

Home learning

Services for Young Children – Issue 10

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

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.



How do children learn?

When we think of school, pre-school and childminder settings, it is easy to think about being taught to read, write and understand maths. But alongside these are other skills and knowledge that children can develop and practice that will help them to learn. In schools, pre-schools and childminder settings, these skills are referred to as the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and they simply describe the way children learn.

This home learning edition will explore these skills that are grouped under the title of **Playing and exploring**.

Sue Allingham explains this in more detail.

[Family website - Characteristics of effective learning.](#)



family.

Playing and exploring – Children need to find out and investigate, experience things, play with what they know and being willing to 'have a go'. They should feel excited about learning.

Initiating Curiosity

Engaging Acting

Representing Risking

Pretending Challenge

seeking Senses

These words describe some of the skills the children are learning through playing and exploring.

Some schools create characters to help the children connect with the characteristics – here is a dinosaur called an 'Explorasarus'. Ask your child what they use at their school or setting.



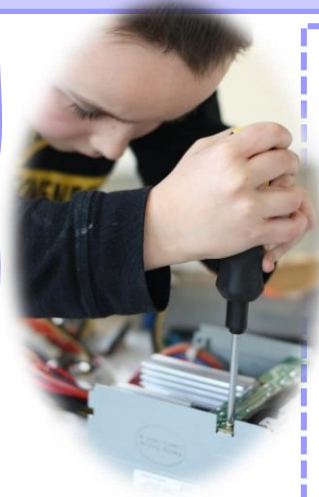
Playing and exploring

Find out how things work

Investigate the house around you;

- carefully take apart an old keyboard with your child
- work out how the door handle works
- have a look at the bolt on the gate in the garden or while out walking
- have a closer look at how a hinge works.

Talk about what you see and find out.



Encourage curiosity about nature

Collect and sort natural objects gathered whilst on a walk. Support your child to explore the world around them;

- using all their senses
- talking about what they find
- describing what they have found, for example "I can see the leaf you have is green on one side and yellow on the other side."



Always supervise your child when using tools and investigating objects

Use non-fiction books with your child to discover why things happen?

- link to your child's interests or something you've done together, for example, on a walk look at the plants. Can you find out what they're called.
- You can either borrow books from the library or search the internet if you don't have any at home. [Check when your library is open here](#)

Make sure your child only collects items that are safe and not poisonous



Try this link for access to a place you can search for lots different things. -<https://kids.britannica.com/>



Encourage curiosity

Ask your child 'wondering' questions

Such as...

I wonder where the ladybird lives?

Who do you think lived in the castle?

I wonder how Goldilocks felt when the bears were coming?

Where have all the rain puddles gone?

Why does the car go faster than the train down the ramp?

Playing and exploring



Help your child to begin to make sense of the world.

Try growing a green bean in a clear cup or glass.

1. Fill the cup with wet tissue or cotton wool. You can even grow one in a bag on the windowsill.
2. Water frequently.

Talk to your child about the changes you see, you could take regular photographs of the bean as it grows.



Have some water fun outdoors

This type of activity is great fun and will help your child become engaged and focussed?

- Have a go at washing your dolls, or teddy bear's clothes, and hang them out to dry.
- Have a go at washing the car.
- Use a sponge and wash the mud off a bike or a scooter in the garden.
- Use a clean paint brush and water to 'paint' the wall.

Encourage your child to talk later about what they are did.

Always supervise your child when they are playing with water.



Try to use soap that is gentle and won't irritate your child's hands, and make sure the water isn't too hot.

Pretend play

Add something unexpected to the sand or mud to encourage your child's curiosity, such as small figures, dinosaurs, or jewels.

- Talk to your child about what they have found.
- Make up a story with your child about the objects that you find.

Encourage your child to retell the story later, you could photograph what they have found to help their memory.

Encourage curiosity:

"I wonder why this treasure is in the mud?"

"I wonder how the dinosaurs got here?"

"I wonder what they were doing?"

"How can they escape from the mud back home?"



Playing and exploring

Representing their experiences in play.

Let your child take the lead and choose how to play. Provide some natural materials such as sticks or leaves. Watch how they play with them. Do they create a picture? Or pretend it is food? Join in with their play if they want you to and chat to them about what they are doing.

Make sure your child doesn't eat anything they shouldn't.



Balloon Rocket

1. Thread a straw through a long piece of string.
2. Tie the string from one side of the room to the other.
3. Blow up the balloon but do not tie it off, just pinch it tightly.
4. Tape the balloon to the straw. Count backwards with your child from ten to zero and then let go of the balloon!
5. Watch the rocket zoom!!!

This can be challenging and may require you and your child to take risks with learning new skills.

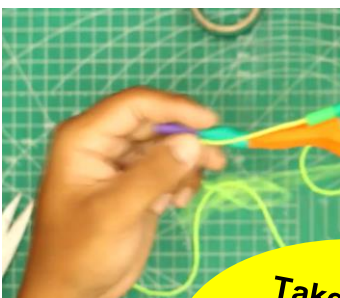
Indoor ball challenge

Roll a ball through paper tunnels. Make it easier by using bigger tunnels, or a smaller ball.

- Draw pictures on the tunnels and make a story or create a journey through an imaginary place.
- Put places from a familiar story on the tunnels, such as a pond or a field from Farmer Duck to encourage story telling.



Here is a link to a video showing you how to make a [Balloon rocket](#)



Take care you child doesn't get caught up in long pieces of string

Investigating

Make holes in a cardboard box (cereal /tissue box) and stick pens or straws into the holes. Encourage your child to investigate taking them out and putting them back in the holes. This activity will also be good for their finger strength.

- Make the holes in a shape, or pattern.
- Stick a picture on the box and put the holes in the shape of the picture.
- Stick an outline of a face on the box add a smile using the pens and straws.

Playing and exploring

Pretending

How about making a box full of dressing up props?

Perhaps use old scarves, hats or other accessories. Maybe add some bags, jewellery, sports equipment, old phones, and various shoes.

- Talk about who might wear these items and where they could go?
- Perhaps dress up with your child and talk about who you can pretend to be and make up a story together.

Here are some ideas of [things to have in your dressing up box](#).

[Tiny happy people](#) have a series of videos to help you to make some things to add to your collection of props, such as binoculars.



TINY Happy PEOPLE

Your words build their world

Make believe can be a good way of talking to your child about their emotions, using the characters to express different emotions.

Here is a link to a series of three video clip that helps you to understand why [make believe](#) play is important for your child.



Here are some videos to help...

[Playing pretend animals.](#)



You can pretend by making up your own stories, or nursery rhymes. Have a go at adding in [sound effects to stories](#) and rhymes, the sillier the noises the better! Having fun is important.

