



Midlothian Council

Learning through Play at home

-to the end of Early Level

Children learn best whilst playing. Here are the key skills we promote through interacting with children throughout the day whilst they are playing. This document provides the key skills together with resources for play, which together with adult interactions support progression in learning.



The three key areas we prioritise in Early Years are Literacy, Maths and Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing

Literacy - This includes Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking

Reading

- ✚ Reading stories, talk about the stories, characters, favourite parts of the book, sequence the events of the books, add props in so children can retell the stories.
- ✚ Reading non-fiction books - this provides children with the understanding about how to find out information and how to use the contents page to find the correct page.
- ✚ Learning Rhymes - Playing with rhyming words - this will support early reading skills, children can hear sounds which are similar and which ones are different. Listen out for the beginning sounds of different words, names - play 'I spy'.
- ✚ Look at print around the house, in the local environment.

Writing

- ✚ Gross motor skills are important in the development of children's concentration and to strengthen muscles. Children's core, shoulder, arm and hand strength which are really important to build on, to support fine motor skills.
- ✚ The fine motor skills support early writing skills.
- ✚ Knowledge of hearing different sounds within words support early writing, have an alphabet so children can see the letters.
- ✚ Supporting children experimenting with their writing and encouraging their efforts is really important at this stage.
- ✚ Model writing, encourage writing for a purpose - shopping list, a thank you note, writing an email to family members together.

Listening/Talking

- ✚ Encouraging your child to listen to one or more instructions and then moving onto more than 2-3 instruction at one time, supports listening skills.
- ✚ Try and have extended conversations with your children. Use new vocabulary and explain what the words mean.
- ✚ Whilst out walking with your children, 'Walk and Talk', find out what their interests are, tell them about your day and thoughts.

Maths and Numeracy is everywhere, have fun!

Numeracy is about being able to understand and use numbers in a range of situations when solving problems and making decisions.

Through their play children will learn to

- ✚ Develop a sense of size and amount
- ✚ Explore numbers and understand that they represent quantities
- ✚ Learn which numbers are big and which are small
- ✚ Count forwards and backwards to 20
- ✚ Ordering numbers before and after other numbers
- ✚ Start and finish at different numbers i.e. counting from 3 -7, counting down from 11 - 3
- ✚ Put quantities next to the number i.e. the number three (3)- add three plates,
- ✚ Look, recognise numbers in the environment in the house, play with a calculator.
- ✚ Write out a number line and miss out numbers, see if your child can work out which is the missing number?
- ✚ Use a dice, get children to jump/bang a saucepan to the amount on the dice, so they can feel how much that number represents.
- ✚ Use the language of maths to describe how things look and feel - big, small, heavy, light
- ✚ Recognise patterns, make patterns, copy patterns
- ✚ Sort and organise information in different ways
- ✚ Play with and recognise 2D &3D shapes, sort them, build with them and talk about which shapes are best for different purposes.
- ✚ Use money to pay for things in real and pretend situations
- ✚ Measure and weigh everyday items
- ✚ Develop a sense of timeday /night , the seasons and some things used to measure it- clocks, timers, calendars
- ✚ Use mathematical language to describe the position of things- in front of, behindand direction- forwards, backwards
- ✚ Sharing - halving a piece of cheese, quarter of a pizza, a whole piece of bread.

A child's everyday routine offers many opportunities and experiences to practise and apply these numeracy skills in meaningful ways

- ✚ Play card games, board games, dominoes, do jigsaws
- ✚ Share stories, songs and rhymes and talk about numbers in them
- ✚ Use numbers as you play with water, playdough, bricks and recycled materials
- ✚ Look out for numbers around the house and count everyday items
- ✚ Point out the time on the clock / on the washing machine
- ✚ Get your children baking, cooking, tidying around the house and build den

Health and Wellbeing - This includes mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing, planning for choices, physical education, physical activity and sport, food and health, substance misuse, relationships, sexual health and parenthood

Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing

- ✚ Support your child to understand their own emotions, how they manage these and help them to understand others'
- ✚ Help to build your child's confidence and develop their understanding of what makes them unique and special

Planning for Choices

- ✚ Talk with your child about different jobs in society and help them to find out more about these
- ✚ Help them to make choices about what they would like to play with or find out more about, help them to lead their learning and ask them to tell you what they want to know and find these things out together

Physical Education Physical Activity and Sport

- ✚ Support your child to keep as active as is possible, know the benefits of this and encourage your child to notice the changes in their bodies before and after being active/exercising e.g. increased heart rate, feeling hot
- ✚ Help your child to understand and learn rules to games and to take turns with others

Food and Health

- ✚ Make/prepare healthy snacks and food with your child, help them to try different food and know healthy and unhealthy foods
- ✚ Help your child to understand the importance of keeping healthy, such as washing their hands, brushing their teeth etc.

Substance Misuse

- ✚ Help your child to understand that there are things that are dangerous for them to touch or eat
- ✚ Help them to know the purpose of medicine and to only have this if it is given by a trusted adult

Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood

- ✚ Help your child to know who they can talk to if they are feeling worried about something
- ✚ Help your child to understand about people's personal space

Learning though Play - Stories/Books



Supporting Learning

This doesn't have to be a 'corner'! You can read and tell stories anywhere!



The best resource is you!

- ✚ Use natural props to enhance story time – open-ended resources can be absolutely anything – a stick can be a wand, a sword, a snake, a broomstick, a horse etc.



Resources Available in the Home

To read or make books

Books, magazines, photographs, scrap paper, old wallpaper, sellotape, masking tape, scissors,

For a story den

Blankets, sheets, cushions, pillows, drapes, net curtains, fairy lights, torch, puppets, soft toys, rug

Props for acting out stories

- ✚ Empty cardboard boxes, dress-ups – any old clothes, hats, shoes and handbags etc. will do!
- ✚ You could try painting characters from stories on wooden spoons or pebbles

Stories on the move

Get into warm clothing and go for a walk or into your garden if you have one. Make up stories on the way using things you see as prompts or re-tell traditional stories like, for example, 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', 'The Bears Picnic', 'The Gruffalo', 'Mrs Mopple's Washing Line', 'Goldilocks and the three Bears' or 'On the Way Home'. **See our story guide for more examples.**

Scottishbooktrust.com for Songs and rhymes app

- ✚ Use non-fiction books/resources to gather information in relation to a specific interest.
- ✚ Make language fun by introducing alliteration and make up silly sentences about what you can see around you or what you are doing.
- ✚ Gather items on your adventure and then use them to tell the story of your day
- ✚ **Digital stories** – on line or free from the library



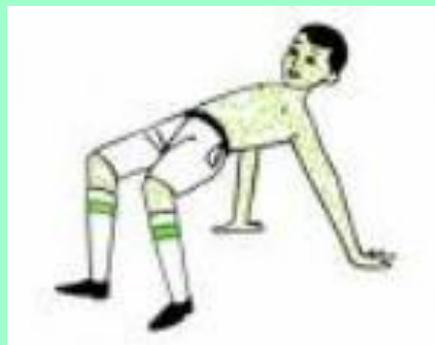
Learning through play Gross Motor Skills

Gross Motor Skills

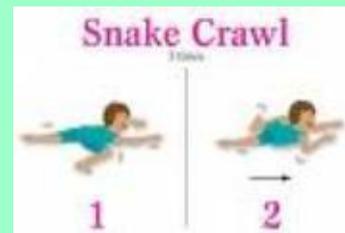
Supporting Learning

Children need to have lots of experiences of developing their core strength, shoulder strength and balance, which will support their ability to concentrate for longer periods of time, it will support also their ability to develop early writing skills.

Make an obstacle course in the house – children’s balance skills will progress if they are walking on different surfaces, which make them have to adjust themselves as they move along.



Core skills



Resources Available in the Home

Obstacle course

E.g. walking over cushions, beanbags, chairs, boxes, planks of wood – balanced etc.....

- Running is an important skill to learn and practice.
- Around an obstacle course
- On the spot/on the toes

With the hands on head/ hips/ behind back.

Balance skills

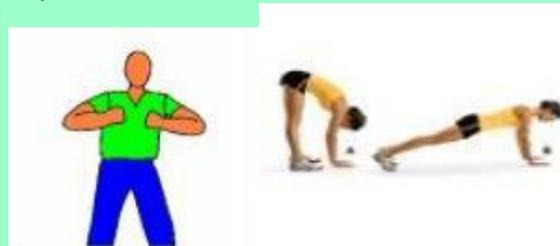
Play musical statues – helping children with their balance skills

Walk along a chalk line, string line or narrow board

- Opportunities to jump or move and be a statue at the end.
- Going up and down the stairs one foot at the time.
- Walking on knees with hands in the air
- Walking up an inclined plank with confidence



Hopping, running and jumping – chalk out zig zags, circles for hopping a ladder for jumping on the ground. These skills will help your child's balance, core strength which are all needed for learning. Make up a course in the garden or in your front room.



Bird Flapping

Inch walk

The child's core muscles are vital to their development in the nursery. Without a stable core, children will struggle to sit still and carry out fine motor skills.

Strong shoulder muscles are needed to help fine motor skills to develop well



Postures and activities which can help develop core strength

and speed

Lifting, pulling, carrying heavy things help the body internal systems to develop. This also includes jumping, running, stepping up and down, hopping, skipping anything that puts weight through the joints.

- ✚ Encourage rolling down hills – this is a fantastic way to exercise our vestibular system that controls our balance and eventually our ability to concentrate.
- ✚ Climb up inclines and hills
- ✚ Build an obstacle course out of loose parts to develop gross motor skills.
- ✚ As the weather gets warmer encourage walking in safe spaces in bare feet.
- ✚ Encourage children to move their bodies in lots of different ways, dancing, spinning, rolling, jumping, climbing & running on as many different terrains as possible

Balls, balloons, pennies



Hand Eye co-ordination

- ✚ Rolling the ball to each other – helps to visually track the ball
- ✚ Bouncing the ball – provides time for child to track and catch
- ✚ Children do high kneeling in rows and catch
- ✚ Volleyball balloon, put a marble or a penny to make it more unpredictable. Only when they can do all the above well.
- ✚ The balls should get smaller and the length between you should get longer as your child becomes more confident and able.

- ✚ Can you throw the ball into the bin?
Have targets with numbers on them?
Can you hit the 3 with the ball? How many times can you hit the target? How many goals? What's the score now?
What if they get two more goals?

Fine Motor Skills



Ideas to help develop pincer grasp



Finger isolation



Early Writing Skills

- ✚ Squeezing sponges help hand strength.
- ✚ Standing and using the whole arm supports the joints around the elbow, which supports early writing skills.
- ✚ Try using brushes outside with water and offer your child the opportunity to paint the house with water. Add in a paint roller if you have one.
- ✚ Put paper/wall paper on the wall for children to draw on.
- ✚ Picking up and placing stones
- ✚ Coffee tins covered and holes put in.

Learning through play
Mark making/Early writing

Mark making /Early Writing



Supporting Learning

- ✚ Making marks with different materials will help develop an interest in drawing and writing.
- ✚ Allow very young children to explore what their hands can do in different materials and how it feels.
- ✚ Pushing cars in sand and gloop will help to develop eye hand co-ordination as well as encouraging them to explore different ways of making marks.
- ✚ Using big brushes to sweep and paint with (with water or paint!) will help build arm muscles in preparation for writing and develop eye hand co-ordination.
- ✚ Children will enjoy making marks over and over again in circles and up and down
- ✚ Write and paint in front of your child as they will begin to copy you.
- ✚ Experiment with different shapes to print with and different tools to make marks with.
- ✚ As children develop their skills, they will begin to use chunky crayons and pens to make marks with.
- ✚ They will begin to use mark making in their play and write for a purpose. It is important at this stage to let children write the way they want toit makes sense to them.
- ✚ Let them experiment with scribbles on post it notes /marks on paper

Resources Available in the Home

Large trays of gloop , paint or flour /water mix, mud and water for outdoors
Washing up brushes in soapy water
Dough with cutters

large bits of paper – old bits of wallpaper are ideal
big paint brushes- decorating brushes
sponges , paint rollers

mops, brushes, squeezey mops

Paint , paintbrushes of different sizes, make up brushes, sponges

Large paper for children to paint horizontally and vertically - a big bit of paper stuck to an outdoor wall or spread across the floor
Chunky crayons marker pens
Lots of things to dip in paint to make marks toy cars, sponges, blocks, shapes , recycled cartons



- ✚ Encourage them to write by creating real situations- making a pretend office/hairdressers/ house- see Role Play section
- ✚ Gradually they will want to copy words that you write for them They will want to sign cards, copy words and eventually write their name independently.
- ✚ It is important not to pressure them to have an end result and perfect writing, be there to support them with words to copy if they ask.
- ✚ Encouraging them to make up their own stories is also a good way of engaging children with writing at this stage.
- ✚ They can tell you their story, you can write it for them and read it back to them. As their writing progresses they can begin to write their own stories.

Whiteboards pens markers calendars diaries
Envelopes post it notes

Smaller things to dip in paint – corks, buttons,

Different sized brushes

Spray bottles to spray water on things in bath or outside. coloured water or soapy water to add interest

Chalk

Role play options

Office – envelopes/post box/appointment cards, diary

Old birthday/ Christmas cards

Invitations

Pretend clipboards made from bits of old cardboard boxes

Registers, recipe books, shopping list pads

Mini story books made from paper stapled together for children to make their own book

- ✚ Draw simple maps in advance of setting out on a journey and follow them to reach your destination

Learning through Play - Sand

Wet or Dry Sand Play or use other Substitutes



Supporting Learning

Wet and Dry Sand if you have some if not, other substitutes could be used...

- ✚ **Peat** - Kept moist it can be pushed, transported and moulded into landscapes as much the same way as sand and it extends the garden theme.
 - ✚ **Sawdust/Shavings** - Needs to be sieved to remove sharp splinters and should be kept damp so no dust is inhaled. N.B. Wood resin can make eczema flare up.
 - ✚ **Lentils/Grain/Rice** - This cannot be used with children who are sufficiently young or immature to put them in their mouths, ears or nose. Their smooth slippery surfaces make them 'pour' almost like water
 - ✚ **Pasta** - Different shapes colours and sizes. Good for scooping and filling.
 - ✚ **Salt** - Be aware of cuts! Or use shaving foam for a different sensory experience
- Early Mathematical Experiences**
- ✚ explore various mathematical concepts e.g. capacity, size, weight
 - ✚ understand and use mathematical language e.g. full, empty, need more/less, heavy, light, straight/curved lines, names of common shapes
 - ✚ make shapes and patterns in the sand
 - ✚ solve problems associated with sand e.g. how much will a specific container hold? Pouring dry sand into a variety of different sizes of containers.

Resources Available in the Home

Large tray
Smaller tray
Junk materials from recycling- bin
Brush Pebbles
Dustpan Twigs
Buckets Shells
Spades/spoons Bun trays
Clear plastic containers of various shapes and sizes

Baking equipment
Sieves Boats
Watering can Kitchen roll tubes
Jugs cups Small world figures
Plastic bottles Combs
Moulds Potato Mashers
Plastic cutlery Ladles

Combs Egg cups
Rakes Tins
Plant pots Cars
Scoops Funnels
Lollipop sticks



Learning through play - Water

Water play



Supporting Learning

This can be done in the bath, in a basin, outside or inside.

Imaginative Play

Floating and sinking

- ✚ Can you make a boat using different materials- plastic tray, piece of wood, dough, plasticene
- ✚ Develop early problem solving- Which things float/sink? Can you make the boat sink?

Resources Available in the Home

Baby Bath
 Funnels
 Basin
 Mop/bucket
 Clothes line and pegs
 Buckets
 Tea set
 Clear containers of various shapes and sizes/wide and narrow necks
 Tins, bottles and containers for filling
 fishing nets
 Tubing
 Sponges
 Corks
 Plant pots

Clothes
 Soap
 Towels
 Jugs



- ✚ How many stones do you need to make the boat sink?
- ✚ I wonder how could you make this float?

Water Play contd... Early Mathematical Experiences

- ✚ Compare the amount of water in different containers by pouring from one to another
- ✚ Understand and use mathematical language e.g. full/empty, need more/less, heavy/light
- ✚ Compare the size of containers e.g. which is the biggest? Which one holds the most water?
- ✚ Talk about the shape of containers - straight sides, curved sides, circle at bottom etc.

- Rubber gloves
- Washing up liquid
- Boats
- Rocks/stones
- Range of brushes
- Shells
- Plastic ducks
- Towels
- Wellies
- Play people
- Paddling pool
- Range of pipes
- Fishing games
- Shapes made out of foil /foil/plastic/polystyrene trays
- Table tennis balls, bouncy balls, tennis balls
- Marbles
- Sponges
- Ice
- Wood off-cuts
- Paint
- Cutlery
- Seals, Penguins
- Paint rollers
- Shampoo
- Food colouring
- Fishing games
- Shells
- Corks
- Bubble wrap
- Marbles
- Fabric
- Arm bands
- Boats
- Pumice Stones

Things to lift water:

- Jugs**
- Scoops
- Spoons
- Beakers
- Yogurt pots
- Ladles

Things to pour:

- Tea pots
- Watering cans
- Spray bottles

Jugs

Things to fill:

- Clear containers – different shapes that hold the same weight
- Containers with holes at the bottom
- Bags with holes at the bottom
- Containers with holes at the side



- ✚ Understand & use positional words e.g. pouring through, floating on top of etc.
- ✚ Recognise and create patterns

Things to add:

Add food colouring. Bubbles, glitter
Change the temperature, add ice cubes, freeze whole trays of water – then pour on warm water
Thicken a tray of water with cornflour

Learning through play – Table Top

Supporting Learning

Resources Available in the Home

Table top activities



- ✦ Working together, learning to take turns
- ✦ Developing concentration
- ✦ Learning to work independently
- ✦ Persevering on a task
- ✦ Children enjoy the satisfaction of completing a puzzle

- ✦ Using mathematical language – first, second, third, fourth, fifth
- ✦ Over, under,
- ✦ Sorting, matching
- ✦ Shapes
- ✦ Counting, recognising dot patterns on dice
- ✦ Learning which numbers are big and which are small

Jigsaws

Card games – Snap Uno Playing cards

Board Games- Snakes and ladders, Dice games,

Memory games- Shopping list /pairs games

Threading and lacing – use a piece of cardboard and a hole puncher, wool. String ribbon, put a small piece of **sellotape** at the end to make it easier to thread. Thread with pasta.

Sorting sets – linking elephants/care bears – also use stones, sticks, cones, leaves

Domino sets – if you have a set of dominoes, or make your own set using domino patterns cards out of paper.

Hammer and nails pack - or any piece of wood and nails (with safety goggles)

Magnetic fish game, Magnetic shapes and boards

Peg boards

Fuzzy felts

Legos

Pens, paper, notepads for keeping the score



First, gather some of your child's favourite toys, books and objects. They can help you with this. Put them together and talk about what's there

Learning through play – Home Corner/Role Play

Home Corner

Supporting Learning

- ✦ Children make sense of their world

Resources Available in the Home

If possible let the children play in the different rooms in the house.

Role Play



through pretend play.

- ✚ They develop their imagination through acting out real and imaginary stories.
- ✚ They learn new words and develop their talking skills through pretend play
- ✚ They play with others to make up stories
- ✚ They learn to make marks and practise writing.



Kitchen

Sink, rubber gloves, have a cupboard they can have easily access to, cups, saucers, cutlery, pots, pans, ice cube tray, vase, cake tins, cloths dusters, dustpan and brush, apron, shopping bags, lunch boxes, real food, recipe books, shopping list, make up a first aid kit , pick some flowers for the table. Sorting socks – looking at patterns in clothing, pens, post it notes for lists, notepads, calendar

Bedroom

Dolls, dolls clothes, hats, lengths of different material, cloaks, hangers, jewellery, blazers, hand bags, laptop bags, caps, waist coat and a variety of scarves.

Bathroom

Towels, face cloths, dolls for washing in the bath, bubble bath to add to water

Have a restaurant/café/take away

Make up a name for the café

Signs within café – opening times

Tables, chairs, table cloth, kitchen cooking equipment

Cups, plates, cutlery, straws, napkins

Flowers, made or picked

Cash register – made from recycling, money, make your own money

Pictures of food – magazines, pictures off the internet, phone, carrier bags

Food, real – play dough

Board for dish of the day

Order pads – pens/pencils, make up a menu with a price list

Area of Home Nursery

Role Play

Supporting Learning

Here are some possible role play resources which can be added to with children's interests and

Resources Available in the Home

A Post Office

Post box – made out of recycling



build on their knowledge. These are just some examples, your child might come up with other interests which you can pursue in a similar way.

Have a look to see if you have any books on their interests, if not look on YouTube.

Numeracy Focus

- ✚ Set up a pretend shop using empty packets/ odds and ends from around the house. Make price tags for different items.
- ✚ Take turns at being the shopkeeper and the customer.
- ✚ Use real coins or make pretend coins or make pretend debit cards. How much does that cost? Do we have enough money to pay for that? Which is the most expensive thing in the shop? How much will it cost for 2 of those? Which is more or less? Which is bigger?

Extension activity- follow link <https://nrich.maths.org/9721>

A uniform – made up of any material, clothing
 Leaflets and forms, passport, travel insurance, TV licence, cheques, envelopes, papers, pens, boxes/parcels using recycling
 Cards- made or old birthday, mother’s day cards you have in the house, wrapping paper
 Stamps – made, or off old envelopes, labels
 Parcels of different weights – Scales
 Stampers, stamp pad, make money and foreign currency, savings book, keyboard, mailbag
 Cash till - make one from recycling

Hospital/Health Centre

Make up a doctors uniform using material available
 A doctors bag/rubber gloves
 Dolls/something that could represent a person/a person
 Beds, waiting area – chairs, magazine, leaflets, books
 Bandages/cotton wool, plasters
 Bottles which can be used as medicine bottles, spoons
 Syringes/stethoscope – can be made from milk bottle tops and a piece of ribbon/string
 Thermometers, Scales, height measurement
 Telephone, keyboard, files, appointment book
 Note pad/prescriptions
 Clipboard/get well cards – make them
 Reference books or children’s on-line information books on the body

Learning through play

Healthy Snacks



Supporting Learning

At nursery, children are given the opportunity to prepare a healthy snack – your child could do this with you at home. This can support your child’s:

Resources Available in the Home

Plates, bowls, cups, scales, chopping board, knives for chopping (supervision required – normal metal eating knives will suffice),

- ✚ Handwashing/hygiene
- ✚ Counting skills
- ✚ Adding and taking away
- ✚ Talking about the length and shape of foods
- ✚ Chopping fruit and vegetables into pieces, learning about halves and quarters
- ✚ Fine motor skills – picking up small pieces of fruit/vegetables, chopping skills
- ✚ Learning how to use equipment safely
- ✚ Taking turns, listening and talking to others

Some other snack art to try: For more ideas visit:
www.hellowonderful.co www.onelittleproject.com
www.lml.org/food-art-ideas

Preparing snack – cutting up fruit



Baking



This can support your child's:

- ✚ Handwashing/hygiene
- ✚ Weighing and measuring
- ✚ Following a recipe/instructions
- ✚ Counting skills
- ✚ Sharing food into equal pieces/portions
- ✚ Changes to ingredients when they are cooked
- ✚ Exploring the textures of different ingredients
- ✚ Taking turns, listening and talking to others
- ✚ Building gross motor skills when mixing/kneading
- ✚ Children have regular opportunities to participate in baking experiences at nursery and you could also provide this at home, if you have the ingredients.

Numeracy:

Follow simple recipes together including some ideas below
 Cupcakes- which ingredients do we need? What can we use to measure this? Can you help me count the spoons? How many will we make? Can you make a pattern on the icing? Can you set

Knives for chopping (supervision required – normal metal eating knives will suffice)
 Recipe books
 Online recipes
 Cake cases
 Ingredients
 Cup/ spoons for measuring
 Kitchen scales
 Ingredients

Banana Bread



Mashing the banana



Granola Recipe
Cupcake Recipe
Pancake Recipe

See Appendix 1

the table, share out the plates, has everyone got a plate, cup spoon?

Fruit kebabs- how many bits of banana, grapes, apple will we need? Can you make a pattern by choosing different fruit to put on the stick? Can you keep the pattern going?

Making pizza- designing different toppings, measuring/ weighing ingredients, cutting the pizza into slices, sharing amongst the family- Is there enough for everyone to get a piece?

Model mathematical language with your child e.g.:

- + More, less, lots, a few, many, more halves/quarters
- + enough/not enough, most/least
- + full, half full, empty, match/sort
- + heavier, lighter, more, less,
- + small / smaller / smallest
- + big / bigger / biggest
- + long, longer, longest,
- + short, shorter, shortest

Recipe for banana cupcakes

<https://www.annabelkarmel.com/recipes/easy-cupcakes/>

Simple Pizza idea using pitta bread

<https://www.myfussyeater.com/diy-pitta-naan-bread-pizza-kids-recipe/>

1. Mix sugar and butter



2. Add eggs and milk



2 eggs



1/2 cup yogurt

3. Mash 3 ripe bananas. Add to the bowl



Add 1 teaspoon vanilla

4. Mix in dry ingredients



1 teaspoon baking soda



1 teaspoon salt

5. Mix well

Pour batter into a greased loaf pan



6. Bake at 180 degrees c for 30 - 35 minutes



Making playdough ~ non-cook recipe

This can support your child's:
+ Handwashing/hygiene

Rolling pin
Plates, bowls, cups,



- ✚ Weighing and measuring
- ✚ Following a recipe/instructions
- ✚ Counting skills
- ✚ Sharing food into equal pieces/portions
- ✚ Changes to ingredients when they are cooked
- ✚ Exploring the textures of different ingredients
- ✚ Taking turns, listening and talking to others
- ✚ Building gross motor skills when mixing/kneading ingredients

Numeracy:

- ✚ Make playdough together- Use cups/ spoons to measure the correct amount of ingredients.
- ✚ Extend to have a numeracy focus by adding birthday candles/sticks to make candles, numbers to add to playdough cakes. Pen lids, matchsticks, pencils can used with playdough to make patterns Beads/pebbles/odds and ends can be added to make patterns. Paper cases and bun tins will allow children to count and work out how many more cakes they need

Homemade playdough recipe:

1 cup of plain flour. ¼ cup of salt, 1 spoon of oil, 1 spoon of cream of tartar, 1 cup of water, food colouring optional. Mix together.

- ✚ You could add food flavourings too e.g. orange peel, herbs, lemon juice, cinnamon.
- ✚ Make sure to wrap the playdough up in cling film /foil, or keep in an airtight container or place in a bowl and cover, so that it keeps fresh and doesn't dry out.

- Knives, forks, spoons
- Scissors for cutting play dough into pieces
- Sticks
- Buttons
- Beads
- Straws (cut into different lengths)
- Bottle tops
- Lollypop sticks
- Scales
- Baking trays, cake tins, cupcake cases
- Containers/trays for small objects
- Make a hob/microwave/oven out of cardboard/boxes
- Birthday candles
- Pebbles, bun tins, cake decorating equipment
- Paper pens to make numbers



Mud Kitchen

Children have the opportunity to play with a mud kitchen/sand kitchen in the outdoor area. You could bring the outdoors indoors

Old pots and pans, plates, bowls, wooden spoons, saucepans, frying pans, cooking utensils, baking trays,



to your home!

You could provide a small amount of soil (the amount you feel happy with!) in an old bowl/tub/saucepan, or even in the bath! Mix with a little water to soften if necessary.

This can support your child's:

- ✚ Imagination
- ✚ Creativity
- ✚ Maths
- ✚ Curiosity and exploration
- ✚ Sensory play
- ✚ Fine and gross motor skills

Join in the imaginative play if your child wants you to – they might even make you some 'cake'. Support them to learn new words, mould the mud, talk about how it feels and the texture.

Numeracy

Have different sized pots and containers available and encourage children to talk about the language of size and amount when filling different sized containers with mud and water.

Mark making

Encourage children to make signs and menus for a café

washing up brush, plant pots, planting trays
Loose parts – natural materials e.g. grass, stones, pebbles, flowers, petals

Pots, containers, utensils of different sizes for measuring during pretend play

Pens, crayons, chalk, whiteboard pens, markers, clipboards made from cardboard boxes
Sticks and other objects to make marks in mud or on ground

Construction

This can support your child's:

- ✚ Explore shape, pattern, size and space

Recycled materials such as tubes and cardboard boxes
Duplo, lego, pebbles, stones, sticks,



- ✚ Counting skills
- ✚ Develop talking and listening skills/extend vocabulary
- ✚ Imagination and creativity
- ✚ Confidence building
- ✚ Designing and making
- ✚ Fine and gross motor skills
- ✚ Turn taking and sharing if building with others
- ✚ Hand-eye coordination
- ✚ Spatial awareness
- ✚ Problem solving

- ✚ Encourage children to talk about textures rough/smooth
- ✚ Make simple models e.g. houses, cars, robots, boats, castles using commercial and recycled materials
- ✚ Encourage creative ideas through mixing/combining different construction kits
- ✚ Use blocks, commercial and junk materials to create props for imaginative play e.g. stories Three Bill Goats Gruff, Three Little Pigs
- ✚ Value children's work and ask them what they've made, encouraging them to talk about their model
- ✚ Talk about the work of the builder, bricklayer, architect, plumber, electrician etc... whatever they are interested in.
- ✚ Encourage thinking skills by asking children questions about how things work & why
- ✚ Explore joining materials together-tape, glue, blue tac etc.
- ✚ Draw/create a plan with children before building.
- ✚ Encourage children to problem solve why something didn't work and what they could do instead
- ✚ Support writing labels for models provide chalk, crayon, felt pen etc.. to decorate models

Numeracy ideas

Construction kits – interlocking bricks, equipment with connectors, cogs and wheels, screws and bolts.
 wooden blocks
 'flat pack' furniture plans, diagrams, instructions of how to use household appliances
 Train track and train
 Small world people, farm animals, zoo animals, dinosaurs, cars
 Measuring tapes, rulers
 Stones, shells, pebbles, leaves, twigs, cones, conkers, feathers.
 Paper, cards

Newspaper, magazines, catalogues, wallpaper, card, any kind of paper, newsprint, foil, cellophane, paper plates,

Cardboard

Cereal boxes, egg cartons, juice cartons, all boxes, kitchen rolls, tubes, large cardboard boxes



CelebrateEveryDayWithMe.com



- ✚ Have a daily challenge. For example, build a spaceship / design a garage, build a bridge. How strong can you make your bridge? How can you test it? Can a car go over it? How many small world figures can stand on it?
- ✚ Improve spatial awareness by building towers and structures. How big a tower can you make using old cereal boxes / milk cartons etc....?
- ✚ Build a tower game. Take turns to roll a dice. Each time you roll, take that number of bricks/Lego pieces from the tray and begin to build a tower. The winner is the one to build the highest tower.
- ✚ What imaginative ways can you think of to measure items with? E.g. footsteps, handprints, pencils, etc... Measure things in your home using 1 of these. Choose 5 things you have measured. Can you order them from biggest to smallest?

Assorted yoghurt cartons, lollipop sticks, plastic trays, wool, string, sequins, tin lids, plastic lids and caps of all shapes and sizes, fabric scraps, foil pie dishes, milk bottle tops, buttons, ribbon, cork, planks, small car tyres, pieces of carpet, hard hats and dressing-up clothes, play people, vehicles, animals, house corner props

Link to possible activity

<https://nrich.maths.org/8865> Building Towers

<https://nrich.maths.org/9724> Tunnels and Tubes

Small world

Small world play is a type of imaginative/role play, which enables

Natural loose parts



children to be creative and spontaneous in dramatic as well as mundane life situations which interest them. It is closely related to puppet play and storytelling.

This can support your child's:

- ✚ Talking and listening skills
- ✚ Imagination and creating their own stories
- ✚ To communicate feelings in a safe way
- ✚ Communicate their observations, knowledge about life, books/TV
- ✚ Control, allowing them to enter and leave a fictional world

Play alongside your child if they wish you to, join in their fantasy world.

- ✚ Pretend to be characters and making up stories together or retell parts of your world together e.g. when you go to the local park.
- ✚ Support your child to make props for small world play with improvised materials/equipment e.g. blocks, bricks, boxes, tins, pebbles, cones, shells, pieces of fabric, carpet, paper.
- ✚ Have pens, pencils, paper available for children to make signs and labels to add to their made up stories.

Toy characters – make your own out of lolly sticks, a natural sticks, paper, cardboard

Cars, trucks, buses, boats, tractors

Train, train track, garage, hospital, shop, fire station, school, castle, dolls house, farm, zoo, pet, dinosaurs animals, sea creatures, airport, town play mat, finger puppets

Pieces of material in different colours to create the small world

Link to possible numeracy activity

<https://nrich.maths.org/13531>

Expressive Arts



Art and design

- ✚ Very young children like to explore colour, texture and shape more so than producing a perfect finished article or beautiful painting. With painting, often children enjoy using a brush in different ways – large sweeping movements, zig zags, rotational movements, up and down or quick dabs for example. They also enjoy exploring the texture of the paint with their hands and use their hands to paint with.
- ✚ You can create a rich, creative learning environment at home with some very basic materials. If possible, try to offer your children the opportunity to select and choose from a wide and varied choice of material and recycled resources at hand, and develop their own creations. Giving the children the opportunity to select material encourages more interesting and individual work.
- ✚ You can encourage creativity and learning by asking questions, discussing their work, sharing their work with siblings, other adults in the house or friends and family online.
- ✚ Try to allow children to create their own work using their own ideas without too much direction from you. Instead of asking your child, “What have you painted / drawn / made?” try saying, “This looks interesting – tell me about your work!”

From outside - Natural materials - sticks, leaves, buds, flowers, twigs, stones etc.....

In the house - Look in your house to see what art materials you have available; ribbon, old bags, tags, labels, string, tissue paper, bubble wrap, netting around fruit, post its, different materials from old and used clothing cut up into small pieces etc...

- ✚ drawing equipment including pencils, crayons, charcoal, pastels
- ✚ different types of paints
- ✚ a variety of brushes – if you don't have paint brushes you can use old dish brushes, tooth brushes, sponges and scrunched up cloth
- ✚ card of different colours and thickness
- ✚ different kinds of paper including cartridge and sugar paper
- ✚ glue and spreader
- ✚ scissors
- ✚ water pot / jam jar / yoghurt carton
- ✚ mixing palettes / plastic plate
- ✚ man-made materials: bubble wrap, cotton wool balls, string, rubber bands
- ✚ clay, plasticine, playdough with cutters and tools
- ✚ collage materials
- ✚ fabric of different textures, patterns and colours
- ✚ Online – look up artists like Wassily Kandinsky, Vincent Van Gough, Paul Klee, Jean Miro and Claude Monet



✚ You can help them develop ideas by providing them with different stimulus such as paintings by famous artists and by chatting about things around about them in the environment including discussing different shapes, patterns and colours.

✚ Think about making a collage of things you collect out on a walk. If the weather is nice children can 'paint' outside on walls and paving stones using just paint brushes and water!



Wassily Kandinsky's Concentric Circles

Joan Miro



Van Gough's Sunflowers
Vincent Van Gough's 'A Starry Night'



- ✚ Use aprons/old shirt to protect clothing
- ✚ Use newspaper or plastic sheeting to cover work surfaces

Outside opportunities

- ✚ Crush berries/flowers/charcoal to make natural paint
- ✚ Make mud paint
- ✚ Create natural paint brushes from sticks, leaves, pinecones etc.
- ✚ Draw in the mud/sand/gravel or whatever is around
- ✚ Collect leaves, flowers, berries, cover with paper or material and tap with a hammer/stone. The imprint of the item below the material/paper will be transferred.
- ✚ Create transient art with what you can find around you. Make a frame with sticks – make a picture out of what is around you. Take a photograph of your creation.



Dance, Music and drama

- ✚ Dance is something that comes entirely naturally to young children and they don't need much persuading to do it! You can play music digitally, play an instrument if you can or simply sing and clap to make music to dance to!
- ✚ Dancing can help children to express emotions, practice fine and gross motor skills, develop coordination, re-create roles and experiences and stay fit and healthy.
- ✚ Did you know that musical experiences can help children to practice rhyming and rhythm which are vital skills for learning to read?

Home-made instruments – plastic bottles containing lentils, buttons, dried peas etc. drums from old tins, pots and pans, things that make scrunchy noises, elastic bands pulled around a piece of card or empty tissue box, different lengths of straw or card tubes.

Scarves - children love to wave and throw these to music

Block Play



Block play

At nursery a favourite activity for all children is playing with wooden blocks. No blocks? No problem! Use empty cereal boxes, toilet roll tubes and other recycled packaging to explore building structures. If you want to make them stronger, cover each box with brown paper or lining paper. You can let children use their imagination or you can find pictures of different buildings on the internet to re-create.

Recycling materials, masking tape or sellotape

Outdoor Opportunities



Self help and life skills

- ✚ Model good hand washing routines and discuss why this is important.
- ✚ Encourage children to put their own outerwear on and button/zip garments. Support as necessary.
- ✚ Have a picnic snack outdoors. Support children to prepare, serve and clear away snack.
- ✚ Encourage independence wherever possible, e.g. running ahead in a safe outdoor space. Offer appropriate guidance, e.g. If you can't see me I can't see you.
- ✚ Play outdoor games, e.g. 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?', Hide and Seek, Hopscotch. Take turns to enhance co-operation and turn taking skills.
- ✚ Support active listening, encouraging children to think about when it is time to listen and time to speak.
- ✚ Encourage a growth mind set (i.e. encourage children to believe that they will achieve if they keep trying and don't give up)
- ✚ Planting bulbs and seeds is a brilliant way to increase health and wellbeing. It also allows for the opportunity to observe how seeds and bulbs develop through time.

- ✚ Build a den indoors or outdoors- Can you fit inside? How can you make it bigger? How many of your teddies can fit inside? Can you make a smaller den? This will help build an understanding of size and also by using mathematical language, children will learn the words to use to describe size. (big, small ,bigger, smaller)

- ✚ Make shelters for animals of different sizes- talk about the size of different materials you use to make the different sized shelters.....Can the little hedgehog fit inside the big hedgehog's house? Can the little hedgehog fit inside the big hedgehog's house? I wonder how many little hedgehogs can fit inside? How could we find out?



- ✚ Draw a hopscotch grid and identify numbers as you play.



Take a trip to a local river. Lots of opportunities to discuss the water: how deep it is; where does the water come from; what if anything lives in it; what makes it become deeper/shallower; do naturally sourced items float or sink in the water; how can we tell how deep it is, how/what can we use to find out; how fast/slow is it flowing; is it safe to paddle in/how do we know?

- ✚ Build a dam from sticks in a nearby river or even build a dam in the bath and discuss what happens.
- ✚ Play Pooh Sticks – on a bridge over a river
- ✚ Jump in puddles

Visit a pond. Watch the water. What can you see? Does anything live in/on there? Discuss and identify. Look out for frogspawn. What do frogs start out as? How do they develop? Spot birds on the water and identify them. Throw small items in, this helps the creatures under the water to breathe.

- ✚ Investigate insects and creepy crawlies. Look under logs and stones or dark damp spaces where they like to live. Identify what you find using online resources or other medium.
- ✚ Study bees. Where can you find them? What do they do? What are they collecting? Why are they important? Where do they live? Who is in charge? What names are given to the different bees who live in the dwelling? What is a large group of them called? What are their jobs? If you can't see any outdoors yet why not have a look at some online?

Listen to the birds and observe them. If you can't get outside you can do



- ✚ Make a simple graph using 2 long sticks. Line up similar objects in rows between the 2 sticks to make a graph.
- ✚ Make a picture using the collected items. Make a pattern using found objects.
- ✚ Collect lots of sticks. Arrange sticks in order of size- longest to shortest/thickest to thinnest
- ✚ Count different birds as they appear in the garden. Keep a tally each day
- ✚ Sort birds into different groups those with big beaks /small beaks
- ✚ black feathers/brown feathers



it from your window. What are they doing? Why are they doing it? When will their babies be born? What will they look like to begin with? How many different kinds of birds can you see? Can you keep a tally or write the number?



- ✚ Look at the flowers when out and about. Do you know their names? How can you find out if you don't already know? Can you keep count of how many different kinds you see?
- ✚ In local woodland study the trees. How are they changing? How do they differ? Which is the tallest one you can find? Or the shortest, widest or narrowest. Do you know their names?
- ✚ Talk about the seasons. Identify the changes. What can you see that you haven't seen before? Is there anything different?
- ✚ In nearby green spaces investigate for animal prints. Can you identify them? What could have made them? Where do they live? Can you spot signs of their dwellings? What is the male called and the female? Do you know what you call lots of them? What are their babies called?



- ✚ Plant a seed inside a plastic bag with soil, attach to a window and observe.
- ✚ Plant a bulb in see through receptacle and watch what happens
- ✚ Study the weather – use conditions to facilitate experiences, i.e. make bin bag kites on a windy day, time ice melting in sunny conditions using a timer, fill a clear bottle and mark it with numbers – record how much rain falls. Use the sun to study your shadow. Is it in front of you or behind you? Is it longer or shorter than you? How can you change this?
- ✚ Go on a treasure hunt. Find different things from a list and tick them off.
- ✚ Look for lots of interesting things in the garden .Sort what you have found into groups of similar things and count how many in each group.

