, wait and deal with winning and losing will all support children's personal, social and emotional development.

- Play games such as snakes and ladders. Model good and bad reactions to winning and losing and then discuss what happened and how it made both the adult and the child feel.



- Get stuck with something. Find something like drawing a picture or doing a (children's) jigsaw tricky. Ask your child for help and say that you can't do it. As your child helps you, discuss how kind it was for them to help you and that you shouldn't give up when something is difficult.
- Involve children in looking after pets and discuss why do we need to take care of them? Looking after dolls or stuffed animals can be an alternative to real pets.
- Making faces at each other or in a mirror. Encourage children to look excited, sad, angry, scared, worried etc and discuss what each of these mean and how to manage those emotions.

Physical Development

Building up big movements and small movements are equally as important and can also impact on children's ability to sustain concentration as well as read and write. Big movements develop our whole body and help our co-ordination, small movement help us to have more control and accuracy.

- Go to the park! Encourage children to run, climb, crawl and negotiate space.
- Throwing and catching games help our hand-eye co-ordination as well as building up physical strength.
- Water on the wall and chalk on the floor. Mark making and writing can be done on a large scale to encourage big arm movements. Using a pot of water and a paint brush children can 'paint' on outside walls and leaving temporary marks that dry. Or children can use chalks on the ground outside which can wash away.
- Threading Cheerios onto dry spaghetti, using playdough or using nuts and bolts can help build up muscles in children's hands.



Literacy

Reading and holding conversations with your child are some of the most beneficial home learning you can do. Activities linked to reading and speaking can help build on vocabulary, understanding of stories and comprehension, listening and attention skills and developing a love for reading.

- Reading a story before bedtime can not only help children relax before bed but sleeping after listening to a story can help children to retain vocabulary and information.
- Sharing a book where you and the child read part of the story means that your child is attempting to read small chunks of text but you are also modelling how to read too.
- Re-reading favourite stories helps children to pick up patterns in language.
- Making own puppets for children to retell the stories.

There are also lots of activities you can try at home to help support writing too.

- Mark making or writing in chalk on the floor or water on the wall.
- Mark making or writing a shopping list for a grown up to take to the shops.
- Mark making or writing in flour, oats, salt or shaving foam make exciting alternatives to pen and paper.

Maths

There are a wide range of mathematics skills we learn at school, everything from counting and recognising numbers to weighing and measuring.

Activities you can try at home could include:

- Singing number nursery rhymes. These are a great way to expose children to initial numbers i.e. 5 currant buns, 10 in a bed, 1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive etc.
- Looking for numbers whilst out shopping or hiding numbers around the room for children to find. This helps children to recognise numbers out of sequence and as individuals.
- Asking children to get the right amount of objects. For example please get 3 forks for dinner or I need 5 toy cars please.
- Comparing and sharing objects such as raisins. Who has more? Who has less? How many do you have? How many will I have if I eat one? These types of questions can deepen children's understanding of number.
- Paying for shopping with cash (sometimes) instead of card. This helps children to know what money is.
- Children helping to weigh ingredients for cooking allows them to understand there are everyday uses for our maths knowledge.
- Comparing sizes of shoes in the family can build on mathematical language linked to size.

Understanding of the World

Discussing how things work, their uses and how they change over time can support children in gaining a deeper level of understanding, problem solving and helps to make links in a wide range of subjects.

- Telling traditional stories or stories linked to our own and others' culture can help children to understand what makes themselves and others special.
- Going for a walk at different times of the year and discussing the differences i.e. the flowers starting to grow, leaves on the trees changing colour etc.
- Helping to look after a pet (even a home-made pet) will help children to know what animals need, how to take care of something and why it is important.



- Showing children how to take a photograph on a camera, phone and tablet can help them to make comparisons about which technology is used for what purpose.

Expressive Arts and Design

Giving children opportunities to act out, dress up and create models and pictures will help to strengthen children's imagination and language.

- Using boxes, pots and bottles to create 'junk models', using Lego and blocks and paper, tape and scissors are all open ended activities that help children to make, adapt and review plans. It also helps to build on their fine and gross motor skills and story-telling when using their creation.



- Explore colours and colour mixing during painting activities.
- Making cards for celebrations gives a purpose to their creating and can encourage children to think about what others would like.