

Activities to Try at Home

Here are a selection of ideas and activities split into the different Areas of Learning that you can do to help your child work towards achieving their early learning goals.

Personal Social and Emotional Development

- Try playing some simple board or card games together. Read and talk about the rules of the game and take turns as you play.
- Demonstrate solving minor conflicts using discussion - for example, when sharing a toy with a sibling or arranging activities. Encourage children to talk about their ideas and listen to other people to solve a small problem.
- Encourage your child to talk about the things they enjoy and are good at, and also about the things they do not find so easy.
- Encourage your child to talk about plans they have made and what went well. Challenge them to talk about what they would do differently next time they try the same activity. Talk about activities such as making models - what worked well? What else could they try next time?

Communication and Language

- Encourage your child to follow instructions they are given and to seek clarification if instructions are not understood.
- Try creating or reading stories together that do not have pictures or use props. Encourage your child to listen to the story and ask them to tell you about their favourite part.
- When sharing stories together, talk about the story and the characters. Ask your child to explain events in stories. Try asking why they think events happened or why characters acted the way they did.
- Encourage your child to retell stories and events. Can they remember what happened? Encourage them to ask and answer questions too.
- Encourage children to follow instructions that have two or three steps, such as "put your toys in the box, put the books on the shelf and then the get your coat."
- Encourage your child to use interesting vocabulary to describe events. For example, when on a walk in the park, children could use language such as 'tickly grass', 'beautiful flowers' and 'fluffy dogs'.

Physical Development

- Encourage children to try some different activities and describe which they like best. They could try swimming, dancing, or football.
- Talk about keeping healthy, such as making healthy food choices, doing exercise and sleeping well.
- Play some music and encourage children to explore hopping and skipping to the beat.
- Draw some lines on sheets of paper and encourage children to practise writing on them. Challenge them to practise which letters are tall letters, such as 'l' and 't', small letters, such as 'a' and 'o' and those which have parts that go under the line, such as 'y' and 'g'.
- Encourage your children to practise writing and to develop a comfortable pencil grip.
- When shopping, encourage your child to talk about making healthy choices and make some healthy recipes together, such as soups or smoothies.
- Encourage your child to practise fastening their clothes including managing zips and buttons and to learn to tie shoelaces.

Literacy

- Encourage children to explore writing words by sounding out (listening to the sounds they can identify and writing the matching letters). Encourage them to try writing sentences as descriptions for pictures they have drawn.
- When reading together, encourage children to sound out words and try different strategies to work out new words. For example, can they use the pictures or context of the story to work out new words?
- Make word cards of words your child finds tricky. Try hiding them around the house for your child to read when they find them! Try some tricky words that can't be sounded out, such as 'said', 'the' and 'come'.
- Challenge your child to write words based on letter sounds – for example can they write: 'light', 'bright' and 'sight' using their knowledge of letter sounds? Use letter sounds that your child has been learning in school to create lists of words.
- Encourage your child to write stories, lists, letters, cards and sentences to describe events. Find opportunities to encourage writing and praise your child's efforts.

Mathematics

- Play some estimation games and then count to see how close your estimates were! Try placing a number of objects up to 20 into a box or onto a plate and challenge children to estimate how many there are before they count. Repeat with objects of different shapes and sizes.
- Explore counting patterns, such as counting in 2s. Use some pairs of socks to try counting in 2s instead of counting each sock individually.
- Have a tea party with some toys! Challenge your child to share 12 sweets between 2 toys. Then, try sharing the 12 sweets between 3, 4 or 6 toys! Encourage your child to share the sweets out equally and count how many sweets each toy would get.
- Compare size, weight and capacity. Get your child using words like 'longer', 'shorter', 'taller', 'heavier', 'lighter', 'full' and 'empty'.
- Use a calendar and a clock to talk about time. Introduce times and days that are important, such as 7 o'clock as bedtime or Wednesday to go swimming.
- Try some baking activities together – encourage children to help measure and weigh ingredients and compare amounts.

Understanding the World

- Go to a museum or talk to family members to explore how things were different in the past. Encourage your child to talk about how things were similar and different in the past and the present day.
- Talk about events and festivals that are celebrated by other people.
- Try some simple science experiments such as exploring objects that float and sink in the bath.
- Ask your child to help you sort out some materials for recycling.
- Encourage children to use technology for different purposes.

Expressive Arts and Design

- Encourage children to sing their favourite songs and listen to music.
- Provide different materials for children to explore and use in their own creative activities. Encourage them to explore different ways of joining and shaping materials.
- Try using some toys or make some puppets and create your own story!
- Encourage children to make plans and designs for their creative projects. Encourage children to build models paint pictures, create songs and dances and try out and adapt their ideas as they work.