

Home Learning for Children Starting Pre-School (Age 3 and 4 years)

Dear Parent/Carer,

If your child is starting nursery for the first time it can be exciting but also a little daunting! It may be the first time that your child has left the care of a family member or friend and will need to adjust to a different routine and more people. But it is also an opportunity to 'broaden their horizons' and give them independence and increased opportunities to learn and develop.

Early years providers (including pre-school and reception classes) follow 'The Early Years Foundation Stage' curriculum which covers all aspects of teaching and learning from 0-5 years. We have a specific focus on the prime areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

These areas are embedded through our every-day practice as they underpin all other learning such as the specific areas:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Often in pre-school, we would provide you with an Age and Stage questionnaire to fill out before your child begins. In our Inspire or Stay and Play sessions, we plan activities based on the questions so that you can fill out the questionnaire easily. Instead we have put together some activities that you may like to try at home to help you fill out the questionnaire and as ideas for activities. We have put a note such as: (Q1 36mths) to explain that the question relates to 36 months questionnaire (the age will be on the front of the questionnaire) and question 1.

The questionnaire is not a test, it gives your child's key person an indicator of where their development is up to, meaning they can plan purposeful and exciting activities and start to build on this. Every child learns at a different pace- it is important to remember this.

Tip- If your child tries something and cannot yet complete it, try the following phrase "You are finding that one tricky aren't you, it's a tough skill? I can think of lots of fun ways to practise over the next few weeks until you get the hang of it!"



Communication Development

- **Action Rhymes** - sing Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes. Sing it fast and slow/ mix up the words/ pause for your child to fill in the gap/ perform the actions on another person, doll or teddy
- When you ask your child to point to their nose, eyes, hair, feet, ears, etc., do they correctly point to at least seven body parts? They can also point on you, or a doll or teddy etc. **(Q1 36mths)**



Here and now conversations: As you are drawing or playing with small world with your child, provide a running commentary and comment on what you are doing, or you can see them doing. Pause (10 second rule) to encourage a response from your child. Remember the hand rule - 4 comments to every question you ask.

Does your child make sentences that are three or four words long? **(Q2 36mths)**
Does your child use all the words in a sentence e.g. "a, the, and"? **(Q6 42mths)**



Follow simple instructions:

During the day give your child a job to do. Remember not to point, touch, tap or eye gaze when asking the question e.g. Ask your child to "put the book on the table" and "put the shoe under the chair." Does your child carry out both directions correctly? **(Q3 36mths)**

Listen: Share books, magazine, catalogues, brochures, etc. with your child. Comment on what you can see, pause, miss out pages, mix up words to encourage expression from your child. Can your child tell you what is happening or what action is taking place in the picture? For example, "barking," "running," "eating," or "crying"? You may ask, "What is the dog (or boy) doing?"

(Q4 36mths) (Q2 42mths)



Repetitions and use of key words:

As your child is playing on the slide, say "Up!" as your child climbs the stairs and then "Down!". Use different tones, facial expression and gesture to support e.g. "Up, up, up!" high tone of voice point up with your finger and "Dooowwwnnn!" lower tone of voice, stretching out the word as it is expressed to support the movement the child is making. Ensure lots of repetition as your child will want to do it again and again which will help to reinforce the word. If you pause, will your child fill in the missing word?

(Q5 36 months)

Rhythm and Rhyme: sing songs that have names in their lyrics. e.g. play Mrs Brown's Box (tune of Old McDonald) and "Joe Bloggs, Joe Bloggs where are you?" "Here I am, here I am, how do you do?" (tune of Tommy Thumb).

When you ask, "What is your name?" does your child say both their first and last names?

(Q6 36mths) (Q4 42mths)

Small World Play:

Using objects and toys your child usually shows an interest in e.g. teddies, vehicles; ask them to place the teddy on the chair and the vehicle under the cushion etc.

Does your child carry out both directions correctly? **(Q1 42mths)**

Other directions can include:

in front, behind, at the side, next to...



Becoming independent and dressing themselves is a great way to promote independence, children's self-confidence and self-esteem and further develop fine motor skills when fastening buttons and zips on their coats. Use these opportunities to challenge your child by placing their zip in the middle and asking them to zip up, then place back in the middle and ask them to zip down. **(Q3 42mths)**



Action songs and rhymes are a fun way to set your child challenges where they do not feel under pressure to carry out tasks given by an adult during play.

Use these opportunities to explore their skills further, for example when singing 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' give your child 3 actions **first** and see if they can carry out **all 3** actions' "Hands on head, spin around, stamp your feet." **(Q5 42mths)**

Common Objects

During story time with your child ask them questions based on the story to see if they can name further items within that category. i.e. book about a dog, ask, "Can you tell me the names of some animals?" **(Q1 48mths)**



Can your child tell you at least **two** things about a common object? E.g. a dog, "They bark, they have 4 legs". **(Q3 48mths)**

A box of 'Tell Me'....

Use a bag or a basket and place common objects or pictures inside and ask your child to close their eyes and pull one out. When they open their eyes, ask them to tell you about that item – remembering not to use any other prompts for conversation.

Ask further questions, "What do you do when you're tired?" (include your child's pyjamas as an item) "What do you do when you're hungry?" (place a food item or photo of a food item as a prompt.

(Q2 48mths)

Word endings...

In the moment, every day conversations are a great way to embed communication and language skills. Take some time during the day or in the evening to sit down together and reflect on what they have enjoyed doing that day, what they are doing tomorrow etc. This will promote storytelling during conversation – Does your child use word endings, such as " **-s, -ed, -ing,**"?

(Q4 48mths)

Physical Development – Whole Body Movement



Enjoy some outdoor ball play and encourage your child to play cooperatively, kicking the ball back to you – watch closely for them swinging their leg forward to kick the ball and without holding on to anything for support.
(Q1 36mths)

Simon says game.

This is a fun way to see how your child follows your instructions and to see their skills,

‘Simon says stand on one leg’.

(Q4 36mths) (Q2 42mths)



Let’s play ‘Sleeping Bunnies’ game.

Sing:

See the little Bunnies there sleeping till its noon, shall we wake them with a merry tune, oh how still, are they ill? Wake up soon....
HOP LITTLE BUNNIES HOP, HOP, HOP,
HOP LITTLE BUNNIES, HOP AND STOP!

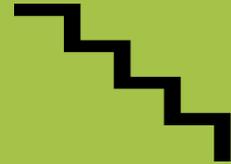
Does your child jump with both feet leaving the floor at the same time? Can they jump forwards? See how far they can jump. **(Q2 & Q6 36mths) (Q4 42mths) (Q5 48mths)**



Does your child hop on one foot? **(Q4 48mths)**

Look for how your child climbs stairs, either at home, in the shops or playground.

Do they have left foot on one step, and right foot on another?



(Q3 36mths) (Q1 42mths)

Create fun throwing and catching games to see if your child can raise arm to shoulder height and throw forward, e.g. Throw balls into a chosen space or hoop/basket. **(Q5 36mths) (Q3 42mths) (Q3 48mths)**

Does your child catch a large ball with both hands? **(Q5 42mths) (Q1 48mths)**



Going to the park

Set your child mini challenges to see if they have the skills to climb up on ladder of playground slide and slide down without support. **(Q6 42mths) (Q2 48mths)**

Make your own obstacle course

Use rope, boxes, chairs or anything you can find to encourage different ways to move.

Concentrate on balancing, hopping and walking on tiptoes. **(Q4 Q6 48mths)**



Physical Development – Small Movements

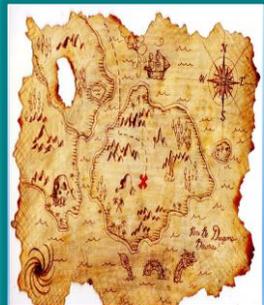
Getting dressed.

Let your child try to do their zips and buttons.

Putting on their own socks encourages hand and finger muscles to work, children will need these to write later on.

Make a game about getting dressed.

Use timers to encourage moving quicker. Put clothing under and on top of Furniture etc. to encourage crawling and climbing safely. **(Q4 – 48mths)**



Challenge your children to draw a map using these shapes: **L + O | X** marks the spot.

Encourage your child to copy what you are drawing, watching closely if they can imitate your lines, circles and crosses once they have observed you drawing these shapes. Think about what your child's interests are to keep their engagement during activity by drawing objects they like. Use large pieces of paper on the floor to draw on. Try it in the bath with bath crayons or on the floor outside with chalk. Even use a paintbrush and water and try it on the wall or shed in the garden. **(Q1, 3, 4 36mths) (Q1, 3, 4, 6 42mths) (Q3 48mths)**

Bracelet & Necklace making

Using pasta or beads and string can your child make some bracelets/necklaces for friends and Family? **(Q2-36 mths & Q2-42 mths)**



Colouring and puzzles are a calming and mindful activity for children.

Does your child stay in the lines when they colour? Can they complete a simple 5-piece puzzle?

(Q5 42mths)



Can your child use scissors to cut a line in paper?

Ask them to help you wrap a present for someone they love.

(Q5 36mths / Q3 42mths / Q2 48mths)

Can your child draw their favourite person?

When drawing, does your child hold a pencil, crayon, or pen between her fingers and thumb like an adult does?

(Q6 36mths) (Q4 42mths) (Q5 48mths)



Solving Problems

Have your child help you to set the table. First line four plates or cups in a row and ask your child to copy you. Then, by placing one at each place, your child will learn one-to-one correspondence. Show your child where the utensils should be placed. **(Q1 36mths)**

Line up the different objects and count them to make sure that there are enough for everyone. **(Q6 48mths)**

Put out several objects that are familiar to your child (brush, coat, banana, spoon, book, step stool). Ask your child to show you which one you can eat, or which one you wear outside, or which one will help you reach the sink etc. Help your child put the objects in groups that go together, such as "things that we eat" and "things that we wear". **(Q2 36mths)**

Go on a walk and look for different colours in nature. Pick up things you find, bring them home and help your child sort them into groups. For example, groups can include colour, or by type, rocks, petals, or leaves.



(Q4 48mths)



Play a picture guessing game. Start to draw a stick person or cover a picture in a familiar book with a sheet of paper and uncover a little at a time until your child has guessed what it is.

(Q3 36mths) (Q1 42mths)

Model different scenarios throughout the day when you need to remember a series of numbers and ask your child to help you. For example, the beginning of a phone number, a password or pin number

(Q4 Q6 36mths) (Q2 Q4 42mths)

(Q1 48mths)



Your child may be interested in creating different formations using blocks. Play a matching game and model some different designs for your child to copy.

(Q5 36mths) (Q3 42mths)



Cut out a small, medium, and large circle. You can ask your child about the different sizes and place them in size order. For example, ask your child, "Which one is the smallest?" Try this game using three different size buttons.

(Q5 42mths) (Q2 48mths)

Pretend to be an animal. Encourage your child to use their imagination and become a 'kitten' or a 'puppy', for example. You can ask, "What do kittens eat?" or "How do kittens play?" to encourage and develop their play acting.



(Q6 42mths) (Q5 48mths)

A good activity to learn location words is to build roads with bridges and blocks. Use toy cars to go *on* the road, *under* a bridge, *between* houses, park in the *middle* of the red and blue car, and so forth.



(Q3 48mths)

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Personal & Social Development

Mealtimes: Take the opportunity to sit together as a family at the table for at least one meal a week. Your child will see you modelling the use of cutlery and will want to copy you as their good role model. Offer lots of purposeful praise "Great scooping!". If you notice your child is struggling to hold their cutlery provide opportunities to more fine motor activities e.g. threading/ posting/ mark making/ cutting/ etc.
(Q1 36mths)

In the bath! Use different sizes of plastic cups, jugs, large spoons, and ladles to pour the water from one container to another. Use whisks to create bubbles and foam in the water. Plan a picnic together! See if your child can help you to make sandwiches by spreading on the cheese or jam onto the bread. Lay out some plastic cups, ask your child to pour out the drinks carefully, pouring a small amount.

(Q5 42mths) (Q1 48mths)

Sing your favourite song while you wash your hands.

Glitter germ hands!

Put some glitter in a bowl of water and place your hands into the sparkly water together. Talk about how the glitter can be like germs. "Now let's see if we can wash the glitter germs off our hands!"

(Q6 42mths) (Q3 48mths)



Mirror Play:

Provide opportunities for mirror play. Comment on what you can see to initially create a no pressure situation. Remember the hand rule (one question to five comments). Comment and pause e.g. "I see....!" building up to you ask, "Who is in the mirror?"
(Q3 36mths) (Q1 42mths)

Large Doll and Vehicle Play:

Provide opportunities for your child to access push along vehicles, dolls prams, sit in and manoeuvre cars, etc. Chalk roads on the floor for your child to steer around objects and follow the road etc. **(Q2 36mths)**

Play with teddies and toys:

Sit the teddies or favourite toys in a circle. Sing your favourite nursery rhymes together. Talk about some of the games you play at nursery and who their favourite friends are. **(Q4 48mths)**

When you are brushing teeth each morning and night, use the mirror to look at their teeth, talk about how much toothpaste you are using (pea sized amount). Notice the bristly feeling on your teeth and gums, taste the mint flavour of the toothpaste and notice the coolness of the water. **(Q5 48mths)**

Dressing Up Play:

Allow your child to dress in your old clothes, dressing up clothes, scarves, hats, material, etc. This will provide a no pressure approach to practice dressing and undressing, in a fun and motivating way.

Offer lots of purposeful praise "Great job!" and reassure to support resilience and a can do attitude. **(Q4 36mths) (Q2 42mths) (Q6 48mths)**

Conversations:

Talk to your child during play e.g. small world, mirror, stories, photographs, etc. to model the concept of boy/girl. Build to ask, using these exact words "Are you a girl or a boy?".

(Q5 36mths) (Q3 42mths)

Start to teach your child their address. Point out the number on your door? Look at and talk about the numbers together. See if you find that number anywhere else. Talk about the name of your street. Point to your street sign. Talk about the town where you live e.g. I am going shopping in Leigh. I am going to my Grandma's house in Wigan. **(Q2 48mths)**



Building a Tower:

Whilst building a tower model "My turn!", "Your Turn!", "Waiting!" etc. Initially keeping waiting to 3 seconds and increasing the time as appropriate. Offer lots of purposeful praise "Great sharing!"

**(Q6 36mths)
Q4 42mths)**