

Time to Talk

Pre-School/ Reception



Did you know?



Children learn best when they are playing – so have fun! In this leaflet you will find activities for quality time, meal times, activities for when you are out and about and for bed time.

Quality Time Activities



Blowing Bubbles

Blowing bubbles helps to develop the muscles used in talking. Children of all ages love bubbles, you can use shop bought bubbles or make your own.

- Make the bubble mixture together.
- If you are outside let your child chase and catch the bubbles.
- Try adding food colouring to the bubble mixture and press paper on to the bubbles, to see patterns.

Bubble recipe

- 600 ml of water
- 150 ml of washing up liquid
- 2 tablespoons of glycerine
(available from the chemist)

Moving to Music



Everybody enjoys listening to music whether it is nursery rhymes, classical, pop or music from around the world. Moving to music is a great way for your child to express themselves.

- Talk to your child about their movements as they move to the music. Ask if they can curl up small or stretch tall.
- Let your child choose music and show them how to use the CD player.
- Play lots of different kinds of music and talk about what they like or don't like. Sing action rhymes and songs and help your child to copy the actions.

Playing games

Playing games with your child can be fun and will help them to learn about taking turns. Choose a game that doesn't take too long.

- Use a tray of objects and remove one while your child closes their eyes. Ask them to guess which object has gone.
- Put picture or number cards face up, turn one over and see if they can remember which picture it was.
- Play a game with a pack of cards, guess whether the next card will be higher or lower.
- Play snap or picture dominoes.

Fun with play dough



Children enjoy playing with play dough and it is cheap and easy to make.

- Encourage your child to help you make the play dough and follow the recipe together. As you heat the ingredients describe the changes that are happening. Talk about how you
- made the play dough, what you did using words like first, next, after and last.
- Give your child a cup cake tin or an empty egg box so that they can divide the play dough equally. Cut up straws, these make great candles for a play dough cake. Give your child plates, so that they can share with their teddies.
- Let your child use children's scissors or a pizza wheel to cut the play dough.

Play dough recipe

- 3 cups of sifted flour
- 1 ½ cups of salt
- 6 teaspoons of cream of tartar
- 3 ¼ cups of boiling water
- 3 tablespoons of cooking oil
- Food colouring

Mix all the dry ingredients together in a saucepan. Mix in the wet ingredients (except for the food colouring) and stir until there are no lumps. Cook on a high temperature for three to four minutes until dough forms.

You can add food colouring to change the colour, knead the dough to work the colour in. Store it in an airtight container.

Messy play

Children love to get messy and use all of their senses to explore the world around them. Let your child know it's okay to be messy. It's a good idea to try this before bath time!

- Give your child objects such as sieves, beakers, spoons or potato mashers, to use in some mixture.
- Bury things like shells, pebbles, plastic dinosaurs or animals, in the mixture for your child to find.
- Fill a washing up bowl or bucket with any of the following mixtures and let your child explore: jelly, cooked pasta, cooked rice, mashed potato, gloop (mix cornflour or custard powder and water until it is stiff, it will become more liquid when handled).

Meal Time Activities

Cooking

When you are cooking with your child, start by making sure they can reach the table and that all the ingredients are ready. An apron will help to keep them clean. Always watch your child if they are using a knife or are near heat.



- Go to the library to find a children's recipe book.
- Choose something to make together and go shopping for the ingredients.
- Children enjoy pretend cooking. Use play dough to make cakes to share with their teddies and dolls.
- Choosing how to decorate cakes or pizzas is fun.
- Talk to your child about how things change when you heat them up or cool them down such as when making cakes or jelly.
- When cutting up fruit for a snack, talk about how many pieces you have.

Pizza recipe

Ingredients:

- Pitta, naan or half a baguette
- Tomato sauce
- Mixed dried herbs
- Cheese
- Your child's favourite toppings, such as ham, mushrooms, sweetcorn and tuna.

Method

1. Spread the tomato sauce over the bread.
2. Sprinkle with the herbs.
3. Top with the grated cheese and any other toppings your child likes.
4. Bake in a preheated oven 200 C or gas mark 6 for 5-10 minutes.

Washing hands



It is really important for children to learn how to wash their hands and it can be fun too.

- If your child is able to wash their hands without help they may like to help a younger brother or sister, although they may still need watching.
- Praise your child if they wash their hands without being told.

Sing "this is the way we wash our hands" to the tune of "Here we go round the Mulberry bush" as this will make the task fun.

This is the way we wash our hands

Wash our hands, wash our hands

This is the way we wash our hands

On a cold and frosty morning.

Eating together



Having meals together helps children to understand how to take turns and join in the conversation.

- Turn off the television or radio as this will encourage everyone to talk.
- When setting the table give your child more or less knives and forks than they need. Let them work out if there are too many or too few.
- Talk about who sits where and use words such as opposite.
- While you eat your meal, talk about what your child has been doing that day.

Washing up

Make washing up or stacking the dishwasher into a game for your child. Keep it fun and take the opportunity to chat.

- Talk about what you are doing while your child watches you. Use words like scraping and rinsing.
- Stack the dishwasher together. Ask questions like “where shall we put this bowl?”
- Let your child press the ‘on’ button.

Here’s an activity you can do outside

• Give your child a bucket or bowl of water and big brush (paint brushes are good) and let them paint patterns on the patio or walls of your house. Or give them soapy water and sponges and let them wash your outside furniture.



Bed Time Activities

Make bedtime fun

Having a clear routine at bedtime will help your child to settle down more easily.

- Children need to know what happens at night, so keep your routine the same.
- Encourage your child to learn to dress and undress by themselves.
- Lay their clothes out on the bed, to make it easier for them to dress.
- Sing this to the tune of “Here we go round the mulberry bush” while your child is getting undressed.

*This is the way we take off our socks
Take off our socks
Take off our socks
This is the way we take off our socks
When we’re getting ready for bed*



Music

Using calm music as part of your child's bedtime routine can help them to relax.

- Make up silly songs together while your child is getting ready for bed.
- Take it in turns to sing the next word.
- Choose gentle music to help your child relax.
- Talk about the pictures in a nursery rhyme book together, as you enjoy the songs.

You could play nursery rhyme or song CDs or sing and say rhymes together. Why not change the words to practise rhyming words? For example:

Hickory Dickory down

The mouse went into town

He saw the streets

He bought some sweets

Hickory Dickory down

Stories

Sharing books and stories at bedtime is fun and will help your child settle before sleeping. Find a quiet, cosy place to snuggle in. Children love to hear their favourite stories over and over again.

- Children love stories about things they like such as dinosaurs, teddies, trains and characters from TV.
- When you read a story, ask your child what they think will happen next.

You can borrow books from the library, all the books are free, for more information go to <https://www.devonlibraries.org.uk>



Bath time



This is a great way for your child to look at different objects to understand shape and size. You could use these ideas in the bath, or even in a washing up bowl.

- Count how many cups or spoonfuls of water it takes to fill a jug or a cup.
- Use containers to talk about half full, empty, too much, too little.
- Cover objects with a flannel or bubbles for children to guess what they are.
- Freeze a small bath toy in a plastic cup of water and ask your child to guess what will happen if you put it in warm water. Watch together as the ice melts.
- See how many ways you can find to stop the water running out of a sieve.
- Suggestions for toys: Spoons, wooden blocks, sieves, funnels, plastic pots, a variety of brushes, droppers, water pistols, plastic bottles, a variety of sponges, straws, empty plastic drinks bottles, plastic cups, jugs, ladles/spoons, egg cups, whisks, a variety of plastic containers such as yoghurt pots and bath books.

Out and About Activities

In the garden



Children enjoy having the space to run about, explore and play. Don't let the rain put you off, just wear wellies.

- Plant seeds with your child and measure them as they grow.
- Ask what they can see in the garden. Encourage them to ask questions.
- Explore under the bushes and plants for insects.
- Let your child use a camera to take pictures of what they see.

Back in the house

- Use the fruit and vegetables from the garden to make a meal with your child, they can help by washing off the soil.
- Talk about what your child saw in the garden. Ask them to draw or paint it.
- Refer to pictures, books and the internet to name insects.

Going on a journey

Children can go on a journey whether you're just popping to the post box or travelling on holiday. Look out for familiar or new things when you are out and about.

- Choose something, like dogs, count how many you see.
- Collect things as you walk along, such as leaves and talk about them.
- Look at road signs and ask your child to guess what they mean.

Back in the house

- Encourage your child to draw a picture of what they saw on their journey.
- Later on ask your child to tell you what they remember from their journey.
- Look at a map of your local area and talk about how you get from your house to the park.
- Help your child to draw a map, it could be a treasure map.

At the park

Children love to move around in a large space, to run, jump, climb and swing. Don't let bad weather put you off. Children don't mind rain or cold if they have the right clothes on.

- Your child will love doing silly walks with you, use small steps, strides, tiptoe, jump or hop. Try putting together a routine.
- Pretend to be different animals, things or people such as a rabbit, a plane or a soldier.
- Take turns making shapes with your bodies.
- Encourage your child to try new ways of moving.



Back in the house

- Use your hands and bodies to make shadow shapes on the wall or cut out paper shapes and see if your child can guess what they are.
- Play, Follow My Leader.

Going shopping



Help your child to enjoy going shopping. Try the ideas below. Try the ideas below.

- Let your child have the money to pay for something they have chosen
- such as their comic.
- Plan an outing to pick your own fruit and vegetables so that your child can see how the food grows and what it looks like.

Back in the house

- Sort the shopping into different kinds of food.
- Make a shopping list with your child. You could make it with pictures.
- Let your child help you to sort paper, plastic and cans for recycling.
- Give your child a shopping bag and a variety of tins and boxes so they can play shops.

Going on a picnic

You can have a picnic anywhere, even inside if you spread a cloth or blanket on the floor.

- Take a camera and encourage your child to take photos.
- Talk to your child about which foods they like or dislike. Ask them to help share out the food. Is there enough or too much.
- Encourage your child to choose healthy foods and to drink lots of water



In the house

- Talk to your child about what you need for the picnic and where you are going.
- Let them help make sandwiches and choose what food to take.
- When you get back talk about the picnic.
- Make a book with the photos or drawings and talk about what you did.

If you have any concerns about your child's development, speak to your GP or health visitor for advice.