

Nurturing Bright Futures



**Working Together to Give Southend's
Children the Best Start in Life.**



www.southend.gov.uk



Southend-on-Sea
City Council

Dear families

Welcome to Nurturing Bright Futures. Creating this guide for you has been a labour of love connecting many people all with one aim, to make a difference in children's lives. It's been a privilege to watch our garden grow, from the seed of an idea to the guide you are reading now and we're so proud to share it with you. We hope you find it helpful and inspiring. We hope that it gives you ideas for new activities to try, new games to play, new songs to sing, new stories to share and new places to go, here in Southend-on-Sea, with your children. We hope it reassures you that you're already doing an incredible job building your child's brain through every interaction and every playful moment that you share. There might be days when it doesn't feel like it- but know you are making a difference every single day! Thank you.

The Nurturing Bright Futures Team

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"During early childhood, from pregnancy to the age of five, our brains develop at an amazing rate – faster than at any other time in our lives. Our experiences, relationships and surroundings at that very young age, shape the rest of our lives."

(Shaping Us Framework, Royal Foundation for Early Childhood)



Watch the award-winning animation here:
<https://shapingus.centreforearlychildhood.org>



Foreword

Liz Hunt, Director of Education, Early Years and Inclusion

At Southend-on-Sea City Council, we believe that every child deserves the strongest start to life and that this begins long before their first day at school.

The early years, from pregnancy to the age of five, lay the foundations for wellbeing, lifelong learning and success. Our ambition, in line with the Government vision of “Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life”, is that every child and young person is nurtured, supported and challenged to develop well and achieve their full potential in welcoming, inspiring and safe environments.

Nurturing Bright Futures is a powerful reflection of our commitment to supporting families, practitioners and communities to nurture these vital early experiences. Developed in partnership with local voices and professionals, this guide offers practical tools and inspiration to help every child thrive.

This document is part of Southend’s promise to walk alongside our families, celebrating every small step and supporting every milestone. Together, we can help our children grow into confident and curious learners who are ready not just for school, but for life.

Thank you for all you do to give Southend’s children a bright and hopeful future.

Introduction

Welcome to Nurturing Bright Futures – Working together to give Southend’s children the best start in life.

“Nurturing Bright Futures” is a guide designed to support families and professionals working together to provide every child in Southend-on-Sea with the richest start to their lifelong learning journey.

The early years of a child’s life, starting even before birth, are crucial in shaping their future. From those very first moments, children are influenced by their surroundings, the people who care for them and the relationships they begin to form.

Focusing on the vital period from pregnancy to starting school, typically between the ages of four and five, this guide highlights the importance of emotional wellbeing, communication, independence, health and curiosity. Like a garden drawing strength from the rich soil beneath, children need strong foundations to grow into confident, curious learners – ready not just for school, but for life. At Southend-on-Sea City Council, within the Family, Early Years and Childcare Service, we believe starting school is not the beginning of learning – it’s just a next step along a child’s lifelong journey.

Together, by nurturing development in these crucial early years, we can help every child in Southend grow and flourish in their own unique way. Every moment, every interaction, every relationship, every experience matters.

How was this resource created?

This resource was created collaboratively between by a diverse group of early years professionals and community partners. We also listened to the voices of families, to make sure it reflects real life and what matters most to them.

We created Nurturing Bright Futures to inspire everyone who cares for and supports young children to come together. By building strong emotional and developmental foundations, we help children grow, thrive, and move confidently towards bright, brilliant futures.

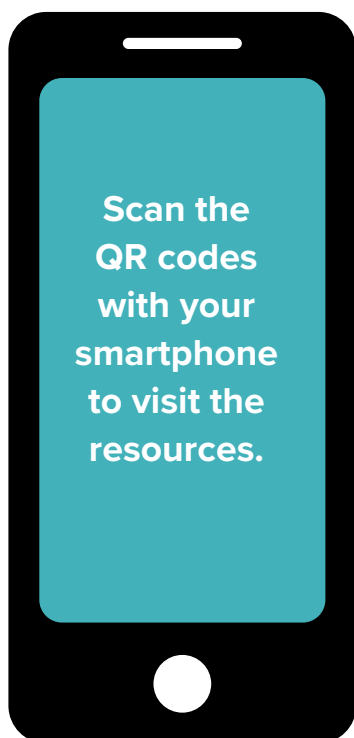
Don’t forget...

Every child’s journey is different and that’s something to be celebrated. While it is easy to compare children or worry about what they “should” be doing, the truth is that development doesn’t follow a straight line. Every child’s growth is shaped by who they are, the people around them and the experiences they have each day. This guide is here to support you, not to add pressure. Small steps, big love and a nurturing environment help children grow in their own time and their own way.



Scan and discover.

These QR codes and links will take you directly to online resources to support you and your family in these crucial years. The resources on these pages will continue to be updated.



Supporting your child through life's big transitions

Before the age of five, children go through many transitions. Every day brings new experiences and discoveries. Even the smallest changes, things we might take for granted can be big challenges for our children: getting dressed, going outside, eating lunch, taking a bath, brushing teeth, or going to bed.

Young children thrive on familiar routines. So, when bigger changes come along, like the arrival of a new baby, moving house, starting at a preschool, nursery, or childminder, or one day going to primary school, it's important to understand how these changes affect them and how we can best support them.

Starting school in Southend-on-Sea

By law, all parents must make sure their children receive a full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday. This is known as 'compulsory school age'. However, parents are entitled to a full-time school place from the September after their child's fourth birthday. It's a big step for both of you and being prepared can really help.

Here are some things you can do:

- **Contact schools and arrange visits** during the autumn term before applications are due (the deadline for making an on-time application will be in the following January). Schools often offer dates for new parent/carer tours. Look at their websites to find out when these are happening and book your places. If none are advertised give them a ring or drop them an email in autumn once

school is back and they've had a few weeks to settle their new children.

- **Use these visits** to get a feel for how each school operates and what they offer for example breakfast and after school clubs, or how their classrooms are set up and the various indoor and outdoor spaces available. You may also wish to ask questions around the schools SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) provision.
- **Gather information** from open days and school websites.

Once you have visited schools, you need to apply for your child's place online. This page will have everything you need to know as well as links to the city's school websites where you will find lots more information and begin to get a feel for the schools. <https://www.southend.gov.uk/school-admissions/primary-school-admissions-1>

Please note that all applications must be made within the time frame given. The admissions team at Southend City Council complete this work - so schools are unable to answer questions relating to your application, the progress of it or if you do not get the school of your choice.

It can be tempting just to apply for one school if you have a favourite – however it is important to choose more than one. You can name up to three preferred school choices and it is recommended that three are chosen. Some parents/carers assume because their child is in the school nursery they will automatically get a reception place in the same school. You must still apply for a reception place and even then, you are not guaranteed a place within that school. Schools have their own criteria for allocating places which include factors such as living in the catchment area or having other children within the school amongst other things.

It is important for you to understand how your application for a school place will be processed. Full details on the admissions process will be published on the admissions webpage by September of the year before your child is due to start school.

Parents will be advised which school they have been allocated on National Offer Day which will be on or around 16th April, depending which day it falls on. This is when you will find out which school your child will be joining. Once school places have been offered, there may be a short wait before you hear from your child's new school. This is completely normal. Schools have established transition procedures and will be in touch in due course to explain the next steps and enrolment paperwork. Many schools offer a range of events and activities to help children (and their families) to feel confident, happy and ready for this exciting next step. These may include:

Visits to the school: Schools will invite you and your child to come and visit the new class and meet their new teachers. Many schools now have virtual tours to watch at home together to help your child become more familiar with their

new surroundings and encourage them to talk about starting school. These may be on their websites.

Setting visits: Your child's teachers from their new school may visit their early years setting, so that they can meet your child's keyperson to discuss their transition, join your child in their play, share stories and get to know them before they start school. If they cannot visit your child's setting they will get in touch with them in other ways, such as via the phone, email or perhaps attending meetings together to discuss transition arrangements.

Stay and play sessions: Most schools will offer play sessions and activities, offering you the chance to experience a little flavour of early years learning.

Family lunches: School lunches are a new experience for many children, perhaps in a large hall, with new smells and new tastes. Some schools will invite you for a lunchtime. Why not join your child for a lovely lunch experience helping them to feel more confident about lunch time!

Home visits: Some schools offer home visits. These visits are to get to know you and your child in the familiar setting of their home. Families will sometimes worry their house may not be tidy- this really is not what the home visit is about. It's all about connection and building relationships to support your child to feel more confident when they join school!

Getting to know your way around: Before your child starts school, walk to the school together, noticing the things you see on the way and talking about their school together perhaps the signs you see there, the school badge that might be on their uniform, the things they are excited to do, e.g. playing in the playground.

Books to share about going to school

Pop along to your local library or browse **Southend Libraries'** and reserve books online at: <https://southend.spydus.co.uk>

<i>'Starting School'</i> by Allan and Janet Ahlberg	<i>'Let's Get Ready for School'</i> by Jane Porter	<i>'Splat the Cat'</i> by Rob Scotton
<i>'Queen of the Classroom'</i> by Derrick Barnes	<i>'First Day at Bug School'</i> by Sam Lloyd	<i>'Lulu's First Day'</i> by Anna McQuinn
<i>'First Time School'</i> by Jan Lewis	<i>'Harry and the Dinosaurs Go to School'</i> by Ian Whybrow	<i>'The Colour Monster Goes to School'</i> by Anna Llenas
<i>'Going to Big School'</i> by Laura Sieveking	<i>'Hooray! It's Our First Day: A Lift-the-Flap Adventure (The Bunny Adventures)'</i> by Martha Mumford	<i>'Topsy and Tim: Start School'</i> by Jean Adamson
<i>'Friends at School'</i> by Rochelle Bunnett	<i>'Lola: I Am Too Absolutely Small for School'</i> by Lauren Child	<i>'School for Dad'</i> by Adam Guillain and Charlotte Guillain

The BBC has some wonderful and easy to access resources to help you too:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zxpc8p3>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/groups/cx1lpm3ve37t>

Listen to 'School Life Unpacked'

This is a podcast for parents and carers presented by Southend mum Natasha Curtis-Igho, podcaster and contributor to Nurturing Bright Futures on Spotify and Apple <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/school-life-unpacked/id1811939902>



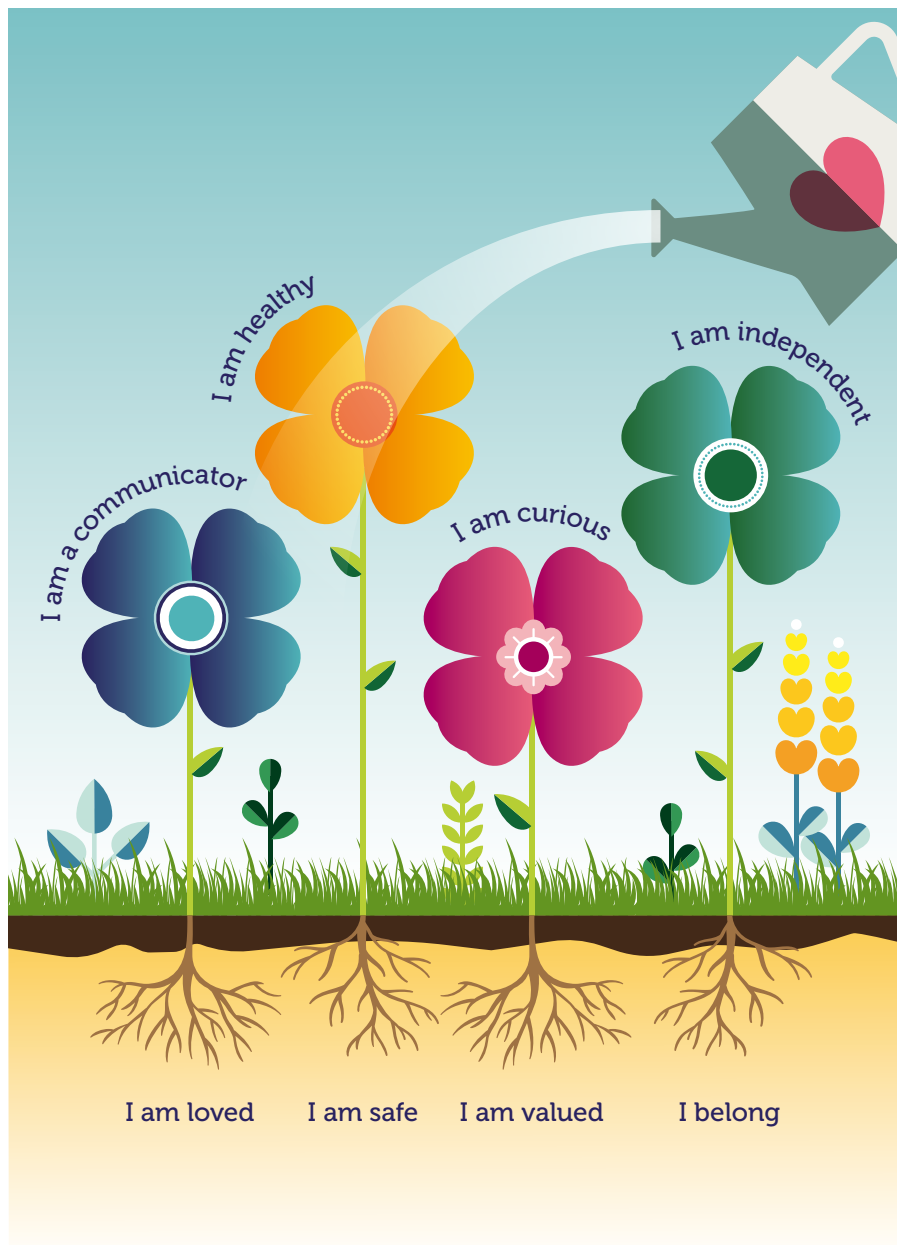
"A smooth well-planned transition into school is key to giving every child the positive start they deserve. By working together, schools, early years settings and families can ensure that each child's unique needs and learning preferences are understood and supported."

Headteacher, Primary School.

How to use Nurturing Bright Futures

This guide has been designed to help you support your child's early development from pregnancy to age five, in simple and practical ways. Whether you're preparing to welcome a baby or getting ready for school, this guide will walk alongside you with encouragement, ideas and reassurance.

We've based this guide on the image of a growing garden, because just like plants, children need the right conditions to help them thrive. Every part of the garden represents a part of your child's learning and development:



The Watering Can: Every Drop, Every Moment

The watering can represents the care and attention given by parents, carers and early years practitioners. Every interaction, every moment, is a drop that helps a child to grow and flourish,

The Flowers: The Garden of Learning

The flowers represent children's learning and development. When adults give time, care and encouragement, children's learning grows- just like flowers cared for in a garden

The Soil: Foundations for Growth

The soil shows what helps children to thrive: being safe, loved, valued and having a sense of belonging. When these foundations are strong, children grow, learn and flourish.

What you'll find in each section of this guide

To keep things simple and supportive each section of this guide follows the same format.

The importance of...

Each section starts by explaining why this part of your child's development matters and how it helps them now and in the future.

Celebrating your unique child

All children develop in their own time. Every child is unique and this guide is here to support you and reassure, not pressure. Don't ever underestimate the power of those moments you have with your child when you support their brain development through talking and play.

Just like plants in a garden, every child grows in their own way and that's especially true for children with special educational needs and disabilities or children who have experienced early childhood trauma. Try not to focus too much on their chronological age, what matters is their own individual starting point. If they're not meeting certain milestones, that's okay. Support, patience and celebrating wins can make a big difference. When looking through this document, choose the activities that feel right for your child and family. There's no one-size-fits-all, just what fits your child.

Growing and learning together: a developmental guide.

This part focuses on child development from pregnancy to age 5, when so much learning happens through love, play and connection. Each part of your child's development is explained clearly by what it might look like in daily life and the simple things you can do to help them learn as you grow and learn together.

Useful links and references to find out more

Follow these links to find out more about your child's development at this crucial time and what you can do to help them.

- The Best Start in Life parent hub: <https://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk>
- Birth to Five Matters: <https://birthto5matters.org.uk/information-for-parents>
- Centre for Early Childhood <https://centreforearlychildhood.org/help-resources/the-explainer-series>
- UNICEF Early Childhood Development: <https://www.unicef.org/early-childhood-development>
- BBC CBeebies Parenting: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/parenting>

"I feel good about going to school because I want to try going there with my friends. I'm excited about going in the garden. I like to play hide and seek."

Taylor, aged 4.

Every drop, every moment

Just as drops from a watering can help a garden grow, every moment you share helps your child learn. Although the journey in this document focuses on children's growth and development from pregnancy to five years old, it's something you can keep dipping back into to continue supporting your child throughout their reception year and beyond.

"My son is happy, friendly and energetic. He is curious and enjoys asking lots of questions about the world around him. He's happiest when role-playing his favourite characters. What's important to me is that he feels valued, understood and supported to make meaningful relationships, have first-hand experiences and that his interests are used to extend and challenge his learning."

Mum of JJ, aged 3.

Story and rhyme time

Fun, free ways to support learning and connection. Reading and rhyming help build language, imagination and emotional closeness.

Links to explore

Quick access to websites and resources to find out more or get ideas and support.

Here to help

Links to support services who you can contact if you need support or reassurance.

"It's the simple, cost free, everyday moments families share: talking, playing, sharing stories, doing chores together and exploring local places that make the biggest difference to young children. These familiar experiences help build children's language, confidence, curiosity, independence and a lifelong love of learning."

Reception teacher, Primary School.



Foundations for Growth

The importance of foundations for growth

"When we think about what children need to thrive in their early years, a strong sense of self is key. This means helping them build pride in their culture, racial identity, and heritage. At the same time, we must recognise the structural barriers, such as racism and xenophobia, that can affect a child's holistic development. Only by understanding and addressing these barriers can we ensure every child has the best possible start in life."

Liz Pemberton, 2025

The early years, even before birth, shape the foundations for lifelong emotional wellbeing and development. When children feel safe, loved and understood, they are more likely to thrive. Strong emotional foundations help them become resilient, confident and independent. These foundations support their ability to form secure relationships, express their needs, explore the world and manage their feelings. Children with strong emotional foundations are often better prepared to separate from caregivers when the time comes and are more ready to embrace new experiences. These beginnings underpin all other areas of development.

For some children their first days or years may not have provided the positive start they needed. This can impact on their ability to manage emotions, build trusting relationships and feel confident in new situations. However, the brain has an incredible capacity for growth and change and with the right support, new connections can be made. As a result, these children may continue to develop at their own pace, requiring ongoing support and encouragement along their journey. Through supportive relationships with caring adults, children can begin to feel secure and ready to

explore the world around them and reach their true potential.

Celebrating your unique child

Strong emotional foundations are built from everyday moments; cuddles, routines and feeling heard. Some children naturally seek comfort, while others show their feelings in different ways. However your child expresses themselves, know that your consistent love, reassurance and attention will help them feel safe and secure. Emotional wellbeing looks different for every child and that's okay. When children feel safe, they're more able to explore, learn and build positive relationships.

When it comes to managing your child's feelings and behaviours, remember that you are doing your best and that truly matters. You are only human and it's completely normal to make mistakes along the way. What's most important is how you respond afterwards. Mistakes offer a valuable opportunity to model growth and resilience. By acknowledging what happened, offering a genuine apology and reconnecting with your child, you show them that relationships can be repaired with honesty, love and care.

Foundations of Growth: Growing and learning together – a developmental guide

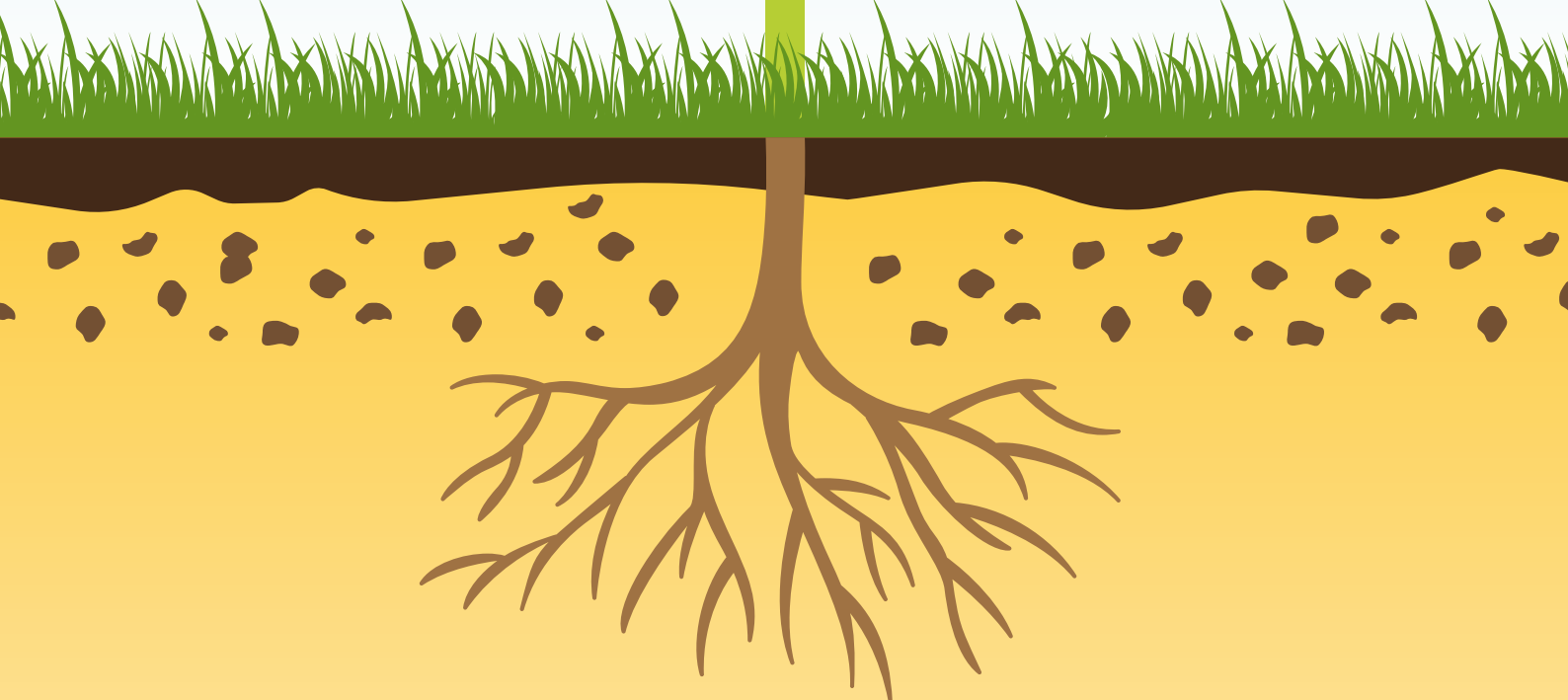
Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
During pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baby hears your voice and starts bonding with you from the womb ● Begins to sense your stress and calmness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk, sing and read to your baby whilst they are in the womb to help them recognise your voice and feel comforted ● Create a calming routine before birth ● Take time to relax, eat well and attend regular check-ups ● Look after your mental wellbeing - it helps your baby too
Birth to 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As your newborn's vision develops they can focus on objects that are close ● Learns to recognise your face, voice and smell ● Starts to feel safe and secure with you ● Cries to communicate need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get up close and face to face when talking to your baby so they can see your face and follow your expressions ● Respond quickly and to their cries ● Talk and sing to help them feel connected ● Hold and cuddle them often
3 to 6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Smiles coos and babbles with expression ● Beginning to imitate sounds and expressions ● Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain or being tired... ● Calms if comforted by you ● Reacts to people's emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Echo back your baby's coos, babbles and noises ● Offer smiles, cuddles and play ● Tune into the meaning of their communication and clues they give you with their bodies ● Keep routines consistent to feel safe. ● Use soothing voices to reassure them when they are upset
6 to 12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shows affection and expresses emotions ● Starts to become anxious around strangers ● Looks to you for comfort and reassurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk about feelings in simple words ● Comfort them when they're unsure ● Let them explore but stay close for support
12 to 18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Becomes more aware of their feelings and those of others ● Uses gestures or words to show emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help them name feelings e.g. "You're feeling sad because you dropped your toy" ● Praise their efforts to calm themselves ● Give comfort and explain changes in routine

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
18 to 24 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to play with others and show empathy. Can get easily frustrated or overwhelmed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be patient and calm during tantrums Promote sharing or turn-taking in play Offer simple choices to help them feel in control
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a wider range of emotions and may have tantrums. This is a natural part of their social and emotional development Begins to assert independence and test boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When your child shows a particular emotion, name it and talk about it with them, e.g. 'you're smiling, you're feeling happy to see me,' or 'you're crying because you're feeling frustrated you can't play with that car' Stay calm and consistent with routines.
3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands turn-taking and starts to show empathy May seek comfort from familiar adults when upset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try playing simple turn taking games that encourage your child to wait for a short time for their go! Use stories and play to explore feelings. Encourage and praise kind behaviour
4 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can talk about feelings and manage some emotion Builds stronger friendships and seeks emotional connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help your child work out how their body feels when they're experiencing an emotion, e.g. 'you look excited! Is your heart beating really fast?' Or 'you look nervous. Does your tummy feel wobbly?' 'You seem angry. Are your fists tight and your face hot?' Reassure them that the way they feel is ok – we all feel happy/sad/upset sometimes and feelings will pass Encourage talking about their day Support them to resolve problems and celebrate efforts



"We were very lucky to find our wonderful childminder. My boy is always so eager for Thursday to roll around. Choosing childcare is such a big decision, but I've always felt at easy leaving my child in her lovely setting."

Mum of Taylor, age 4.



I am loved

Being loved and connected is essential for young children because it supports their emotional, social and physical development in deep ways.

How to help at home: I am loved

Let them know they're loved

Tell your child you love them every day and be clear about what you love about them. For example, "I love how kind your heart is," "I'm so proud of how helpful you were today," or "You're such a good friend to others." When children hear specific reasons for your love, they understand that their actions and qualities are appreciated, which boosts their self-esteem.

Cuddle time counts!

Set aside time each day for 'cuddle time'-a special moment to relax, snuggle and bond with your child. During this time, talk about what makes them feel loved, what they're grateful for and what makes them happy. This quiet, close connection helps children feel safe and emotionally secure.

Consistency builds connection

Be consistent in your actions, responses and rules. Children feel most loved when they know what to expect from their caregivers. When they can rely on you for comfort, safety and fairness, it reinforces the trust and love you share.

Join their world

Show your child that you love them by taking an active interest in the things that make them happy; whether it's their favourite toys, meals, TV shows, or activities. When you engage with your child's interests, it tells them that they matter to you and that they are loved just as they are.



I am safe

Safety and security is essential for young children to ensure their well-being, development and overall health.

How to help at home: I am safe

Routines that reassure

Establish a consistent routine for daily activities like meals, playtime and bedtime.

When children know what to expect next, they feel more in control, secure and worries and fears are reduced.

Safe people, strong bonds

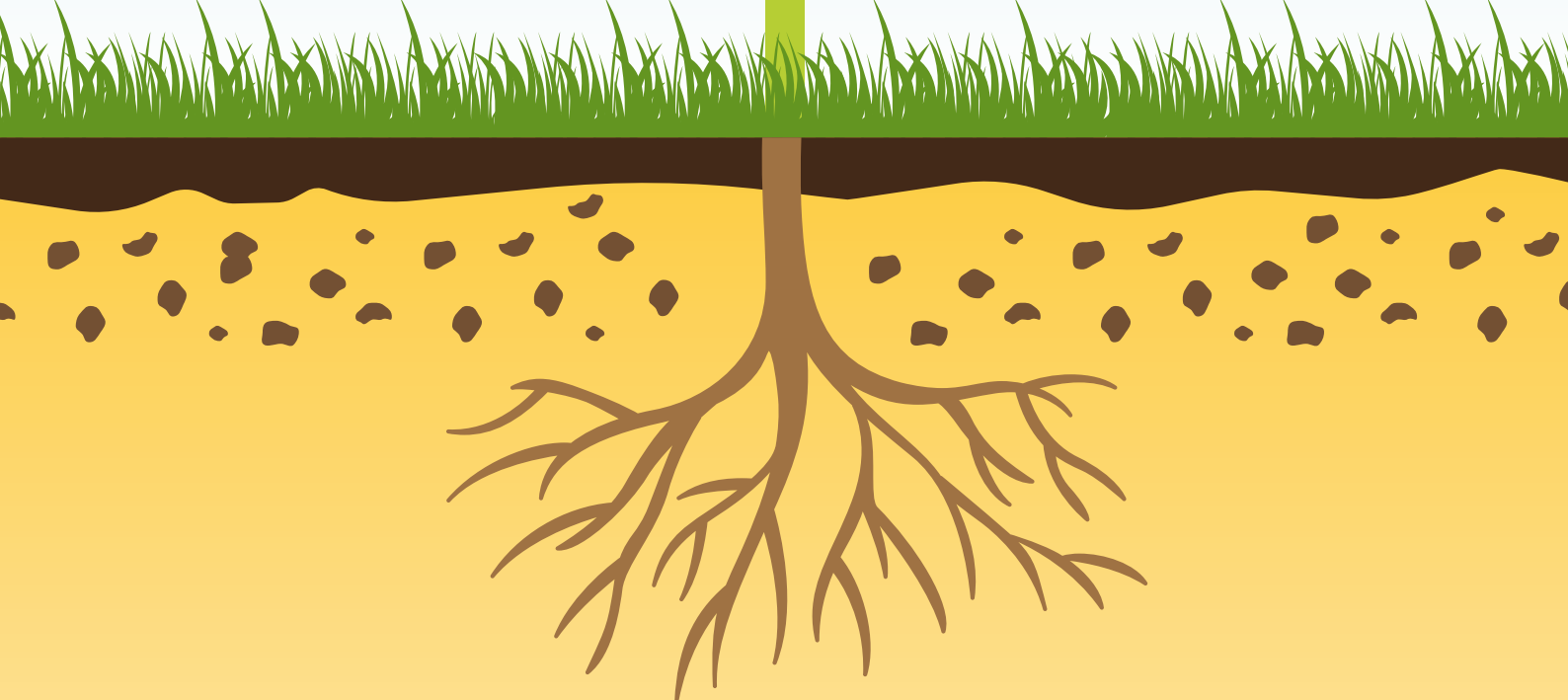
Make sure your child knows who the trusted adults are in their life. Whether it's you, a family member, or a close friend, ensure your child feels secure knowing who they can turn to for support and care.

Clear rules, caring hearts

Set clear, consistent rules and boundaries in your home. Make sure your child understands what is expected of them but keep the rules simple and for their age, reinforcing them with lots of love, support and understanding. Young children are learning and will make mistakes and need the adults around them to show lots of understanding, patience and compassion.

Creating a comfort corner

Set up a safe, comforting space in your home where your child can go when they need a moment of peace or comfort. This could be their bedroom or a cosy corner with soft pillows, blankets, or their favourite cuddly toys. Encourage your child to use this space whenever they need to calm down, need space or to feel secure.



I am valued

Feeling valued and accepted is crucial for young children because it lays the foundation for their emotional and social well-being.

How to help at home: I am valued

Self-care for the whole family

Show your child how to value themselves by setting aside a special day for family self-care activities. Take turns choosing things that help each family member feel good about themselves – whether it's a relaxing bath, reading together, enjoying a favourite meal, or even doing something creative. By modelling self-care you teach your child that they are worthy of love and attention.

Say it like you mean it

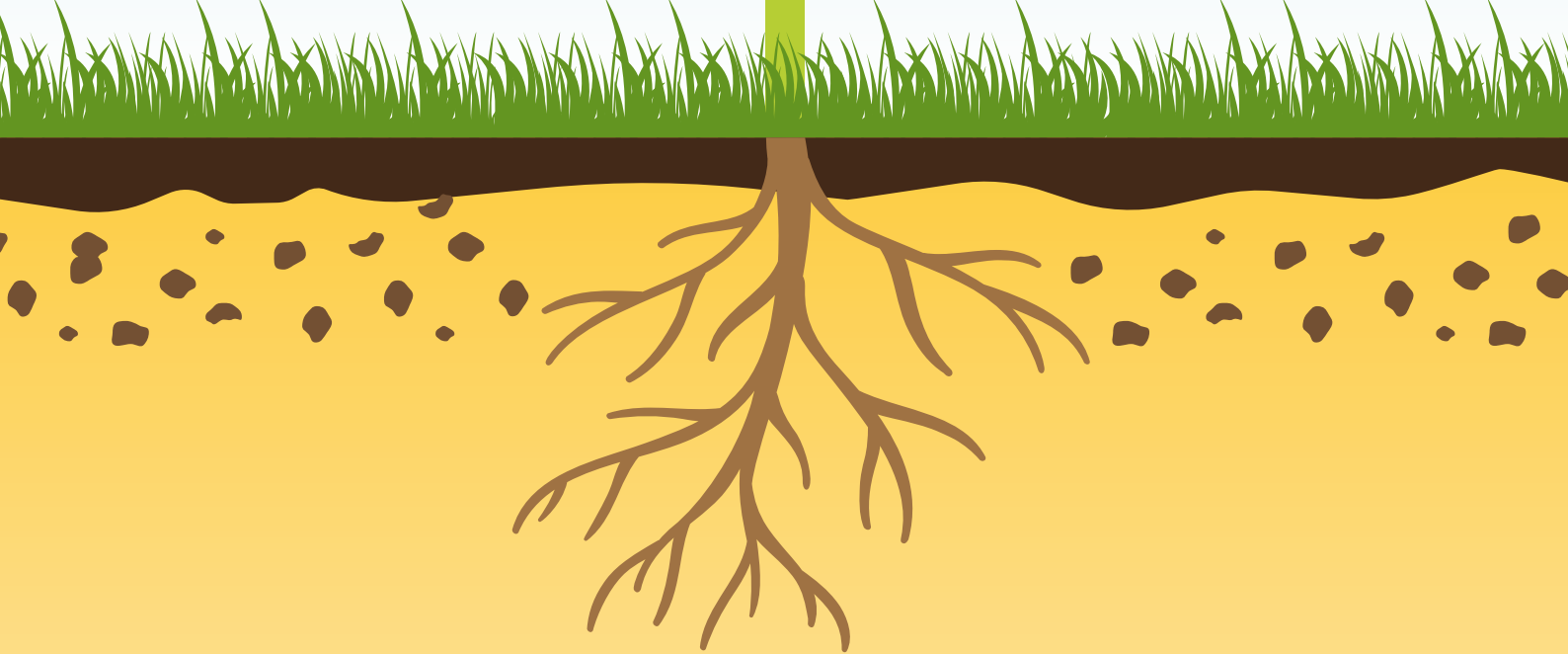
When praising your child, make sure your compliments are clear and focus on their efforts or achievements, e.g. instead of just saying "Well done," say, "I'm so proud of how much effort you put into finishing that drawing," or "I love how you stayed focused and solved that puzzle on your own." This highlights their actions and shows that you see and appreciate their hard work.

Say more than 'how was your day?'

Set aside time each day where you actively listen to your child, without any interrupting. Use open-ended questions like, "What was the best part of your day?" or "What made you smile today?" rather than "What did you do today?" When children feel that their thoughts and feelings are genuinely listened to, they feel valued. This builds their confidence to communicate and strengthens the emotional bond between you and your child.

Connect before correct

When your child is experiencing strong emotions, practice a 'listening-only' approach before addressing their behaviour. Instead of immediately offering ideas or correcting, focus on validating feelings with phrases like, "I see you're feeling upset," or "It's okay to feel frustrated." Offering comfort can help, but the key is to connect first, showing them that their emotions are heard and supported. Once they're calm, you can then discuss their behaviour. This approach strengthens your bond and makes it easier to address behaviour in a calm, constructive way.



I belong

A sense of belonging for young children means that they feel accepted, valued and connected to the people and environments around them, whether at home, school, or in social settings. It's about knowing they are a part of something larger, where they are loved, respected and safe.

How to help at home: I belong

Snapshots and stories

Show children photos from past outings, holidays, or family celebrations and share stories about those moments to reinforce the love and bond that exists within your family. Reflecting on these shared experiences helps children feel connected to the family.

Kindness in action

Organise a family challenge where everyone performs small acts of kindness toward one another each day. It could include helping with chores, complimenting a family member, or offering comfort when someone is feeling down. When a child sees that their needs-and the needs of others-are met with kindness, it reinforces their sense of belonging and connection to the family.

Family traditions

Create and maintain family traditions, such as weekly movie nights, special outings, or bedtime rituals such as a favourite book or song. Traditions provide a sense of security, reminding children that they belong to a family that shares unique experiences.

Celebrating you!

Talk to your child about what makes them special and unique, such as their favourite colours, foods, hobbies, interests and the important people in their life. This can include family members, pets, or any significant connections. Once complete, share with others to celebrate their individuality and role within the family. It's a powerful way for children to see themselves as valued members of the family, reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging.

Story and rhyme time

Pop along to your local library or browse Southend-on-Sea Libraries' and reserve books online at:

<https://southend.spydus.co.uk>

- 'Be You!' by Alexandra Strick
- 'Find Out About Families' published by Pat-a-Cake
- 'Guess How Much I Love You' by Sam McBratney
- 'I Am Enough' by Grace Byers
- 'I Love Me!' by Tina Sykes and Kendra Smiley
- 'My Family, Your family' by Laura Henry-Allain
- 'My First Book of Emotions for Toddlers' by Orlena Kerek
- 'So Much' by Trish Cooke
- 'The Family Book' by Todd Parr
- 'The Worry Bee' by Holly Hartman
- 'The Worrysaurus (DinoFeelings)' by Rachel Bright
- 'When I Feel Loved' by Paula Bowles
- 'When I'm Feeling LOVE' written and illustrated by Trace Moroney

Follow the links to learn these rhymes to enjoy together

If you're happy and you know it: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/z6rnmfr>

Polly put the kettle on: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zf8vhbk>

Rock a bye, baby: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zbwgsqw>

Ten in the bed: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/z7bnmfr>

Links to explore

CBeebies Parenting – wellbeing

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/behaviour-and-wellbeing>

How we speak to children about their behaviour

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/z3mfp4j>

Anna Freud common difficulties

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/under-fives-wellbeing/common-difficulties>

Games for emotions

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/z8sgr2p>

Videos explaining how your interactions make a difference

<https://centreforearlychildhood.org/help-resources/the-explainer-series/>

Scan and discover

Want to find out more? Check out this padlet full of ideas and information:



Foundations for Growth

Here to help

If you have any worries, concerns or just need to speak to someone- there's lots of support both in Southend and nationally. You are not alone.

<https://safeguardingsouthend.co.uk/directory> – Support available for families

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/health-visiting-0-5-2> – Health Visiting 0 – 5

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/childcare-early-education-funding> - Education funding

<https://southend.foodbank.org.uk/help-and-advice/help-through-hardship-helpline> – Southend Foodbank

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/parent-wellbeing> – Tips/Advice Parent Wellbeing

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/helping-children-deal-with-change>

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/supporting-others/childrens-mental-health>

<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline> – SETCAMHS: Telephone number 0800 953 0222. Provides advice to children and their families who need support with emotional wellbeing.

"When you adopt, you quickly become aware that your child's educational journey may look different from that of other children their age, shaped by early childhood trauma and experiences beyond their control. Their emotional and social development might need extra support, compassion and patience. More than anything, you want your child to feel accepted, understood and especially safe. I feel incredibly fortunate to have found a local school that not only understands this, but has welcomed my children wholeheartedly and as a result, both have thrived!"

Mum of two adopted children.



"In my opinion what matters most for children in their early years is consistent and trusting relationships where interactions and communications can flourish."

Nursery Nurse, Primary School.

The Learning Garden: I am a communicator



The importance of communication

"Speak to your children as if they are the wisest, kindest, most beautiful and magical humans on earth, for what they believe they will become"

(Brooke Hampton)

From the very beginning, children communicate in many ways-through cries, gestures, eye contact, facial expressions and sounds. As they grow, most children will begin to use words to share their thoughts and feelings. Some may communicate using signs, pictures, or in other ways. However a child expresses themselves, communication is key to building relationships, expressing needs and making sense of the world. When we notice, listen and respond, children feel understood, valued and their confidence to communicate continues to grow.

Celebrating your unique child

Communication starts long before children use words. From eye contact and gestures to babbles and pointing, your child is already finding ways to connect with you. Some children speak earlier than others; some use signs, sounds, or pictures and all of these are valid forms of communication.

Try not to compare your child with others. Focus instead on the little moments of connection for example when they look at you, respond to your voice, or show you something they love.

Every child's voice matters, in whichever way they express themselves.

Communication: Growing and learning together – a developmental guide

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
During pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baby begins to hear sounds and your voice from around 18 weeks ● Responds to rhythms and tone of speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk and sing to your baby whilst they are in your womb daily ● Respond calmly to stress, as it can affect your baby too
Birth to 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cries to communicate needs ● Begins to make cooing sounds ● Responds to your voice and facial expressions and increasingly will stop crying to listen when you speak ● Shows a reaction to other familiar sounds, e.g. ring of the doorbell or phone or a favourite noisy toy, becoming quiet, or changing facial expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enjoy being face to face whilst feeding and having cuddling ● Repeat your baby's cooing sounds to show that you are listening and engaging in a conversation ● Talk and sing to your baby often, especially whilst you carry out daily routines such as changing their nappy or giving them a bath, e.g. 'this is the way we wash your hair'...
3 to 6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Smiles in response to voices ● Turns head towards a sound ● May be startled by loud noises, which makes them jump ● Smile and laugh when others do ● Makes sounds to themselves, e.g. cooing, gurgling and babbling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe what you're doing as you do it, e.g. "now I am changing your nappy" ● Follow your child's gaze and talk about what they are looking at ● Sing nursery rhymes ● Imitate your baby's sounds
6 to 12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses gestures, e.g. pointing, waving ● Babbles using tone and rhythm ● Begins to understand simple words ● Makes noises and points and looks at you to get your attention. ● Will babble strings of sounds, like 'na-na' and 'go-go' ● Will understand simple instructions linked with a gesture, e.g. get the ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk clearly using simple words ● Use gestures when talking and singing songs ● Name objects as you or your baby reaches for them ● Let your child make choices by offering two toys or foods. Your child may show you what they want by looking, reaching, pointing, or by trying to say the word

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
12 to 18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses some recognisable words ● Enjoys naming things and listening to songs ● Understands simple instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acknowledge your child's attempts to communicate ● Take your child's dummy out when they are talking. Dummies get in the way and can stop them being understood and talking clearly ● When your child tries to say a word, repeat it back to them correctly to show you're listening and so they hear the word correctly ● Try to build learning into your everyday routines, e.g. use action words like 'wash' and 'splash' when washing up or taking a bath and repeat them in different contexts
18 to 24 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understands more than they can say ● Begins to combine two words ● Ask questions through gestures or sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand your child's language by repeating what they said and adding one (or two) additional words to it to make a two (or three-word phrase) ● Before going shopping, talk about what you're going to buy, show your child the items and name them as you put them in the trolley, sometimes your little one might like to help you and show you where the apples or the beans are
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses short phrases or sentences ● Understands simple questions and instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk about what you're doing together. Later encourage your child to talk about what you did ● The next time you ask your child a question try waiting up to ten seconds for your child to respond. It can seem like a long time, but you are giving them time to process what has been said and think of their response, without being interrupted ● Give simple instructions: "first, put on your socks, then, your shoes"

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can re-tell simple stories and events • Understands longer instructions and will ask lots of questions using words like ‘what’, ‘where’ and ‘why’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your child to retell a favourite story or event from the beginning • Answer their questions patiently • Help your child to be confident to say when they don’t understand something by making sure you use phrases like, “I’m not sure what you mean” or “could you say that again?” Praise them when they use these phrases too
4 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaks in full sentences and joins in conversations • Understands jokes, rhymes and more complex instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play listening games like, ‘I went shopping and I bought a...’ - take turns remembering the items each person has named and add a new item, forming a long ‘shopping’ list to remember • Share silly rhyming books and joke books and try to see who can keep a straight face the longest without laughing



I am a communicator



Every drop, every moment

How to help at home: Teaching me to communicate with confidence

Cheer every try

Celebrate every effort your child makes to communicate, even if it's not perfect.

Listen and repeat

Gently repeat back what the child is trying to say to show you're listening and to help them remember the language you've modelled

Playtime is talk time

Make time for play! Playing alongside and following your child's lead and interests creates a supportive environment helping your child to feel confident, ready to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Feel it, name it

Help your child to understand what they might be feeling by naming the feeling and its physical effect on their body. This will also help them to understand how their gestures, facial expressions and body language show what they're thinking or feeling.

How to help at home: Helping me to build listening and attention skills

Less noise, more connection

Make sure to have moments throughout the day free from extra noise or distractions, a moment of calm. Make sure your child is facing you when you speak, so they can see your face and focus on what you're saying.

Read, pause, imagine

Whilst sharing a book together, pause now and then to ask questions like, "what do you think will happen next?" or "who do you think is talking?" This helps your child to stay connected to the story and share their thoughts. Using props, puppets, or pictures can make the story even more exciting and help hold their attention.

Shhh... what can you hear?

Take a walk together, either indoors or outside and show your child how to stay very quiet so you can both listen carefully. When you hear different sounds, gently encourage your child to whisper what they can hear.

Listen and play together

Play simple games together that involve waiting for a signal, like "ready, steady, go!" or "one, two, three... jump!" These fun moments help your child to practise listening carefully, control their impulses and stay focused.

How to help at home: Growing my vocabulary

Fun with animal sounds

Use soft animal toys and as you play with them, say the name and sound, e.g. "cow says moo, moo!" "sheep says baa!" This will help your child to link sounds to words and sound play is key for speech development

Words in everyday moments

Talk to your child as you go about daily routines (nappy changes, bath time, feeding) to help them learn new words. Name objects you're using and describe what you're doing. Hearing these words over and over helps your child to understand and remember them, building their vocabulary.

Read, touch, describe

Together read and explore a simple sensory book like 'That's Not My'... series. Let your child touch textures while you describe them. The books offer a rich descriptive vocabulary for sensory words such as 'soft', 'rough', 'bumpy' and 'furry'.

Nature detectives

Whether it's a walk to your local park, a stroll along the beach, or time in a garden, being outside helps our children to explore the world around them. Talking about what they see, "a fluffy cloud," "a buzzing bee," "a tall tree," introduces new words and encourages rich, descriptive language. Encourage your child to observe, ask questions and describe what they notice. Every leaf, bird, or breeze is a chance to build vocabulary!

How to help at home: Helping me understand

Finish the story!

Read a familiar story but stop before the ending. Ask your child to predict what happens next or tell it using puppets or props.

Rhymes that move

Together sing songs with actions, as this helps enhance your child's understanding of rhythm, tone and gesture in communication. Enjoy classic rhymes like; twinkle, twinkle little star, wheels on the bus, or head, shoulders, knees and toes.

Guess the feeling

Act out a range of feelings and emotions like happy, sad, excited and scared. Make sure to give your child time to guess the emotion. This will help your child to begin to recognise the different gestures and facial expressions used to express an emotion, name an emotion and begin to understand how someone else might be feeling.

Where's bear?

Why not have a game of hide and seek with your child. It is a great way to support their understanding of language. It can help them to learn some key phrases and it gives them a motivating reason to communicate. Hide a favourite toy, let your child watch where you hide it, then say "where's bear?" When they find it say, "you found bear" and then hide it again! You can extend the game by introducing position words; on, under, behind, beside. When your child finds bear you say "you found bear on the chair" or "you found bear under the table", or "you found bear behind the book".



"He loves when I become a tiger in his jungle role play."

Papa of Oscar, age 2.

Story and rhyme time

Pop along to your local library or browse Southend-on-Sea Libraries' and reserve books online at:

<https://southend.spydus.co.uk>

- 'Oi Frog!' by Kes Gray and Jim Field
- 'The Squirrels Who Squabbled' by Rachel Bright and Jim Field, published by Orchard Books
- 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle, published by Puffin
- 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen
- 'Not Now, Noor!' by Farhana Islam and Nabila Adani
- 'Each Peach Pear Plum' by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
- 'Only One You' by Linda Kranz
- 'Sulwe' by Lupita Nyong'o
- 'From Head to Toe' by Eric Carle
- 'How to Catch a Star' by Oliver Jeffers

Don't forget to visit your local Southend Library to find out about the zero-fives services that are provided. These include free Bookstart packs including packs for children with additional needs, dual language books, story rhymes, story sacks, Little Story Stars (a reading incentive) and "Let's get Ready for School" Bags and much more....

Learn more about your library service at:

<https://www.southend.gov.uk/libraries>

For Story rhyme booking information visit:

<https://www.visitsouthend.co.uk/guide/southend-libraries-bookstart>

Explore the BookTrust Bookfinder for a wonderful selection of handpicked books.

Search by age or theme at:

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book-recommendations/bookfinder>

Follow the links to enjoy these stories and rhymes together

These episodes explore a wide range of traditional stories from around the world:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zjjkdbm>

Nursery rhymes: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zrfc3j6>

For Mr Tumble (using Makaton: a way of helping understand and express themselves by using signs, symbols, and speech together):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p07ctrl6/mr-tumble>

Rhyme cards and more to download:

<https://www.tlc-essex.info/downloads>

Nursery rhymes and songs to try at home:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/nursery-rhymes-and-songs-collection>

"He's only 4 months old but the moment he hears my voice, he turns, recognises me and then comes the smile. Then I smile too."

Grandad of Louie, 4 months old

Links to explore

<https://wp.penguin.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Lit-in-Colour-incomplete-list-EYFS.pdf>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/advice-for-families/look-say-sing-play>

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/resources/find-resources/michael-rosens-storytelling-tips>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/znfcpg8>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/key-talking-tips>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zbc4y9q>

Scan and discover

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I am a
Communicator

Here to help

If you have any worries, concerns or just need to speak to someone, there's lots of support both in Southend and nationally. You are not alone.

<https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/help-for-families/resource-library-for-families/children-communicating-in-different-ways>

<https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/help-for-families/talk-to-a-speech-and-language-advisor/talking-with-your-toddler-webinars/>

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/early-years/bilingual-quick-tips>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/tips-and-advice>

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/directory-record/2469/bookstart-southend-on-sea>

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/health-visiting-0-5-2/health-visiting-0-5-1/4>

"When my children were younger, one of our favourite activities in Southend was attending the Story Rhyme sessions at the local libraries. We often went to two sessions a week! The children absolutely loved them and I saw firsthand how they supported their language development and early counting skills. But above all, what I cherished most was the simple joy of spending half an hour singing together, doing little actions and just having fun."

Mum of Maya, age 8 and Curtis, age 5.

"There is nothing sweeter than being at bedtime with my granddaughter, snuggled close sharing favourite stories, where every page begins a new conversation, filled with questions."

Nanna of Alice, age 5

TOOLS FOR TALKING

Ways to support children's language development



Get face to face



Have mini conversations - respond to baby's sounds



Respond to babble



Notice and talk about your baby's interests



Follow baby's lead



Add new words to make simple sentences



Repeat what they say with the right words and phrases



Talk about the past and future



Talk about sounds in words

bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/parenting

Scan here for more advice



Link to download poster:

https://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/TFT_POSTER_ENGLISH_FINAL.pdf

The Learning Garden: I am healthy



The importance of health

"To grow and develop optimally, children need to receive nurturing care. This means that they enjoy adequate nutrition and good health, feel safe and secure and have opportunities for learning starting from birth."

(World Health Organisation)

Good health supports every part of a child's development-body, mind and emotions. Building healthy habits early, helps prevent problems later on. Whether it's eating well, moving their bodies, getting enough sleep, or identifying any concerns early, every healthy choice matters. A healthy start supports better learning, stronger relationships and greater wellbeing. It also helps children feel good about themselves inside and out.

Celebrating your unique child

Health and development aren't the same for every child. Some may reach milestones early, others a little later. Things like sleep, diet, activity levels and any medical needs can all affect how your child grows. Try not to compare your child to others. Instead, focus on helping them feel well, happy and supported. If you ever have concerns, you're not alone. There are professionals and resources further in this section who can help you.

Health: Growing and learning together – a developmental guide

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
During pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Body and organs begin developing ● Growth can be affected by your health and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eat well, rest, attend antenatal appointments and free NHS dental check-ups (free for mum until baby is twelve months) ● Avoid smoking, alcohol and stress ● Take vitamins and engage in physical activity consistent with pre-pregnancy activity
Birth to 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gaining weight and growing quickly ● Sleeps and feeds often ● Builds strength by moving arms and legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow a calming sleep and feed routine (breast or bottle) ● Respond to your baby to build a strong early attachment ● Give supervised tummy time
3 to 6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learns to roll, reach and grasp ● Starts sleeping for longer stretches ● May begin teething 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage movement and play ● Stick to regular feeding and sleep routines ● Offer clean, safe teething toys
6 to 12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eats a wider range of foods ● Crawls or starts moving independently ● Begins to sleep more at night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce healthy, textured foods ● Let them explore safely indoors and outdoors ● Keep regular nap times ● Take your child for their first dental check when their first tooth arrives and then every six months ● Begin toothbrushing when the first tooth arrives twice a day
12 to 18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Walks, climbs and plays actively ● Sleeps in longer blocks ● May have fussy eating phases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage active play daily ● Be patient with food preferences ● Stick to bedtime routines and calm evenings ● Have a potty at home that your child begins to see so that they become aware of it even though they are not using it yet ● Begin to introduce drinking from a cup- lidded, straw, or sippy to begin to move away from bottles

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
18 to 24 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Runs, jumps and becomes more confident ● May begin toilet awareness ● Uses hands to feed and drink independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer chances for free movement and outdoor play ● Support handwashing and healthy habits ● Model good food and sleep routines ● Try changing nappies as soon as they are soiled so they begin to understand what being dry feels like. When you see your child's face show they are doing a wee or poo comment on it, so they make the connection
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eats a wider variety of foods ● Begins potty training and becomes more active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer healthy snacks and meals which are low in sugar and salt ● Encourage physical play and toilet practice
3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Becomes more confident climbing, jumping, running ● Shows awareness of healthy habits like brushing teeth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let them explore parks and soft play area safely ● Brush teeth together and make hygiene routines fun
4 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can manage basic hygiene with reminders ● Has regular sleeping and eating patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help your child to feel more independent by setting up your bathroom so they can access items themselves, with your gentle prompting ● Build calm bedtime and mealtime routines

"When I had my son, I decided to pop along to the local NHS postnatal group. The other mums I met there have become my lifelong friends. Our bond is unbreakable. Even though our children are almost 20 now, we are always there for each other, we've supported each other as our children have grown and have always been there for each other through the very best and very worst of times. I never could have dreamt a group of women I met as we sang Jelly on a plate with our babies would grow to mean so much."

Mum of Max, age 19.



I am healthy



Every drop, every moment

How to help at home: Keeping me active

Building strength through play

Active play builds strength, balance, and coordination. From tummy time and pram walks to climbing, running, or exploring parks and beaches, movement helps children grow healthy and confident.

Road safety, step by step

Hold hands and walk side by side. Let children press crossing buttons, look both ways, and talk about safe crossing to build awareness, confidence, and good habits.

Little journeys, big benefits

Walking, whether to the shops, nursery, or school, is a simple way to stay active and build routine. Practising the school run helps children feel confident. Walking, scooting, or biking burns energy, supports wellbeing and creates time to connect and chat. Even parking further away and walking helps.

Strong hands for everyday tasks

Fine motor skills help children with tasks like writing, zipping and using cutlery. These small movements need daily practice through play. Drawing, painting and mark-making with crayons, chalks, cotton buds, or paint rollers help build hand strength in fun, creative ways.

Other ways to develop gross motor skills (large movements) include:

- Running, jumping and hopping in the garden or park
- Climbing at the playground or on soft indoor furniture
- Dancing to music both fast and slow using big movements and freezing
- Playing with balls- throwing, catching, rolling and kicking
- Pulling, pushing or riding wheeled toys like balance bikes, buggies or scooters
- Playing animal walks (bear crawls, frog jumps, crab walks)
- Obstacle courses using cushions, chairs and tunnels
- Using hula hoops, beanbags or skipping ropes to play simple games
- Walking on uneven surfaces like grass, sand or woodland paths

Other ways to develop fine motor skills (small movements) include:

- Cutting paper with scissors
- Building with small blocks like Lego (Duplo for 1.5yrs to 4)
- Threading beads or pasta onto string
- Doing up buttons, zips, or press studs
- Playing with playdough—rolling, pinching, shaping, squeezing, patting
- Using clothes pegs, tweezers or tongs to pick up small objects
- Sticker play or peeling and placing small labels
- Puzzles with small pieces
- Roll out a roll of wallpaper and use crayons and felt tips to make maps for dinosaurs, cars and play figures.
- Outside, buckets of water and a set of unused decorators paint brushes are great for “painting” the ground, walls or fences on sunny days!
- Playground chalks on the ground outside are brilliant for making patterns, shapes or even drawing a hopscotch to play!

How to help at home: Supporting me to have a balanced diet

Creating healthy mealtimes

Support healthy eating by offering a variety of foods and keeping meals and snacks low in salt, sugar and processed ingredients. Create a calm, sociable mealtime and model good habits by eating together. Involve your child in preparing food or setting the table to build interest and confidence.

Healthy lunches for

Check which foods are allowed in your child’s packed lunch, as some schools and early years settings have rules about nuts, sweets, or drinks. If your child is new to packed lunches or their favourite foods and drinks aren’t allowed, try different options at home. Keep lunches low in sugar, as even “no added sugar” foods can be high in natural sugars. Did you know that a small carton of apple juice contains five teaspoons of sugar?

Water: A simple way to stay healthy

Help your child stay hydrated by encouraging them to drink plenty of water, ideally from an open-top cup. Support them in understanding and recognising when they are thirsty by asking, “do you feel thirsty?”

Exploring new foods

Every child is different and trying new foods can be tough. Schools, early years settings and health visitors can help. At home, let your child explore new foods through touch, smell and play. Keep offering different foods to build confidence- just because they don’t like something at first doesn’t mean they won’t later.

How to help at home: Nurturing my emotional well-being

Relaxing into bedtime

Create a bedtime routine that works for your family. A simple routine might include a bath, pyjamas, reading a story, a cuddle, brushing teeth and then sleep. Some children need time to wind down, while others might need to burn off energy first. Find what helps your child relax and stick to it for a smoother bedtime.

Healthy screen habits for the family

Limit screen time: the World Health Organisation recommends no screen time for children under two and no more than an hour per day for two – four years olds. Encourage activity through reading, dancing, drawing, puzzles, or outdoor play. Spending time together in the real world helps your child grow and their brain to develop, so be sure to take screen-free breaks too.

Letting your child lead the way

Find moments to connect with your child without distractions like phones or TV. Join their play but let them take the lead. Ask questions, offer encouragement and show interest in what they're doing. This helps build confidence and creativity while allowing them to explore their own ideas.

Supporting your child's emotions

Encourage emotional well-being at home by talking about feelings, practising deep breathing and modelling calm-down techniques with toys. Read stories about emotions and create a cosy space for relaxation. These activities help children manage emotions and build empathy.

How to help at home: Teaching me healthy habits

Making toothbrushing fun

Make toothbrushing fun by using dolls, puppets, or role play to show your child how to brush. Set a consistent routine, brushing once in the morning and once at night. Use a song or timer to keep them engaged and help develop healthy habits.

Supporting your child's toilet training

Toilet training is a unique journey for each child and may take time. Like eating or walking, toileting skills develop through practice, support and encouragement. Having a potty at home and talking about wees and poos during nappy changes help children become familiar with toileting.

Key health checks for starting school

Before school, ensure medical appointments are up to date, including immunisations and an eye test if needed. The health visiting service will carry out a 'two-year old development check' and your child's nursery or childminder will complete their "progress check at age two." Your input into both is key.

Teaching good hygiene habits

Model good hygiene by covering coughs, wiping noses and disposing of tissues. Teach handwashing with visual cues and fun songs, like this one to the tune of "happy birthday"
*"Wash your hands clean with soap,
Wash your hands clean with soap
Don't forget in between your fingers...
Wash your hands clean with soap."*

Story and rhyme time

Pop along to your local library or browse Southend-on-Sea Libraries' and reserve books online at:

<https://southend.spydus.co.uk>

- 'Healthy Ninja: A Children's Book About Mental, Physical and Social Health' by Mary Nhin
- 'I Can Eat a Rainbow' by Olena Rise
- 'I'm Not Sleepy: Helping Toddlers To Sleep' by Amanda Gunner
- 'My Wobbly Tooth Must Not Ever Never Fall Out' by Lauren Child
- 'Oliver's Vegetables' by Vivian French
- 'This Is How We Keep Healthy: For Little Kids Going To Big School' Dorling Kindersly
- 'What are Germs?' by Katie Daynes
- 'Which Food Will You Choose?' An entertaining story to entice fussy eaters to explore a whole new world of colourful food by Claire Potter/Ailie Bushby
- 'Suzie Goes to the Dentist' by Charlotte Olso

Follow the links to enjoy these stories and rhymes together

Heads, shoulders, knees and toes: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zbxht39>

Grand old duke of York: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zrymd6f>

Hop little bunnies: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zhfb382>

Yoga with Jo-Jo and Gran Gran: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/yoga-with-rebecca-jojo-and-grangran>

Nursery rhymes: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/nursery-rhymes-and-songs-collection>

Links to explore

<https://www.parkrun.com/about/join-us/junior-parkrun>

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/activities>

<https://www.southend.gov.uk/parks-open-spaces>

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/a-parents-guide-to-screen-time>

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/baby-safety/being-a-parent-or-caregiver>

<https://eric.org.uk/potty-training>

<https://www.communitydentalservices.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-Tips-for-toothbrushing-children.pdf>

Here to help

If you have any worries, concerns or just need to speak to someone, there's lots of support both in Southend and nationally. You are not alone.

<https://www.communitydentalservices.co.uk/oral-health-improvement/family-fun-information>

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/school-nursing>

<https://eric.org.uk/helpline>

<https://apcp.csp.org.uk/content/information-parents-carers-0>

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/health-visiting-0-5-2/health-visiting-0-5-1/3>

<https://safeguardingsouthend.co.uk/directory>

"Our son is still young, but we are already seeing different behaviours and tendencies. He much prefers being able to crawl around any space, grabbing, feeling and normally trying to eat anything he can find. He seems to be a lot more physically active and is at his happiest when he is in some sort of safe environment (either inside or outside) where he can be left to his own devices."

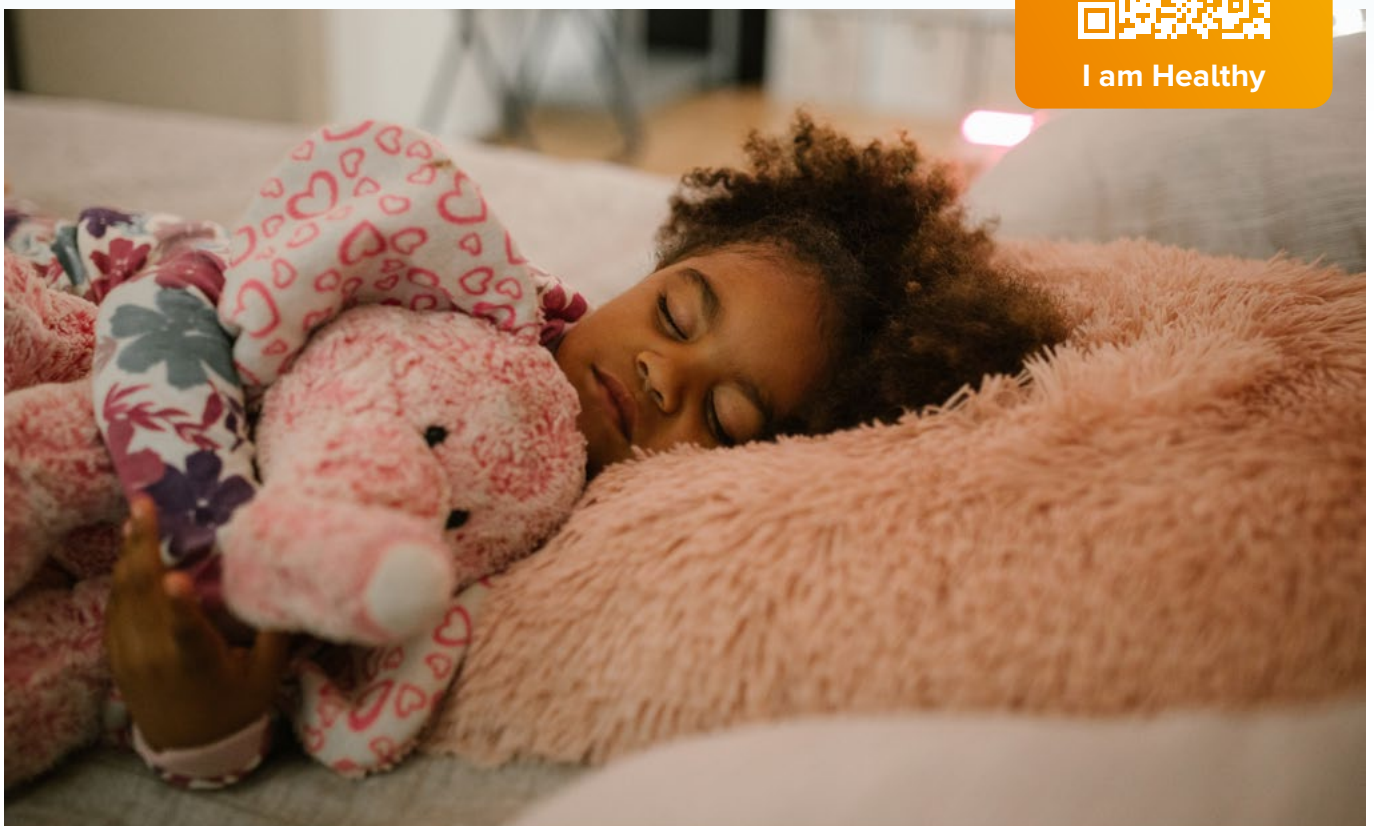
Dad of Leo, almost one.

Scan and discover

Want to find out more? Check out this padlet full of ideas and information:



I am Healthy



Physical activity for early years (birth – 5 years)

Active children are healthy, happy,
school ready and sleep better



BUILDS
RELATIONSHIPS
& SOCIAL SKILLS



MAINTAINS
HEALTH &
WEIGHT



CONTRIBUTES TO
BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
& LEARNING



IMPROVES
SLEEP



DEVELOPS
MUSCLES
& BONES



ENCOURAGES
MOVEMENT
& CO-ORDINATION

Every movement counts

Aim for at least
180
Minutes
per day
for children 1-5 years



Under-1s
at least
30 minutes
across the day

TUMMY TIME



Get Strong. Move More. Break up inactivity

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

Link to download poster: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/620a8add8fa8f549097b864a/physical-activity-for-early-years-birth-to-5.pdf>

The Learning Garden:

I am independent



The importance of independence

“Children who are independent take greater responsibility for their own learning and behaviour as well as developing secure self-esteem. They take pride in their skills and are better able to contribute to their groups, school, family and community”

(Kathryn Solly, 2015)

Independence builds confidence, resilience and a strong sense of self. When children begin doing things for themselves, for example feeding, dressing, or making choices, they feel capable and proud. It teaches important life skills and empowers children as they grow. Supporting independence helps children develop problem-solving abilities, self-esteem and a sense of dignity.

Celebrating your unique child

Every child develops at their own pace

and that includes the journey toward independence. Some love to try things on their own, while others need more encouragement and that’s completely normal. It’s not about ticking off milestones but noticing how proud they feel when they try. From picking out clothes to helping with small tasks, independence is built one small step at a time. Celebrate their achievements, however small and remember that their starting point is just as important as their destination.

Independence: Growing and learning together – a developmental guide

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
During pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baby's development is shaped by mum's health and emotional wellbeing ● Building blocks for brain and body are forming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritise your own health and rest ● Attend antenatal appointments ● Begin to talk to your baby whilst they are in your womb to form early bonds
Birth to 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Starts to lift head during tummy time ● Begins to show preferences (e.g. for certain voices or people) and interest in their immediate environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give opportunities for short tummy time daily ● Hold toys within reach to encourage movement ● Follow their gaze and talk about what they are looking at
3 to 6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reaches for and holds objects ● Tries to bring hands to mouth ● May start rolling over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer safe toys for grasping ● Let them try things independently with supervision
6 to 12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sits unaided and may start crawling ● Begins feeding self with fingers ● Responds to routines (e.g. bedtime, mealtime) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage self-feeding with soft foods ● Allow time for practicing new skills
12 to 18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tries to help with dressing ● Takes first steps or starts walking ● Imitates daily routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let them try putting on hats or shoes ● Offer small, safe tasks to support independence ● Start having the potty visible in your home and maybe sit toys on it explaining they are doing a wee or poo in it instead of their nappy
18 to 24 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses a spoon or cup with some success ● May begin toilet awareness ● Insists on doing things “by myself” or “me do it” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage independence in daily routines ● Be patient with mistakes- remember they're learning ● Offer support but allow them to try first
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tries dressing with help, feeds self with cutlery ● Wants to ‘do it myself’ in daily routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make time for your child to have a go getting dressed independently ● Support with gentle encouragement and praise

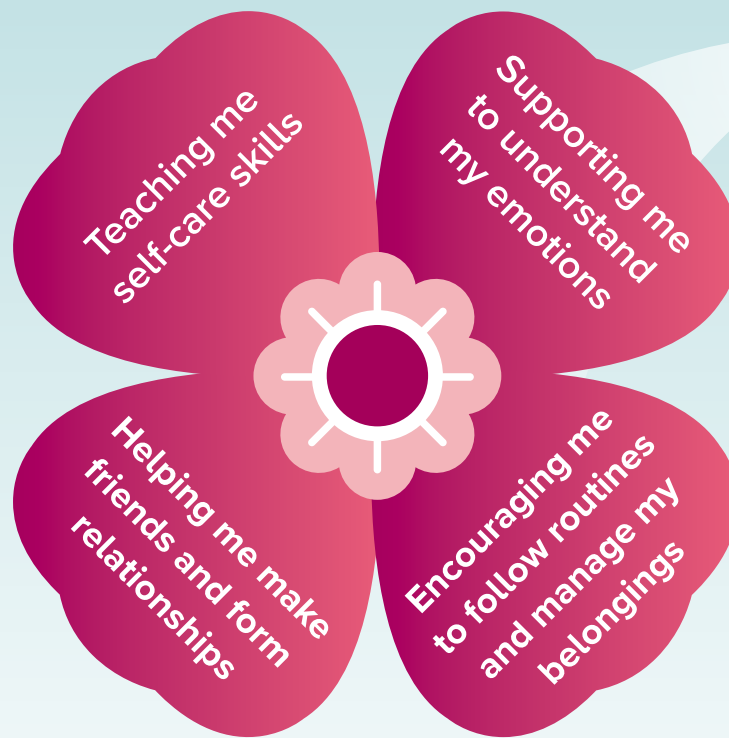
Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can dress and undress with fewer prompts • Begins to take responsibility for belongings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple visual reminders and routine charts • Involve them in packing their backpack or choosing clothes
4 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages more tasks alone, like washing hands and tidying • Understands rules and routines better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your child a 'job' to do, e.g. feed the pet, water the plants or lay the table for dinner. Small tasks can make your child feel capable and trusted • Use praise to build confidence in new tasks



“Early years settings matter because they provide rich, nurturing environments where children are introduced to new experiences that ignite curiosity and learning. They support the most critical stage of brain development, helping children grow, thrive and reach their full potential. Settings also offer children vital opportunities to play, build relationships and develop social skills. For families, they are a source of support, guidance and connection — places where parents can meet others and feel part of a caring community.”

Early Years Practitioners, Playgroup.

I am independent



Every drop, every moment

How to help at home: Teaching me self-care skills

Toilet time independence

Make the bathroom child-friendly with steps, low baskets, and reachable items. Encourage washing, wiping, and dressing themselves to build confidence, independence, and pride in doing things on their own.

Wipe, bin, done

Keep tissues within reach and show your child how to use and bin them. Offer gentle reminders, praise effort, and make learning fun through role play.

Let them try at mealtimes

Encourage your child to feed themselves, even if it's messy. Start with soft foods and the utensils your family uses. Talk about their lunchbox and what to eat first, like sandwiches before yoghurt, to build understanding, healthy habits, confidence, and independence at mealtimes

Dress for success

Getting dressed is a big task made up of lots of smaller steps. Start with easy items like putting on hats, pulling up trousers, or taking off shoes. Lay clothes out in the right order and give plenty of time and encouragement. Let your child choose between two outfits to build confidence and decision-making. Dressing dolls or teddies can also be a fun way to practise the skills without pressure. Dressing up is great fun too!

How to help at home: Supporting me to understand my emotions

Growing kindness every day

Children learn how to behave by watching and listening to you. Use everyday moments to praise kind actions like sharing or comforting a friend. Be specific, say things like, “That was kind, helping your friend when they were sad,” so they know what they did well. Regularly talking about kindness helps build empathy and teaches them how to treat others gently

Naming big feelings

Children feel big emotions but often lack the words to express them. Gently name their feelings, like “I wonder if you’re angry because I said no,” or “I can see you’re sad because your teddy is in the wash.” This helps them feel understood and shows that all emotions are normal and okay to talk about. The more they hear about feelings, the better they’ll be at expressing themselves calmly.

Helping your child with goodbyes

Short, gentle separations help your child learn that goodbyes are okay and you always come back. Start by stepping out briefly while they’re calm, then return with a smile. Try not to leave when they’re upset, as it can make the space feel unsafe. Use a simple, cheerful goodbye, consistency builds trust. With time, your child will feel more secure being apart from you.

Encouraging communication skills

As parents, it’s natural to anticipate what your child wants, but giving them time to express themselves helps build their communication skills. Pause for 10 seconds to let them try, whether it’s pointing, babbling, or using a word. Offer choices and encourage simple phrases like “more,” “drink,” or “help please.” These moments help boost their confidence and strengthen their communication over time.

How to help at home: Helping me make friends and form relationships

It’s okay not to win

It’s important for children to learn that things won’t always go their way-and that’s okay. Let them lose a game now and then or wait their turn to speak or act during play. Experiencing disappointment in a safe, loving environment helps build resilience and coping skills. You don’t need to make every game competitive, just give them space to feel all kinds of outcomes and emotions with your support.

Getting involved in your child’s transition

Join events like stay-and-play or induction sessions offered by your child’s new school. Some schools may also offer home visits, which help teachers get to know your child in a familiar setting. Check out local meetups, soft play venues and summer activities at Family Centres or libraries to connect with others and support your child’s transition.

Turn-take and teamwork games

Games that involve waiting, sharing and taking turns are great for developing social skills. Try simple games like Snakes and Ladders, Jenga, or rolling a ball back and forth. These activities teach patience, cooperation and how to handle wins and losses. Keep it fun and celebrate their effort, not just the outcome.

Building conversation skills together

Children learn how to interact with others by watching you. When they ask questions or tell you something, stop and listen with interest, even if you’ve heard it before! Respond calmly, ask follow up questions and let them finish speaking. This shows them how to listen, take turns in conversation and express their ideas respectfully – all key skills for friendships and learning.

How to help at home: Encouraging me to follow routines and manage my belongings

Bedtime routines that build confidence

Encourage your child to take the lead in small but meaningful ways at bedtime. Let them choose their pyjamas, pick a book to read and practice dressing/undressing themselves. Give plenty of time and praise their effort, even if things aren't perfect. A calm, predictable evening also helps them feel secure and ready for sleep.

Looking after my things

Label clothes, lunch boxes and bottles clearly with your child's name. Adding picture stickers or colours can help them find their things before they can read. At home, show them what belongs to them and where things go-like shoes or toys. This builds independence and confidence, especially in busy nursery or school settings

My bag, my responsibility

If the school doesn't require a specific bag, let your child choose one they like—this builds independence and helps them spot it easily. Choose something simple they can open and close themselves. If a school bag is required, add a keyring to help them recognise it. Packing and unpacking together each day builds routine and responsibility.

Using pictures and objects to support routine

Children often understand routines better with visuals than words. Try laying out items or using pictures in the order they'll be used like toothbrush, flannel, then clothes. You can also talk through the steps: "First we have breakfast, then we brush our teeth, then we get dressed." This helps them feel prepared and confident about what's coming next.



Story and rhyme time

Pop along to your local library or browse Southend-on-Sea Libraries' and reserve books online at: <https://southend.spydus.co.uk>

- 'How to Brush your Teeth with Snappy Croc' by Jane Clarke
- 'Hello Friend!' by Rebecca Cobb
- 'Hesitant Hettie' by Emma Atkinson
- 'Meesha Makes Friends' by Tom Percival
- 'No More Nappies (big steps)' by Cambell books
- 'Poo Poo Bum Bum Wee Wee' by Steve Cowell and Erica Salcedo
- 'Sharing a Shell' by Julia Donaldson

Follow the links to enjoy these for songs and games to enjoy together

Getting ready for school song: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zd4dr2p>

Snuggle Up song: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zfdgrj6>

Getting ready to go out song!: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zbvqbdm>

Nappy changing song: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/z64r2sg>

A washing line song: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zhd6rj6>

Links to explore

<https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/help-for-families/resource-library-for-families/create-opportunities-for-your-child-to-communicate>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zkqnxbk>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/znhyt39>

"When you have a child with SEND, being their advocate becomes part of everyday life. The worry never leaves – will others understand and support them? When my son started school, those fears eased. He went in happy, came out smiling, and I knew the staff saw him – not just his needs, but his whole self."

Mum of Alfie, age 14

Here to help

If you have any worries, concerns or just need to speak to someone, there's lots of support both in Southend and nationally. You are not alone.

<https://safeguardingsouthend.co.uk/directory>

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/under-fives-wellbeing/common-difficulties/separation-anxiety>

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/under-fives-wellbeing/common-difficulties/sharing>

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/under-fives-wellbeing/common-difficulties/toileting>

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/health-visiting-0-5-2/health-visiting-0-5-1/4>

<https://eric.org.uk/helpline>

"Watching my three year old explore the world with such fearless curiosity and excitement, reminds me how independence begins with wonder and how important 'letting go of his hand' is, even just for a moment, as he learns to trust himself and build his resilience."

Mum of Roman, age 3.

Scan and discover

Want to find out more? Check out this padlet full of ideas and information:



I am Independent



MORNING JOBS

Try to introduce new words as you talk through these activities with your little one!

have a cuddle



chat through morning



make bed



get dressed



eat breakfast



brush teeth



go potty



clean up toys



Find loads more fun activities for your child at

BBC CBeebies PARENTING



<https://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/MorningjobsCB.pdf>

The Learning Garden:

I am curious



The importance of curiosity

“Children have a natural urge to do the same thing again and again, whether it is throwing things, hiding things all over the house in bags, or emptying all the toys out of the toy box. This repetitive behaviour helps children to develop and deepen their understanding of concepts.”

(Stella Louis, 2019)

Curiosity drives learning. It inspires children to explore, ask questions and discover new things. When we nurture curiosity, we encourage creativity, problem-solving and confidence. Open-ended play and hands-on experiences allow children to learn in their own way, following what excites them. Curiosity builds skills for life and helps children develop a love for learning that lasts.

Celebrating your unique child

Children are naturally curious and curiosity looks different in every child. One might

love books; another might prefer building or climbing. What sparks one child’s interest may not appeal to another and that’s okay. Learning happens everywhere: during play, conversations and even quiet moments. What matters is giving your child time, space and encouragement to explore the world in their own way. Tune into them. What makes them tick? What are their fascinations? There’s no need to rush- your child is learning through every experience, every interaction, every moment big and small.

Curiosity: Growing and learning together – a developmental guide

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
During pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baby’s brain begins forming connections for learning ● Responds to sound, light and movement from the outside world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talking, singing and reading to your baby whilst they are in the womb will spark early curiosity by exposing your baby to sound, rhythm and language, helping build memory and attention, the foundations of learning
Birth to 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Looks around and follows moving objects ● Begins to show interest in faces and voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make eye contact and smile often ● Use toys with bold patterns and black and white images ● Sing your favourite songs with actions to your baby ● Play simple games such as ‘peek-a-boo’
3 to 6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reaches for toys and mouths them ● Watches people and objects closely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide safe toys or real-life objects (pieces of fabric, crinkly paper or nail brush) with different textures* ● Let them explore objects during play ● Copy the sounds and actions that your baby makes, for example if your baby claps, you mirror this by clapping back <p><i>*For health and safety purposes, ensure to supervise your child whilst playing</i></p>
6 to 12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drops, shakes and bangs objects to see what happens ● Crawls to explore new spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer cause-and-effect toys (e.g. rattles) or real-life objects (*wooden spoon and pot) ● Give freedom to move around safely <p><i>*For health and safety purposes, ensure to supervise your child whilst playing</i></p>
12 to 18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explores surroundings with curiosity ● Begins pretending play with objects (e.g. feeding a doll) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Join in their play and name what they’re doing ● Encourage safe outdoor exploration ● Share and read books together daily ● Offer choices “banana or apple?”
18 to 24 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shows interest in how things work ● Asks questions through actions or words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Answer their questions simply ● Provide open-ended toys like blocks or containers ● Follow their lead and support their interests

Age range	What your baby might be doing	How you can support them
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks ‘what’s that?’ as they explore new things Likes repeating activities to learn how they work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give your child time to explore at their pace Answer questions and describe what’s happening as they play
3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoys pretend play and simple problem-solving Explores more independently but checks in with adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer open-ended role play with everyday items Talk through their play and discoveries
4 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and builds with purpose (e.g. towers, stories). Enjoys exploring new places and asking deeper questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start collecting reusables to support your child’s creative thinking, empty yogurt pots, cardboard boxes, anything can become something! Visit new places together and talk about them



“My grandson is at his happiest when he chases me through the park or in a swimming pool, while I have to play the baddie. Nanna never seems to escape and gets caught with invisible keys and handcuffs. The park and pool become our playground and a stage for his imagination and curiosity.”

Nanna of Joe, age 4.

I am curious



Every drop, every moment

How to help at home: Supporting me to learn through play

Fun with pretend play

Pretend play helps children explore the world and express themselves. Join in with small toys, teddies, or dress-up clothes. An empty box can become anything, you don't need expensive toys to make believe!

Sharing a love for reading

It's never too early to start reading to your little one. Talk about pictures and characters, let them turn pages, every moment can be a reading moment.

Nursery rhymes for learning

Nursery rhymes build language and maths skills. Try rhymes with actions, repetition and numbers, like "five little ducks" or "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Once I Caught a Fish Alive." Singing together boosts memory, rhythm and vocabulary. Your voice is their favourite, even before they're born!

Building skills through play

Daily movement helps your child build body and brain. Use crayons, chalk and sensory experiences like sand to practice fine motor skills. For gross motor skills, encourage activities like crawling, swinging, or yoga. These movements build strength, balance and coordination, aiding skills like writing and dressing.

How to help at home: Allowing me to explore my world

Explore, play and get messy

Messy play helps children learn through touch, sight, sound and movement. Use mud, water, sand, or shredded paper with real items like pots and pans. Set up indoors or outdoors, put on old clothes and enjoy the fun. These activities support language, curiosity and brain development. Join in and enjoy the mess together!

Adventures in your local area

Children learn from real-world adventures. Visit places like the beach, parks, libraries, or museums. Short trips help them understand their world. Talk, answer questions and explore together. These outings build language, confidence and memories. Southend offers plenty for free-get outside and enjoy!

Talking about family traditions and special moments

Celebrating family traditions helps your child feel a sense of identity. Discuss birthdays, festivals and customs. Involve them in planning special times. Share stories, cook, sing, or look at photos. These moments help your child understand who they are.

Building confidence and celebrating uniqueness

Help your child feel proud by talking about what makes them special for example, their hair, the colour of their eyes, their hobbies. Read books that celebrate differences and discuss how everyone is unique. Feeling valued builds self-esteem and emotional security.

How to help at home: Encouraging me to have a go

Exploring with everyday items

Toys and everyday items without a set purpose spark creativity. Children love playing with things like curtain rings, boxes, or kitchen utensils. These items help them problem-solve, invent and explore. No fancy toys needed – let your child take the lead and see what they create. Just think safety first when your child plays with real things.

Learning from each other through play

Playdates help children learn to share, take turns and manage emotions. Short, relaxed playtimes at home, the park, or family centres allow them to negotiate and problem-solve. Stay nearby for support but let them figure things out.

Building confidence through practise

Children learn by practising tasks like putting on shoes or zipping up a coat. Give them time and space to try, even if it takes longer. If they get stuck, offer gentle guidance but let them try first. These moments build patience, confidence and independence.

Encouraging effort over perfection

Your child may not get it right the first time, but effort matters. Celebrate perseverance with phrases like “You worked hard!” or “I love how you kept trying.” This builds resilience and a love for learning.

How to help at home: Helping me to solve problems

Cooking up confidence and skills

Cooking teaches children about measuring, mixing and how things change with heat. Simple tasks like washing vegetables build early maths and science skills. It also boosts confidence, encourages bonding and promotes safety.

Endless fun with everyday objects

Natural and household items like flowerpots, utensils, shells and leaves spark creativity. These materials encourage counting, sorting and building in your child's own way. With no right or wrong, each playtime is a new adventure.

Learning through real-life tasks

Daily tasks like shopping, cooking, or folding laundry offer plenty of learning opportunities. Let your child count apples, sort socks, or name colours and objects. These moments build language, memory and confidence while helping them feel included and capable.

Problem-solving fun with puzzles

Jigsaw puzzles and matching games boost memory, focus and early problem-solving skills. Start with simple puzzles and gradually increase difficulty as confidence grows. These activities encourage planning, thinking and persistence - while having fun.



Story and rhyme time

Pop along to your local library or browse Southend-on-Sea Libraries' and reserve books online at:

<https://southend.spydus.co.uk>

- 'Jabari Tries' by Gaia Cornwall
- 'Edward Gets Messy' by Rita Meade
- 'I Hear a Pickle' by Rachel Isadora
- 'Look Up' by Nathan Byron and Dapo Adeola
- 'My Hair' by Hannah Lee
- 'Shark in the Park' series by Nick Sharatt
- 'Sheep in a Jeep' by Nancy E. Shaw
- 'Stuck' by Oliver Jeffers
- 'Ten Black Dots' by Donald Crews
- 'Ten Little Dinosaurs' by Mike Brownlow
- 'That's Not My ...' series (Usborne feely books)
- 'Tilda Tries Again' by Tom Percival
- 'What Do You Do with a Problem' by Kobi Yamada
- 'What's the Time Mr Wolf' by Debi Gliori
- 'You Can't Win Them All, Rainbow Fish' by Marcus Pfister

Follow the links to enjoy these for songs and games to enjoy together

Nursery Rhymes and Songs - A to Z:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/z4ddgwx>

Time to Rhyme:

<https://www.tlc-essex.info/resource/rhyme-time>

50 Things to Do Before You're 5:

<https://www.tlc-essex.info/resource/50-things-to-do-before-youre-5>

TLC Top Ten Talking Tips:

<https://www.tlc-essex.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Talk-Listen-Cuddle-Number-rhyme-cards-with-top-ten-talking-tips.pdf>

Links to explore

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/leaflets/look-say-sing-play-early-years-resources-parents>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/the-baby-club>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/playdough-recipe>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zmkd92p>

<https://www.visitsouthend.co.uk/guide/free>

<https://earlymaths.org/maths-postcards-for-families>

<https://www.trustlinks.org/our-projects>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zwq7ywx>

<https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/open-ended-play-at-home>

Scan and discover

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I am Curious

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<https://safeguardingsouthend.co.uk/directory>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/parent-life>

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/children-young-people-families/early-years-local-offer>

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/health-visiting-0-5-2/health-visiting-0-5-1/3>

<https://www.livewellsouthend.com/early-years-education>

position

What is next to the post office?

numbers

Let's see who will be the first to see a number 3 somewhere. I'm going to look on the cars and the doors.

direction & routes

Which way do we go now? Which way next?


counting

Let's count the steps!


estimating

I wonder - how many dogs we will see on the way to the shop today?

website



Walking to the shops



EARLY CHILDHOOD MATHEMATICS GROUP

Watch your child playing • See what they enjoy doing • Join in and use these ideas when they seem ready

"Being a childminder provides me with the incredible privilege of supporting children to learn, feel valued, communicate, build confidence and resilience, trust and feel safe and respected. Through the provision of bespoke learning opportunities for each child we are always doing our best to stimulate each child's holistic growth. Being able to observe and participate in each child's individual progression is extremely rewarding and seeing the joy on the faces of such young children makes every day very special."

Childminder

方向和路线

你今天给我指点迷津!

计数

这条街上有很多灯柱..... 我们能把它们都数出来吗?

方向和路线

这里是公共汽车站。让我们看看哪些公交车在这里停靠, 它们会去哪里。看--这里有一张地图。

牢记路线

你能记得, 我们接下来要经过什么吗? 是邮筒还是狗住的那个花园门?

编号顺序

其中一些门牌号已经丢失...

网站



步行到商店



EARLY CHILDHOOD MATHEMATICS GROUP

观察孩子的游戏 看他们喜欢做什么 • 加入进来 · 并在他们看起来准备好时使用这些想法

Find more family postcards here:

<https://earlymaths.org/family-postcards-the-collection-to-download-or-print>

<https://earlymaths.org/family-postcards-other-languages>

NSPCC

look say sing play

to build your baby's brain every day



Tip #15
**Epic
everyday
stories**



For **FREE** tips and activities

 search 'NSPCC brain-building'

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

©NSPCC 2023. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Registered charity England and Wales 216401. Scotland SC037717 and Jersey 384. The child and adult pictured are volunteers. Photography by Tom Hull. J20221114.

Tips and other brain-building resources provided by the early-learning experts at Vroom™, an initiative of the Bezos Family Foundation.

Get
brain-building
tips straight
to your inbox



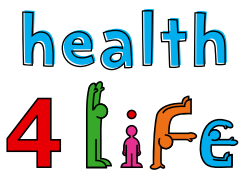
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<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/3277/3-look-say-sing-play-sing-poster-june-2023.pdf>

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BBC CBeebies PARENTING

BBC CBeebies Parenting helps parents and caregivers to support their child's development and language and communication skills, from pregnancy up to 5 years old in the home learning environment. The website is full of free, fun activity ideas to support child development and has expert led tips and advice on all things parenting

CBeebies Parenting has not contributed to or collaborated in the creation this document but has kindly allowed us to share links to their website. You'll find these links throughout, with QR codes below for quick access to specific resources.



Home page



Activities



Tips and advice



Child development




Skills for starting school





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A summary can be provided in alternative formats such as Braille, audio-tape or in large print.

Translations of this document in alternative languages are also available upon request.

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