

Playing at home for parents and carers

Whether your child is with a childminder, goes to preschool or nursery, their setting will be following the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The most important principles of EYFS are that learning is based on play, is active, fun and encourages confidence and independence. If we follow their lead, children will teach us too!

Playing at home ideas:

Play take it in turn games. "I went to the supermarket and I bought..." memory game.

Play Kim's Game. Find interesting items from around the house and put them on a tray. Look carefully, remember what's there and then cover with a cloth. The other player takes away an item without them seeing. Which item is missing?



Make up a story together. Take it turns to say what happens next in a made up story or retell one you already know. You could use toy play figures or household objects made into characters.

Share a story and talk about it. Look at the pictures together and talk about what you can see? Join in with the bits that you know.

Pair up the socks. Collect up as many pairs of socks as you can. Unpair them and muddle them up. Can you match the pairs again?

Make things with junk. Use recycling items like boxes and yogurt pots to make something. A rocket, a car, a house? Endless possibilities.



Target Game. Use soft balls, balled socks or scrunched up balls of paper and set up targets to aim for (paper bin, laundry bin, box).

Explore sounds and make music. Use pots and pans to make a band, have a kitchen disco and make up dance moves for others to copy. Sing songs together that you know and learn new ones. Play musical statues - when the music stops be as still as you can.



Have a toys tea party. Use pretend or real food at the table or on a picnic rug. Invite toy friends and grown-ups too. Enjoy lots of chatting together and pouring "tea"! Count the cups and plates to make sure there are enough. Dress up for the party.

Get Moving. There are lots of simple ways to be [active](#) at home or in the garden - obstacle courses, playing with water or cardboard boxes all with simple things at home. Try out [Disney Shake up Games](#) or [Tumble Tots at Home](#).

Make playdough. Use this no cook recipe [here](#) to make playdough and have fun playing with it. Keep it in an airtight container to use again.

Make a den. Make a den inside your house with blankets or sheets over the sofa, under tables or using a clothes airer. Outside dens are fun too if you have a garden. Use sheets over a washing line or pegs and chairs. Share books inside, have a picnic or pretend it is a shop.



Ten Pin Bowling. Use old plastic bottles/toilet rolls as the pins.

Buckaroo Challenge. How many objects can you balance on someone lying down on the floor before something falls off? No tickling allowed!

Get Dancing. Dance to your favourite song and get others to join in. You could even have a special costume!

Help with cooking. Maybe something you haven't eaten before or a family favourite! Good family [cooking](#) ideas. Change 4 Life will have some too.

Supporting your child's emotional wellbeing:

You can get help with [how to talk to children about coronavirus here](#). Depending on your child's age, they will need different support to help them understand and manage what's going on around them. They may have questions such as, "Why can't I see my friends or family?" or "Why can't I go to nursery?" They may also be picking up on how the grownups around them are feeling as we manage these new circumstances. There are many useful ways to support children's emotional wellbeing that will benefit the whole family. Here are some ideas:

Do something kind for someone else. Making something for them, helping with a job at home or joining in with making a rainbow for the window to cheer up people walking past.

Getting out and about safely. Perhaps in the garden or on a walk locally. Practising being mindful supports a lifelong skill of looking after our mental health. Look up and around, what do you notice? Fresh air and being active supports wellbeing for everyone.

Talk about feelings. Helping children to name feelings, as and when they are occurring will support their emotional development. You can also use stories to talk about how the characters might be feeling. Happy, sad, excited, grumpy, worried, bored etc.

Have some quiet time. Find time and space to do something restful and relaxing. Looking at picture books, watching a favourite TV programme or DVD or snuggling up for a story.

Make choices about the day. Making choices gives children a sense of responsibility, control and supports independence. Help children choose what they might do next. “Will you play a game first or paint a picture?” Children also enjoy mastering new skills, can they make a snack or wipe the table?

All the ideas here support the 7 areas of the EYFS:

Personal Social Emotional Development - feeling safe and secure

Young children may need more support with this area at the moment, as life is different to what they usually know. Stories and talking about what is happening is often a great way to nurture wellbeing and help children manage their feelings and behaviour. A routine that supports a feeling of control and safety is a good way to help children understand what is happening now and what is coming next. Too much structure may be difficult for young children who need time to initiate their own play spontaneously, rest and relax. Following a child’s lead is a good early learning principle - take notice of what they are interested in and make that the starting point for any play together.

Communication and Language - chat, play, learn

Talking and listening are very important parts of early learning and these skills are the key ways that all areas of learning are supported. Chatting about what is happening in everyday activities as well as learning new things while watching a TV programme, reading a story or playing a game all help children learn new vocabulary. Best of all is just taking time to have a conversation about anything at all!

Physical Development - get moving and learning

Physical activity is important for health, wellbeing, development and learning (and promotes brain development). Large movements and small movements are important to build strength, control and coordination (and support early writing skills). Health and self-care is also part of this learning. Taking time to learn how to manage eating and dressing independently is enormously valuable.

Literacy - reading and writing together

Early literacy is based on lots of shared experiences with an adult. Hearing and talking about stories, watching you write a shopping list or ingredients for cooking all supports independent reading and writing in the future. Read lots and lots of stories, books and other things to your child. Reading the same story over and over supports language structure and pattern and encourages a love of books. Playing with a range of mark making tools (pens, pencils, crayons, chalk, paint brushes) creates opportunities for young children to learn about ‘writing’.

Maths - numbers and shapes everywhere

Children love numbers especially big ones! Talk about numbers in any situation and wonder about how many plates/cups we need to lay the table or how many stars are in the sky. Sorting things by shape and size also offers loads of opportunities for maths. Best of all is cooking and counting out how many spoonfuls of this and that are needed to make a cake.

Expressive Arts and Design - music, role play, dancing and making

This area of learning can take the imagination to lots of new places and gives children a way to share their thoughts and ideas. Use anything you have to make things; draw and paint pictures or models; and use music to encourage singing and dancing. Making up stories and acting them out is also the way that young children represent their own thoughts and experiences. Den making is a great starting point to create a new world and to play in.



Understanding the World - finding out new things about people, places and technology

Spending time at home with family is a good opportunity for children to find out about their own lives and the lives of others. Looking at photos, information books, the internet and TV programmes that show children places, animals and plants in the world they live in are great to talk about. Using the computer or a tablet in lots of different ways (finding out things, taking photos) is also fun.

Some useful websites:

[EYFS Home.com](#) A simple, organised programme of activities, advice, support and a much needed community for all those looking after 3-5 year-olds and their siblings.

CBeebies website has lots available including [shows, games, watch and sing, make and colour, Bedtime stories](#) (with information for grown-ups too).

HENRY Healthy Start, Bright Futures - During this time of uncertainty and worry, we are here to support you. There are a number of resources and tips [here](#) to help you and your family to continue to be happy and healthy.

[National Literacy Trust Small Talk- loads of ideas for under 5s](#)

[Fun with Makaton on youtube](#)

[Hungry Little Minds App- simple, fun activities 0-5](#)

[EASY PEASY for parents to support early learning FREE until 31 May](#)

[Book Trust Home Time – lots of fun activities](#)

[Listen to stories on cbeebies radio](#)

[Follow a live zoo cam](#)

[Join Pyjamarama on May 1st](#) - There'll be lots of new activities for your children and fantastic ideas for things to do on the day – the only requirement is that they're done in pyjamas!

Keep in touch with your child's nursery or childminder. They may be making videos or sending ideas via their webpages or social media.