Helping your child to learn

## You are your child’s first and most important teacher. All the time you spend with them- reading, playing or just talking – they are learning. Everyday activities which to you seem ordinary can to your child be a wonderful experience and an opportunity to explore and discover. Learning needn’t be and shouldn’t be a chore. It should be something you can share and enjoy together. – so have fun and learn at the same time.

*Some of the best learning takes place when children have the freedom to explore, discover and have fun without an adult telling what to do or what to think. Because playing is fun it’s easy to forget its value in supporting development and learning in children – play can be a valuable tool for learning.*

*Learning and development in young children covers a huge spectrum of skills and knowledge, but when thinking about the opportunities we want to give children it can be useful to think about it in these broad categories.*

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

This is about children’s attitudes to learning, how they see themselves, how they relate to people – other children and adults – and their behaviour. It also includes how they care for themselves and their sense of community.

**Communication, Language and Literacy**

This is about communication, using language to communicate and for thinking. It relates to linking sounds and letters, sharing books and early reading and writing. It includes the use of gesture and facial expression.

**Mathematical Development**

In the early years maths is about using numbers as labels, for counting and calculating. Developing mathematical language such as ‘bigger’ or ‘smaller’ when talking about shapes or comparing quantities.

**Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

These skills help children to develop understanding that helps them to make sense of the world around them. It includes exploring and investigating; designing and making; using technology; time and place – recognising local features and developing a sense of community; as well as understanding culture and belief and recognising that this is not the same for everyone.

**Physical Development**

The development of physical skills is concerned with developing control, movement and co-ordination in both fine and gross motor movements. It supports children to stay active and healthy.

**Creative Development**

This can involve a range of texture, materials and sound and is about exploring and creating with their imagination and senses.

***Relationships*** are about communication, about children feeling they belong and recognising their lives are connected with other people. A child who is able to form effective relationships will grow up to be a secure, sensitive and caring adult

***Taking turns*** doesn’t come naturally to young children, it is something they learn. Help them by playing games that require turn taking.

***Finding out about feelings***, before children can learn to control their feelings they need to learn to recognise and label them. Talk with children about feelings.

***Boundaries*** help children to learn about right and wrong – but they must be based on good reasoning. Give children opportunities to talk about these reasons so they come to understand why decisions have been made.

***Reading*** with your child is one of the best tools we have to support their learning and development. Help children to use pictures to understand what’s happening in the story and even to tell a story from the pictures.

***Nursery Rhymes*** give hours of fun and help children develop confidence with language.

As children become aware of ***words and letters,*** they start to notice them ***in the environment***, this is a great way to support early reading and writing skills.

***It’s easy to do far too much for children.*** If you want them to grow up being able to think things through and solve problems, then you need to encourage those skills from an early age.

Children need to have ***practical maths experience*** in order to understand what is really meant by it. Everyday routines at home provide a variety of opportunities to explore this.

Learning to ***count*** and getting number names in the right order needs plenty of practice – but make sure it’s fun.

Use everyday situations to teach your child the ***language of maths*** and don’t forget to include the ***language of time***.

***Explore your neighbourhood together*** (safely using social distancing measures!) and you’ll be amazed at the sights and sounds.

***Science*** is based in encouraging children to use their ***senses*** to explore new situations and experiences, discover how things work or relate to each other, ask questions and develop ideas…

Children are fascinated by ***things that grow and change –*** what can you grow together? (you don’t need a garden for this, gardening in containers can bring fantastic results)

Allowing children the much needed time for ***energetic, physical and free play,*** can be quite challenging at the moment, but don’t forget to get out for your daily exercise, make good use of your garden, if you have one – and if not an indoor assault course can work wonders! 😊