

Home learning ideas

Services for Young Children - Issue 3

This is a guide to help and support you as parents and carers with providing your children with fun experiences in the home and outside.

We will aim to refresh this on a regular basis to help you keep young minds busy and bodies active.

While we will do our best to verify all the websites which we share, information is changing rapidly so please be aware that it is only accurate at the time of writing.



On the government website [Hungry Little Minds](#) there is a wide range of ideas and video clips to support you during this time, and beyond. The information had recently been updated to provide advice and reassurance during this prolonged period of home schooling. They have produced a list of useful, [online resources for home schooling](#) and some ideas and support with [learning at home with 2 to 4 year olds](#) and there is a document for [learning at home with school aged children](#).

You can access the full documents in the links above, however some of the key points have been highlighted within this document.

No one expects parents to act as teachers or childcare providers. Or to be able to provide all the activities that a nursery might.

While children gain a lot from nursery, things that parents do at home can help their development more.

You know your child best. Avoid forcing them into lengthy planned activities if they naturally respond better to a mix of shorter activities. This can stop them getting bored or frustrated and keep them active, interested and learning through things they enjoy. (GOV.UK – April 2020)

Try to make sure your child:

- gets up and goes to bed at the same time each day
- has regular mealtimes
- turn off any electronic devices, including the TV, at least an hour before bedtime.



Socialising

If you can, try a video call with other children. Younger children may not have a conversation as you would, but they can play alongside one another and show each other things they have made. For example, build models out of Duplo.



Play ideas for sitters

Sensory Pea Mat

You will need: a bag that can be sealed, peas either defrosted or tinned and some tape to secure edges of the bag so no leakage occurs. One type of thick liquid, e.g. hair gel, oil, paint, sauce etc.

Squirt one type of thick liquid into a bag and add peas and seal the bag with tape. Spread out the peas and place bag on the floor. For extra security, tape the bag to the floor. Place the child on their tummy. This will help them develop their balance, coordination and their core strength and give them the opportunity to pat and poke the peas to help develop their finger and palm strength. They could also stamp on it with their feet.

Video Link:

[green pea sensory bag](#)



Active play as recommended by the government



Sensory whisk

Fill a kitchen balloon whisk with pom poms, then encourage the child to pull the pom poms out, this will develop their finger strength and coordination.

If you haven't got pom poms find other objects such as dried pasta, or even chopped up vegetables such as carrot or peppers.

Please remember to never leave your child alone with this activity in case they choke on the pom poms

Make a pat mat.

Like the pea mat above, see if you can find an empty food bag, or a plastic wallet.

Fill in with small blobs of paint and develop finger strength by trying to mix the colours. This can either be laid flat on the table in front of your child or stuck to a window using Sellotape.

Other ideas include using hair gel and pom poms or beads and move them around the bag. Sand and small stones, loom bands...the possibilities are endless. If you search for 'pat mats for babies' on Pinterest there will be lots of great ideas there.

Active play is recommended by the government



Play ideas for early walkers



The birds are all out for spring.
Why not try to make a bird feeder for them?
This simple bird feeder just needs a cardboard tube and some seed.
Follow a video here on how to make your own.

[how to make a bird feeder from a toilet roll](#)



How about a bit of springtime gardening? This will work with or without a garden.

You could use a plant pot or recycle a drink carton to plant your seeds into. If you haven't got any soil use kitchen paper or a sponge. Maybe you could plant some herbs to use with your cooking. Try planting the seeds from your fruit and vegetables that you are eating. Take regular photos to record the changes.

Active play is recommended by the government



Frozen flower eggs

Finished with your eggshells? why not fill a shell with some flowers, add water and freeze for your child to investigate while it defrosts.

You can use anything as a mould, a cupcake case, or an ice cube tray. Talking about how the shape of the ice changes and what happens to the ice as it melts is the important part of this activity.

Why not try logging on to the Oxford Owl website, it has a number of e-books with very simple text that can be listened to. The text can be further developed through discussion with your child and linking it back to real experiences they may have had linked to the text read. The link below will take you to the e-books, you have to set up an account, but it is free.

[Oxford Owl - e-books](#)

Daily reading is recommended by the government



Play ideas for walkers and explorers

Why not use some of the natural items you can find on a walk outside to create some shape pictures or organise them in size order.

You could count them and carry out simple sums, such as adding or taking away. You could estimate whether you have more sticks, or more stones and then count to check.



Active play is recommended by the government



Why not set your child a challenge of finding colours from around the house?

Try and collect the objects in piles and talk about what they have found. Can you create a collage, using only one colour, or using only two colours?

You can try this activity outside too. Lots of colours are starting to sprout out as spring begins.

Either use the coloured objects you have found or find some new objects and sort them by the letter that they begin with, so pen goes in the 'p' bowl.

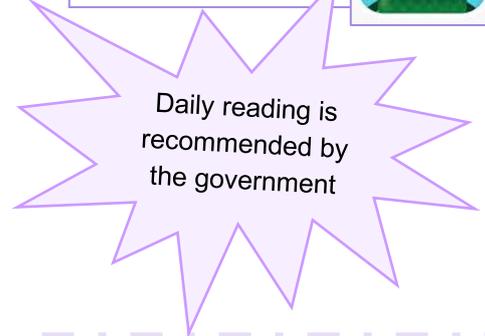
You can also sort them into pairs of objects that rhyme, for example 'pan' and 'man'.

You could also make up silly sentences using the objects, for example the 'dog sat in the cup'. You can just have fun just saying these sentences, or you can see if you can record them in some way, either by writing them down or recording a video.



Don't forget there are lots of apps to help you with phonics and reading.

Try 'Teach Your Monster to Read'.



FAMILY I CAN'T SEE... MINI ME



Imaginative play is recommended by the government

WHAT IS A MINI ME?

A mini me is a small version of you!
Usually a photograph that has been printed, laminated and stuck to something that will help it to stand up.
Lots of Early Years settings use mini mes of children (and staff) to add into play. The children LOVE them.
Why not make some with your child of the family they are not seeing at the moment?

WHAT TO DO:

- Find a photo of the person you are going to make 'mini'
- Print it out
- Cut around their outline
- Laminate it (if you have a fancy laminator!) or...stick it onto some cardboard (like the back of a cereal packet).
- Glue or tape your mini me to something like a small bottle, yoghurt pot, small box...anything to help it to stand up.
- PLAY!



Alistair Bryce-Clegg shares lots of ideas on his website - <https://abcdoes.com/home-learning/>

Sock puppets and sock caterpillars.

When you sort the washing out and find the odd sock that is always there, put it to good use and make a sock puppet. If you have any odd buttons lying around then they will make great eyes, if not use what ever you can find in the house and felt tip pens.

If you have any more socks use these to stuff one sock and then use elastic bands to turn this into a sock caterpillar, maybe use tights to make a really long worm, you can use newspaper to stuff the tights with.



Why not try and make up your own board game?

You could make it active by having 'challenge' spaces on your game, such as jump up and down on one leg five times. Add in other interesting squares, such as move on 5 spaces if you can spell a specific word, this way it can be linked to learning.

