



Learning
Skills

Fine Motor Skills

Starting
School Soon

Gross
Motor
Skills

Early
Literacy

Talking
With
Others

Many parents worry about the transition from nursery or home to reception class and if their child should be writing their name and reading words before they go. The simple answer is no, but there are a range of skills that will be important stepping stones to these activities and there are practical things that you can do to help build these skills at home.

Click on the links to find
out more!

Understanding
Others

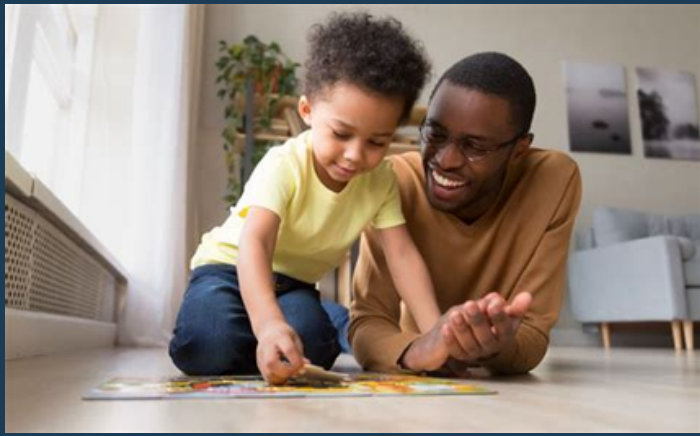
Early Maths



EARLY MATHS

WHAT IS EARLY MATHS?

When we think of early maths skills, we often jump straight to ideas of recognising numbers and saying them in order but early maths is so much more than that! Maths is actually all around us and babies and young children are natural-born mathematicians who use logical thinking as they explore patterns, space, shape, measurement and quantity, and solve problems. Daily moments where children explicitly engage with mathematical concepts and language can empower them to become confident mathematicians.



Did you know that studies have shown that:

- Block play and puzzles support success in later maths
- Pattern spotting and reasoning are better predictors of later maths achievement than counting
- Playful, interactive maths is an effective way of building children's confidence and enjoyment

WHY NOT TRY...

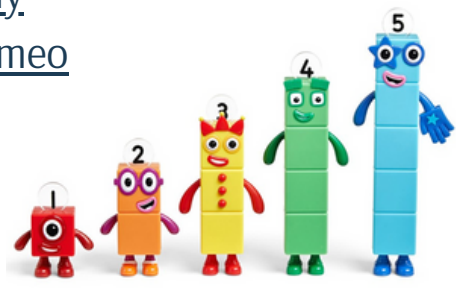
Next time you go to the park, why not try being pattern detectives! This idea can be broken up into different activities:



- Pattern spotting - can you spot any patterns on your way? This might be the stripes on a zebra crossing, bricks in a wall, flagstones on the floor or patterns in gates or fences.
- Pattern describing - say the patterns aloud to highlight them e.g. "Black, white, black, white."
- Continuing patterns - use natural materials to make a pattern and ask your child to describe the pattern and then continue it. Saying it aloud can help if your child is unsure, e.g. "Cone, leaf, cone, leaf..." Have at least two full examples of the repeating unit before you ask them to continue. What comes next?
- Correcting patterns - if you make an error in your pattern, can your child spot where and tell you what should be there instead and why?

Helpful links:

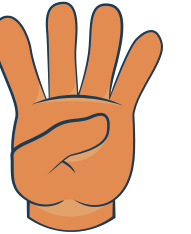
- [Mathematical Moments – ECMG](#)
- [Everyday Family Math: Supporting Children's early math learning with fun, everyday activities! on Vimeo](#)
- [Encouraging Positive Math Attitudes on Vimeo](#)
- [Numberblocks - BBC iPlayer](#)



WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LEARNING TO DO?

3-4-Year-olds are learning to:

- Develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects, without having to count them individually (this is known as 'subitising')
- Recite numbers past 5
- Say one number for each item in order: 1,2,3,4,5 and know that the last number reached when counting a small set of objects tells you how many there are in total
- Show 'finger numbers' up to 5
- Show the right number of objects to match the numeral, up to 5
- Experiment with their own symbols and marks as well as numerals
- Solve real world mathematical problems with numbers up to 5
- Compare quantities using language: 'more than', 'fewer than'
- Talk about and explore 2D and 3D shapes (for example, circles, rectangles, triangles and cuboids) using informal and mathematical language: 'sides', 'corners'; 'straight', 'flat', 'round'
- Understand position through words alone, e.g. "The bag is under the table."
- Describe a familiar route or location, using words like 'in front of' and 'behind'
- Compare the size, length, weight and capacity of different objects
- Select shapes appropriately: flat surfaces for building, a triangular prism for a roof, etc.
- Spot and talk about the patterns around them, e.g. stripes on clothes, designs on wallpaper
- Extend and create simple repeating patterns – stick, leaf, stick, leaf
- Begin to describe a sequence of events, real or fictional, using words such as 'first', 'then...'



MATHS MOMENTS

The Nursery Run

The nursery/school run provides lots of potential maths moments to explore:

- Count the number of red cars you see or how many children are scooting to school.
- Spot shapes in road signs or on buildings. How many circles or rectangles can you spot? What shape is the window?
- Describe the route you use and the position of landmarks, e.g. "Go straight down the path then cross over the road. Nursery is next to the library."

Shopping

Trips to the shops can be full of maths opportunities:

- Compare sizes: "Which one is larger?"
- Compare capacity & volume: "Which has more milk in?"
- Count or subitise: How many burgers are in the packet?

Cooking

Meal times, cooking or baking provide many fun, active maths moments:

- Talk about quantities: "How many eggs do we need?"
- Explore fractions: "Can you cut the pizza into halves or quarters?"
- Compare length & weight: "Which banana looks longer or feels heavier?"

Playtime

Children naturally explore maths as they play:

- Build towers. Whose tower is the tallest? How many blocks did you use?
- Sort toys at tidy-up time. Put all the cars in one box and all the dolls in another.
- Play games like *Hide and Seek*. Which places are good to hide and why? Can you be spotted behind the table? Why/why not?



EARLY READING & WRITING

WHAT ARE EARLY READING & WRITING?

When we think of early reading and writing, we may think of saying the alphabet in order, sight-reading words, name writing or even writing words and sentences. These are skills that will be taught once your child starts school but there is no expectation that your child should do these things before they start. Early literacy skills are developed through gesture, talk, song, sharing books and noticing print in the environment.

Early literacy skills are developed through daily routines such as:

- Sharing new and favourite stories every day before bed or during the day
- Regularly singing nursery rhymes along with their actions until your child knows them off by heart
- Using everyday objects and tools such as fingers, crayons, spoons or sticks to make marks in media such as shaving foam, bubbles, food or even mud!



WHY NOT TRY...

Children are wonderfully creative and often tell simple stories as part of their play. Why not try creating, telling, writing or even filming your own stories together? It doesn't have to take too much time or be longer than a couple of ideas/sentences and it can be lots of fun!

- When your child draws a picture, ask them to talk about what they have created.
- Ask them questions or introduce new, exciting vocabulary, e.g. if they tell you they have drawn a spider, you might say, "What does this spider like to eat?" or "It looks like a gigantic spider with 8 hairy legs!"
- If they start to tell you a story about the picture, scribe their ideas underneath or on a separate piece of paper, making it clear that you are writing down their ideas, facts or adventures.
- Invite an audience of siblings to come and listen to the story being read with optional prompts or toys to help retell the story.
- You might want to film the story being read and/or acted out with props and toys. This could then be cast onto the TV or sent to extended family to celebrate your child's storytelling success.

Helpful Links:

- [Nursery Rhymes and Songs](#) - BBC Tiny Happy People
- [Raise a Reader: A Parent Guide to Reading for Ages 3-5](#)
- [Reading tips](#) | BookTrust
- [Learning to write](#) - CBeebies
- [Alphablocks](#) - BBC iPlayer



WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LEARNING TO DO?

3-4-Year-olds are learning to:



- Understand the five key concepts about print:
 - print has meaning
 - print can have different purposes
 - we read English from left to right and from top to bottom
 - the names of the different parts of a book
 - page sequencing
- Develop their phonological awareness so that they can:
 - spot and suggest rhymes
 - count or clap syllables in a word
 - recognise words with the same initial sound, such as monkey and Mam
- Engage in extended conversations about stories, learning new vocabulary.
- Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing. For example: writing a pretend shopping list that starts at the top of the page; writing 'm' for mummy
- Write some or all of their name
- Write some letters accurately



READING & WRITING MOMENTS

The Nursery Run:

The journey to and from school offers lots of early literacy opportunities:

- Which houses have names and numbers? What do they say?
- Pay attention to road signs. How many different road signs do you see? What might they mean?
- What is the name of the nursery or pre-school? Where is the sign that tells you this?

Out and About:

Print is all around us:

- Pay attention to signage around town. Which shops, cafes or restaurants do you pass? How do you know what they are called?
- Let your child help to write, hold or cross things off the shopping list.
- Point out the names of products or brands you are buying. Do they have any memorable logos?

In the Park, Garden or at the Beach:

Children naturally explore in their play:

- Go on a sound hunt. How many different sounds can you hear?
- Play *I hear with my little ear*: "I hear with my little ear, something that sounds like a vehicle/animal/type of weather."
- Make pictures using natural objects. Can you make a stick man?
- Use sticks to make marks in the mud or sand.





LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN HOW TO LEARN?

Children learn through sensory exploration of the world around them and time spent playing with others. Adults at home play a significant role in laying the foundations of effective, life-long learning behaviours, and rich, early experiences can help them to set goals, think, plan, create, persevere, meet others' expectations and manage frustrations and other strong feelings.

These skills can be encouraged through everyday interactions when you:

- Give your child time to talk and think
- Actively listen to your child's ideas to try to understand what they want to know or achieve
- Join in play sensitively, fitting in with your child's ideas
- Model responding positively when things go wrong, and talk about learning from failure

WHY NOT TRY...

Obstacle courses are a great way to keep fit, have fun, and practise skills such as planning, problem solving and perseverance. You can do this in the garden or at the park and there's no need to buy any additional resources. Everyday objects and natural materials can be used in very creative ways!

This may include:

- String, wool or sticks to mark out the course
- Objects such as watering cans or buckets as markers to hop, skip or run around
- Sticks or swimming noodles to jump over or between
- Bags for life to do a sack race in
- Spoons to carry eggs or small toys in
- A sheet to crawl under



Above all, encourage laughter and have fun as happiness deepens learning!

Helpful Links:

- [Building an obstacle course - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)
- [Tiny Happy People - Tips and Advice - Emotional development](#)

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LEARNING TO DO?

3-4-Year-olds are learning to:

Problem solving & planning:

- Select and use activities and resources, with help when needed. This helps them to achieve a goal they have chosen, or one which is suggested to them.

Persevering:

- Develop perseverance within play, sometimes with support and encouragement, e.g. when completing a shape sorting activity or jigsaw.

Meeting other people's expectations:

- Increasingly follow rules, understanding why they are important.
- Remember rules without needing an adult to remind them.

Managing frustration & other strong feelings:

- Develop appropriate ways of being assertive.
- Talk with others to solve conflicts.
- Talk about their feelings using words like 'happy', 'sad', 'angry' or 'worried'.
- Understand gradually how others might be feeling.



LEARNING MOMENTS

Not only is every day a school day, every moment is a learning moment!

Getting Dressed:

This part of a child's daily routine offers so many opportunities to plan, persevere and manage frustrations:

- Plan suitable outfits for the weather and/or activity
- Put items of clothing on the right way round and in a sensible order
- Put dirty clothes in designated space such as a washing basket

Story Time:

Sharing stories about characters learning to problem solve, persevere or manage emotions can be a great way to broach these topics. You could share:

- The Colour Monster by Anna Llenas
- Oh no, George! by Chris Haughton
- Giraffe's Can't Dance by Giles Andrae
- Lost & Found by Oliver Jeffers

Playtime:

- Playing *Simon Says*
- Planning models and building them out of a range of resources including bricks, Duplo, Lego or junk moddleing
- Completing dot-to-dots, jigsaws, puzzles and memory games

At the Park:

- Climbing on the climbing frame
- Swinging on the monkey bars
- Waiting for your turn on the slide or swing



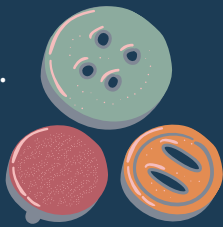
FINE-MOTOR SKILLS

WHAT ARE FINE-MOTOR SKILLS?

Fine motor skills are the ability to make precise movements with the small muscles in your hands and wrists. They also rely upon a stable core (tummy area) and shoulder girdle (set of bones and muscles that connect arm and chest).

A lot of everyday tasks require good fine motor skills and good fine motor skills build independence:

- Holding a pencil or paint brush
- Holding and positioning Duplo or Lego pieces or snapping together construction pieces.
- Zipping a zipper
- Eating with knife, fork and spoon
- Twisting a door knob or pushing down on a door handle.
- Fastening a button
- Using scissors
- Putting on or taking off smaller items of clothing, e.g. socks
- Using a key board or interactive screen



THINGS TO TRY

Cut pictures apart and then glue or tape them back together

Snack and cereal cardboard boxes are great for this! These boxes are generally a little thicker than regular paper and are also usually brightly coloured which makes putting the pieces back together a little easier.



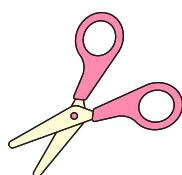
You may start with **playing in parallel and modelling** how to do something, giving hints and tips. Don't jump in too quick, let them think, plan and struggle a little before giving some physical support.

If your child finds this tricky to begin with, you can support using a **hand over hand method**. As the name suggests, place your hand over your child's hand and complete the snipping movement a few times.

You could also try **back chaining**, where you gradually reduce the support you give with difficult tasks, always doing the whole process with them but letting them try the last phase, then middle and last phases etc., until they reach the point of being able to complete the task from start to finish.

Considerations: Can your child sit for a few minutes, watch what you do and copy. If they would find this difficult you need to build up their joint attention skills (when two people intentionally focus on the same thing at the same time) first.

You can use the above strategies with **a range of experiences**, such as: stacking blocks, bead threading or lacing, simple origami, cut and stick, art and construction sets.



Helpful Links:

- [Making puzzles](#)-Tiny Happy People BBC
- [Cooking with your child](#)- Tiny Happy People BBC (also supports [Learning with Others!](#))

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LEARNING TO DO?

Between 3 and 5 years, mark a rapid progression in finer, more precise movements for drawing, using tools such as scissors and glue sticks and completing jigsaws and threading. Children develop their fine motor skills at different rates but here's what you might expect by age 3-4.

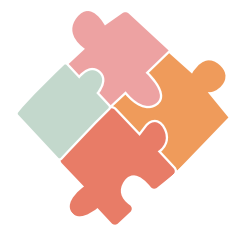
3 years:

- Thread a sequence of small beads onto string
- Trace on thick lines
- Complete 4-6 pc interlocking puzzles
- Cut roughly around pictures
- Dress independently including large buttons, socks and shoes



4 years:

- Colour inside the lines
- Copy letters
- Use a preferred hand for most activities
- Complete 8-12 pc interlocking puzzle
- Cut along a line continuously



FINE MOTOR MOMENTS

Developing the fine motor skills for drawing and writing takes development in the following:

Develop strength, stamina and control around the shoulder.

They can achieve this by:

- Crawling around soft play/ through tunnels and into tents
- Beating cake or play dough mixture
- Making large patterns on vertical outside walls with squirty bottle or paint brush on easels,
- Pegging out washing on a line
- Throwing balls into targets on walls
- Dances with streamers/ribbon/ scarves
- Light Saber play or torches



Wrist flex and rotation: flip between palm and back of the hand without moving their whole arm and make circles with their wrist. They can achieve this by:

- Screwing and unscrewing lids on jars
- Using a screwdriver
- Turning the pages of a book
- Table top races such as flipping over a row of coins or playing cards
- Flapping paper fish across a table top with rolled up newspaper
- Scooping and pouring sand into a bucket



Independent finger movements:

- Finger puppets
- Picking treasure out of sand with different combinations of thumb and finger
- Glove puppets
- Playing music on keyboard



Muscle at the base of the thumb:

- Pressing objects into clay
- Pressing cookie cutters into dough with thumb and index finger (pointing finger)
- Tweezer work, e.g., picking up pompoms with tweezers and putting them into a basket



GROSS-MOTOR SKILLS

WHAT ARE GROSS-MOTOR SKILLS?

Gross motor skills are the skills that children develop using their whole body. You can see this from a baby's earliest efforts to move and travel, to young children coordinating whole body movements. By using their whole bodies children become increasingly confident, agile and flexible.

It is essential to understand that these are big muscle movements that your child makes, such as **crawling, walking, and jumping**. These skills play an important role in a child's **physical development**, delivering fundamental abilities for **balance, coordination**, and overall body control.

Gross motor skills affect wellbeing and give children opportunities to socialise in play. Confidence and coordination in gross motor skills are essential for children in developing their **Fine Motor** Skills.



WHY NOT TRY ...

Hopping and jumping are a great way to develop gross motor skills and require balance and coordination. Hopscotch is a simple way to practice those skills. (As a bonus, it can help practice **Early Maths** skills, too!) If you don't have a path to draw on or a playground nearby, you can set up hallway hopscotch using masking tape.

All you need for this active game is some free floor space, a coin or counter to throw in the squares, and masking tape. Use the tape to make a hopscotch grid. you could even have your child make tape numerals in each box. If you're both feeling creative, you can even make the grid with circles, triangles, or diamonds instead of the traditional boxes. Then start hopping!

Helpful Links:

- [Throwing game with socks](#) - Tiny Happy People BBC
- [Obstacle course](#) - Tiny Happy People BBC



WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LEARNING TO DO?

Children between the ages of 3-5 are expected to spend at least 3 hours a day doing a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day. Children aged 3-4 years are learning to:

- Jump with two feet together
- Walk up and down stairs with alternating feet
- Run around obstacles
- Hop/ balance on 1 foot
- Climb onto a climbing frame and ladders
- Run with control
- Throw and catch a ball
- Scoot/ pedal a tricycle
- Kick a ball forwards



GROSS-MOTOR MOMENTS

By actively engaging with your child, you can make a big difference in their growth while creating fun, memorable moments together.

You may observe children finding their own obstacle course with what is already there, travelling in lines, going over, going under and going through. Children may repeat the route, challenging themselves and others. This can include fixed climbing equipment, outdoor furniture, paths and natural features, such as tree stumps or fallen branches.

Encourage your child to walk, scoot or bike to my nursery or childminder.

Help your child with dressing but allow them do the last steps, e.g. pulling up my zip after you have started it off. (This supports **Fine Motor** skills and encourages independence when **Learning with Others** too!)

Give your child lots of opportunities to be active and practise running, jumping, balancing, climbing and swinging.





LEARNING WITH OTHERS

WHAT IS LEARNING WITH OTHERS?

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.

These skills are essential for young children in all aspects of their lives and will help them to:

- Relate well to other children and adults
- Make friends and get on with others
- Feel secure and valued
- Explore and learn confidently
- Feel good about themselves



WHY NOT TRY ...

Children need to learn to recognise their feelings and learn the words to label them. They will need help from you to do this and will need you to show them different ways to manage their feelings.

For example, you could say "I can see you are getting very frustrated with that toy - it's not working properly is it? Let's see if a cuddle might help and we can look at it together".

1. Adult recognises the emotion.
2. Adult names the emotion for the child.
3. Adult provides some comfort.
4. Adult offers solution.

By repeating this four step approach every day the child can learn to manage their feelings themselves.

Helpful Links:

- [Talking about feelings](#)- Tiny Happy People BBC
- [Sharing with toys](#)- Tiny Happy People BBC



WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LEARNING TO DO?

Through supported interactions with other children, children learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These skills will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life. Between the ages of 3 and 5, children develop PSED skills in three main areas:

Self regulation

- Notice and identify emotions and thoughts
- Manage strong emotions and develop strategies (with support) to regulate emotions
- Be able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate
- Give focused attention to what is said and responding appropriately even when engaged in activity
- Show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

Managing Self

- Build confidence to try new activities
- show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices

Building Relationships

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs



SHARED LEARNING MOMENTS

You don't need to plan out how to support your child with this, shared learning moments can happen naturally throughout your day.

Teeth brushing:

Supporting your child to brush their teeth not only promotes good oral hygiene, it's also a good opportunity for turn taking, and encouraging independence. For example, model how to brush, then say, "Your turn." Then back to, "My turn next," to model brushing the back teeth, then, "Now your turn."



Snack time

Ask your child to help prepare snacks and begin to try to pour their own drinks! Give your child a "job" to do after snack time such as washing their plate/ bowl after snack.

Meal times

Another lovely opportunity could be to help get some ingredients out for you or to help set the table at mealtimes.



Story time:

When sharing a story, be curious about how a character is feeling at different points of the story. E.g. In Goldilocks and the three bears:
- "I wonder how Goldilocks is feeling when she gets to the house..." (worried- because she doesn't know whose house it is).
- "I wonder how baby bear is feeling when he sees his porridge is gone..." (sad because he was looking forward to his porridge and now it's all gone).



TALKING WITH OTHERS

WHAT IS EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE?

Before starting school, children are developing their ability to use words, sentences, gestures, and writing to express meanings and messages to others, something known as expressive language. This type of language allows children to:

- Express their feelings and needs
- Make requests and decisions
- Ask and answer questions
- Describe objects and events
- Use grammar correctly
- Retell and write stories

Expressive language skills rely on lots of other skills, such as fine motor skills to use gestures, and receptive language skills to understand what others are trying to communicate. Expressive language is key to childhood development, laying the groundwork for emotional regulation by allowing children to have their wants and needs met and express strong or intense emotions.

WHY NOT TRY ...

One of the best opportunities to develop your child's expressive language is through play. There are some strategies that may help you make the most of play time:



- *Comment on their play* - Try to reduce questions by talking about what they are doing with their toys instead, 'Dolly's eating tea.', 'The car's going really fast!'.
- *Expand* - You can expand your child's language by repeating what they are saying and adding one or two more words, e.g. 'Doggy walking.', you could reply 'Yes, the big dog is going on a walk.' You can also add new ideas, e.g. 'I wonder if he'll go to the park?'.
- *Face-to-face* - Try and stay face-to-face with your child when talking so they can watch your mouth, imitate how to produce words, and learn from facial expressions.
- *Recast* - If your child says something incorrectly, don't correct them, just repeat back what they have said in the correct way, e.g. 'I swammed holiday.', 'How lovely that you swam in the sea on holiday!'.

Helpful Links:

- Get free tips and activity ideas from the NSPCC's [Look, Say, Sing, Play campaign](#).
- Speech and Language UK offer a series of [7 free webinars](#) led by a Speech and Language therapist to help you think about ways to talk with your toddler.

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LEARNING TO DO?

Children develop their speech, language and communication skills at different rates but here's what you might expect by age 3-4:

3 years:

- Can have conversations with at least two back-and-forth exchanges
- Asks "who", "what", "where", "when" questions
- Says their first name when asked
- Describes actions occurring in pictures or books
- Generally speaks well enough for others to understand

4 years:

- Says sentences with four words or more
- Repeats words from a nursery rhyme, song, or story
- Answers simple questions like, "What does a doorbell do?" or "What kind of dog do you have?"
- Shares at least one event from their day



SHARED LEARNING MOMENTS

Expressive language skills can be developed through everyday shared moments with your child.

Daily routines

- Talk to your child throughout the day while you do daily jobs, and while you're out and about so they link words to everyday activities. Name items together and use verbs to talk about what you're doing, e.g. 'I'm washing the plate. I'm squeezing the sponge ...'
- Create daily opportunities to practise speaking, e.g. in the morning, encourage your child to talk through what they are doing and use time language, e.g. 'First, I will have my breakfast and then I will brush my teeth.'
- At dinner time, reflect on the day and give your child the opportunity to share their favourite thing about the day, encourage listening and turn-taking.

Getting ready

- Name different clothing items as you help your child dress. Leave a gap to help your child join in, e.g. hold up a sock and say 'now it's time for your ...'
- Offer your child choices so they are encouraged to practise words they are learning. Show your child two things to choose between, 'Do you want this shirt or this one?' 'The blue shirt!'

Long journeys

- **Use** simple word games such as *I Spy*, *Hangman*, or *20 Questions*, to keep your child occupied, and encourage vocabulary development as well as pronunciation of sounds.
- *I Spy* will encourage your child to take notice of their surroundings. Ask them to elaborate on what they are thinking, ...
- *20 Questions* is great to encourage your child to ask questions and model correct sentence structure.



UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

WHAT IS RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE?

Before starting school, children are developing their ability to understand language in a range of forms, such as hearing, reading, as well as interpreting signs and body language. This is called receptive language and is our first experience as we listen to our parents and caregivers speak to us and hear language used around us.

Receptive language skills are really important for starting school as they allow children to:

- Follow instructions and participate in daily routines, e.g. 'Put your bag away and line up at the door.'
- Understand questions designed to check comprehension and guide learning
- Listen to and understand information shared through stories, lessons, and discussions
- Learn new vocabulary introduced in school
- Participate in group activities, and learn to understand group rules and turn-taking
- Build social relationships, by understanding conversations, playing cooperatively and resolving conflicts
- Boost confidence, as they understand what is happening around them and can ask for help if needed

WHY NOT TRY ...

What's in the bag?

You can try this simple activity to develop your child's understanding of object names, descriptive language, and following instructions.



1. Place different everyday items/objects (e.g. toothbrush, car, cup, block) into a bag.
2. Model the activity by reaching into the bag without looking and describe what you feel, e.g. 'It's round ... it feels hard ... I think it's a ball!'
3. Let your child take a turn. Encourage them to reach in to feel an object and describe what they feel. You can ask questions to help them, e.g. 'Is it soft or hard?', 'What do you think it is?'
4. After guessing, take the object out and talk about it, e.g. 'What is it used for? How does it feel? Does it make a sound?'
5. Use and reinforce descriptive words, e.g. smooth, bumpy, spikey, heavy. To further support instructions, encourage the child to follow directions, e.g. 'Show me the round one.' or 'Find the smallest object.'

Helpful Links:

- Watch parents try out the 'What's in the bag?' activity for some helpful ideas.

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LEARNING TO DO?

Children develop their speech, language and communication skills at different rates but here's what you might expect by age 3-4:

- Enjoys listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens
- Can pay attention to more than one thing at the same time, though this may still be difficult
- Understands and follows 2-step instructions and questions, e.g. "Get your coat and wait at the door."
- Understands and answers simple 'who?', 'what?', 'where?', and 'why?' questions, e.g. "Why do you think the dog ran away?"
- Understand basic concepts like:
 - Colours (e.g., red, blue, green)
 - Shapes (e.g., circle, square)
 - Size (e.g., big vs. little)
 - Quantity (e.g., one vs. many)
- Understand positional words like:
 - In front, behind
 - Up, down
 - Top, bottom



SHARED LEARNING MOMENTS

Receptive language skills can be developed through everyday shared moments with your child.

Story time

- Label pictures: "That's a dog. What's this?"
- Ask "wh" questions: "What is the boy doing?" "Where is the cat?"
- Predicting: "What do you think will happen next?"
- Retelling: "Can you tell me what happened in the story?"

Tidy-up time

- Sorting: "Put all the blocks in the red box and the animals in the basket."
- Location words: "The puzzle goes under the table." or "Put the books on the shelf."
- Sequencing: "First pick up the cars, then the books."

At bath time

- Describing textures: "The sponge is soft. The water is warm."
- Action words: "Let's pour, scrub, splash, rinse."
- Body part games: "Wash your tummy. Now wash your knees."

Meal times

- Give simple instructions: "Put your spoon on the table." or "Can you pass the red cup?"
- Descriptive talk: "This soup is hot. Let's blow on it. The carrots are orange and crunchy."
- Concepts: "Your cup is full. Now it's empty."



Helpful Links

If you are accessing a paper copy of this information, here is a list of the links to helpful websites that are embedded in the electronic version.

Alphablocks: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b01cz0p1/alphablocks>

Building an Obstacle Course: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zh7nv82>

Cooking: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zfybg7h>

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

Encouraging Positive Math Attitudes:
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7875996/video/487363481>

Everyday Family Math: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/7875996/video/487343387>

Look, Say, Sing, Play: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/look-say-sing-play/>

Making Puzzles: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/z79hhbk>

Mathematical Moments: <https://earlymaths.org/mathematical-moments/>

Numberblocks: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b08bzfnh/numberblocks>

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

Raise a Reader: <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/books-and-reading-guides/raise-reader-parent-guide-to-reading-ages-3-5.html>

Reading Tips: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/resources/find-resources/reading-tips/>

Learning to Write: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/its-not-just-scribbling-its-mark-making>

Sharing With Toys: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zxfbg7h>

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

Talking About Feelings: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zjsgr2p>

Throwing Game With Sock: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/z64t6v4>

What's in the Bag?: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8e3dCMyOdk&list=PLqA6Q-vvA4sNdUcgP75f5Sed_4iCgcplP&index=4