

Home Learning ideas for Parents

**SEND Activities,
Resources and Ideas
for Early Years
Children.**

Contents:

Pages 1-3 – Attention Skills, Eye Contact and Anticipation

Pages 4-8 – Physical and Sensory

Pages 9-10 – Communication and Language

Page 11 – Early Years SEND Team Contact Details



Bubbles

Activities and Resources to support:

Attention Skills

Eye Contact

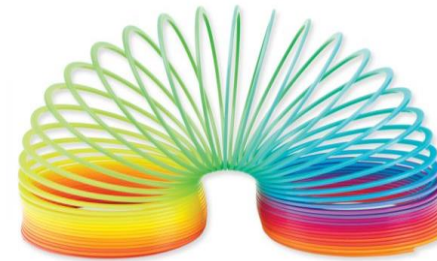
Anticipation



Push/Spin/Light Toys

Attention Buckets:

- Fill a bucket/box with a few reaction toys
- “I’ve got something in my bucket, in my bucket, in my bucket, I wonder what it is?”
- Explore each toy showing the child what the toy does
- Use simple language and exciting tones
- You can use a First and Then board to support the activity



Slinkies or Flexi Balls

Groan Tubes



Balloons



Try To:

Keep it simple

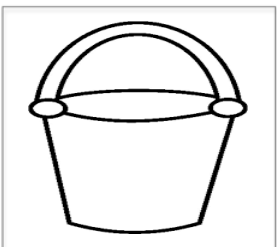
Keep it short

Keep it fun for you and your child

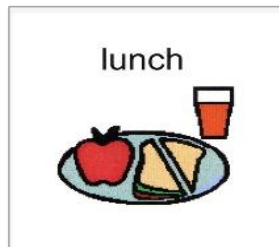
Keep it as a time for just them

Keep going, you are doing great!

First



Then



Cause and Effect Toys

When using these resources such as bubbles, balloons and spins toys. Try and pause, wait for eye contact, then blow the bubbles for your child. This will encourage them to look at you and anticipate the bubbles.

“Ready, Steady....” Try and wait until your child looks at you then “GO!”

Homemade Posting Activities



You could use a shoe box, coffee cans, pringles tubes or cereal boxes and cut holes in the top to use for posting boxes.

You could use wrapping paper rolls to post a ball down and watch it roll out the other end. Also threading or pushing pasta, pipe cleaners, straws through anything with holes.

All these activities encourage eye contact, interaction and turn taking.



Sit opposite the child. Encourage the child to look at you and if she makes eye contact (however fleeting) roll a ball towards them. Encourage the child to send the ball back and wait for eye contact again before you return the ball

Encourage the child to look towards your face by holding a toy etc. by the side of it. Name them, for example "look.....a car"

Put on a silly hat, glasses, nose etc to get the child to look at you face. See if the child notices something silly (a cup for example) balanced on you head. If not, get them to look at you and to take it off.

Let the child brush your hair, wash your face, put face paints on you, and so on.

EYE CONTACT ACTIVITIES

Put on a silly hat, glasses, nose etc to get the child to look at you face. See if the child notices something silly (a cup for example) balanced on you head. If not, get them to look at you and to take it off.

Place a musical instrument between yourself and child e.g., a drum, tambourine. Take turns to strike the instrument one at a time. Imitate what the child does straight afterwards. After a while, do something different or stop suddenly; this should make the child look at you.

Using an inset puzzle, shape sorter etc. keep all the pieces and give a piece to the child only when eye contact is made.

Put stickers on your nose. Encourage the child to look at you and pull the stickers off.

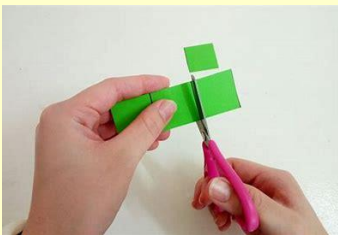


Fine motor skills are everyday movements involving the control and precision of the small muscles of the hand e.g. using a fork.

Fine motor activities increase dexterity and help to develop co-ordinating movements of the hands and fingers with the eyes. This is called hand-eye co-ordination.

Fine motor skills include:

- Grip
- Manipulating objects
- Using both hands together
- Using just the thumb and one finger to pick up objects instead of the whole hand, also known as a pincer grip.



HOME LEARNING IDEAS PHYSICAL AND SENSORY

Sensory play has an important role in a child's overall development. All children benefit from access to a range of sensory experiences.



Where possible sensory play should incorporate all the senses and encourage children to explore resources to make sense of the world around them.

Children may present with different sensory needs. Whilst some, may be Hyper-sensitive, and avoid contact with certain sensory stimulation, others, maybe Hypo-vigilant, and require higher sensory input in some areas and activities can be adapted to support these sensory preferences.

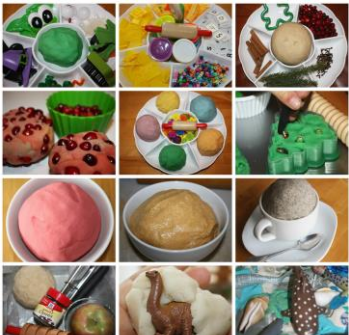
Many Sensory Activities can also be an excellent way to develop our fine and gross motor skills.



Gross motor skills require the use of the larger muscle groups within the body and include broader movements such as, walking, kicking, jumping, and climbing stairs. Some gross motor skills also involve hand-eye co-ordination such as throwing or catching a ball.



Playdough can be made at home (see recipe attached) and can be an excellent way to strengthen hand muscles as children use a range of movements to manipulate the dough. To develop greater precision and control, objects can be added to the dough e.g. dried pasta or straws which can be picked up using a pincer movement. You could also introduce tools such as rolling pins or scissors, plastic knives, and forks to learn other fine motor skills. You could also try making your own dinosaur prints by pushing plastic dinosaurs into the dough.



Sorting objects by colour, size, shape or simply transferring objects from one container to another using a thumb and one finger can be a simple activity to encourage the development of fine motor skills. Once your child has mastered that you could try introducing some child's tweezers to develop muscle control.



FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES



Like posting, **Threading activities** are also a great way to develop fine motor skills. These can include threading pasta or toilet roll tubes onto wool, straws or cheerio's onto spaghetti, or feeding spaghetti through the holes in a colander.



Other activities which are good to help muscle control is attaching pegs to a piece of paper, squeezing sponges, using pipettes, or popping bubble wrap using a pointy finger.

Posting activities help to develop hand eye co-ordination, improve attention and concentration, and turn taking. Posting activities can be made using simple household resources for example, making a post-box out of an old shoebox, and decorating it with something your child is interested in; putting cars down a track; feeding balls through a tube; putting objects into a pringles tube or water bottle.



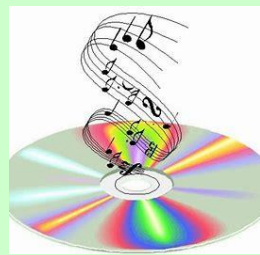
Mark making does not have to be about drawing, colouring, or holding a pencil, although they are great activities for your child to engage in. Other mark making activities can include making patterns in sand or flour using a stick or paint brush, painting using a brush or other tools e.g. scourers, cars, cotton wool, vegetables, pictures on pavements or patios using chalk or a brush dipped in water.



Sensory Stories involve children as part of the story telling experience encouraging listening and responding skills as well as providing a safe space for children who are nervous of unfamiliar situations to experience new sensory stimuli in a safe and supported environment. You can use some of your favourite stories with your children at home e.g. Going on a Bear Hunt
www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/were-going-bear-hunt
www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/the-sensory-story-project



Sensory Baskets contain everyday items around the theme of the senses (except taste) and is perfect for children beginning to develop a deeper understanding of their senses. Objects can be everyday items that are found within the home e.g. crunchy space blanket, brushes, wooden rings and beads, large craft feathers, wooden spoons, ribbons, loofah, small metal sieve and bells.



SENSORY ACTIVITIES

Tac Pac is a sensory communication programme using touch and music. TAC Pac Resources consist of a music CD and everyday objects and materials that you would find around the home. Each item is accompanied by its own piece of music which are introduced one at a time.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjrRmNTghGM
 or www.tacpac.co.uk

Children learn through experiences and hands-on activities and **Messy Play** is one of the best ways to do this and to introduce different types of sensory input.

Messy play can help children to understand how things feel, such as textures and temperatures and how they smell. Whilst exploring the resources children also learn about body awareness, personal boundaries, or spatial awareness. You can add different tools to the play e.g. empty yoghurt pots, spoons, funnels, jugs, as this helps to develop fine and gross motor skills as they scoop, pour, mix or transfer from one container to another. For a child who struggles with textures, especially food, messy play can be a great way to encourage sensory exploration in a fun and less stressful way than at a dinner table. Activities can include play involving water, sand, jelly, spaghetti, rice, pasta (dried or cooked), vegetables, dried beans or pulses, gloop, slime, shaving foam, ice cubes.



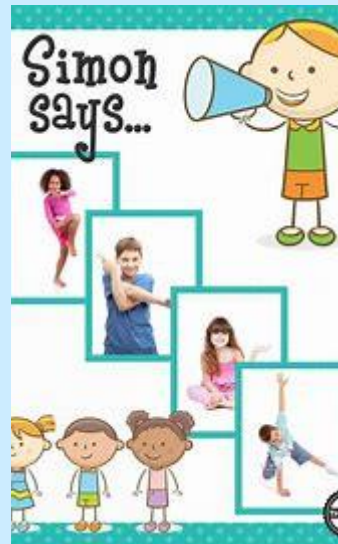
Chasing games can increase spatial awareness and enable children to run and navigate space safely e.g. What's the time Mr Wolf, Please Mr Crocodile



A **mini assault** course can be one way to encourage children to experiment with different ways of moving i.e., running, crawling, jumping, hopping, tiptoeing, skipping, galloping, balancing, and adjusting speed to go fast or slow or to stop or go. This can take place indoors or outdoors using items found around the home e.g. upturned crates, a tunnel, some cushions as steppingstones. Alternatively, you could use a piece of chalk or some masking tape to make marks on a patio or pavement for children to follow e.g., zigzags, jumping squares, curved and straight lines.

GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES

Copying games like Simon Says can help to develop an awareness of the different parts of the body as the child follows actions modelled by an adult.



Throwing and catching games can help to develop hand eye co-ordination e.g., rolling, passing, or throwing balls backwards and forwards in pairs or throwing bean bags into a hoop.



Singing Action Rhymes or Songs or Dancing to music can be a wonderful way to develop gross motor skills as children follow actions or move their bodies to the rhythm of the music.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rV_tR6ij6Y

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFJuCpbKe_A

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pn02FV_LBY-0

www.youtube.com/watch?v=84Ge0Esu1sw





PLAYDOUGH RECIPE

Ingredients:

3 Cups of Flour

1 Cup of Salt

1 Cup of Warm Water with some food colouring mixed in

2 Teaspoons of Cooking Oil

2 Teaspoons of Cream of Tartare

Combine all of the ingredients together.

If it is too wet add more flour.

Too dry add a little more water.



Home Learning: Communication

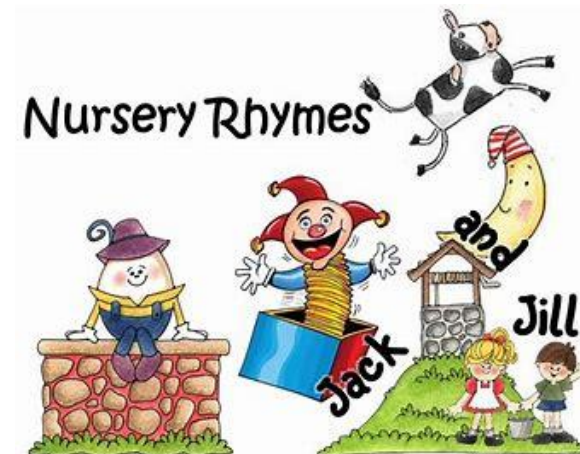
Sensory Stories:

- A sensory story is a story that has additional sensory input.
- You can read a story or play a video of a story and add in sensory elements to this.
- Here is an example below using the story 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Please see the link for an example of this. Sensory stories are a great activity to use if your child enjoys stories and seeks sensory input.

[We're going on a Bear Hunt Sensory Story - Bing video](#)

If your child uses Makaton, here is a makaton version of the story, you can then use the sensory items alongside this

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=DBOc32Mx-nQ>



Songs and Rhymes:

Nursery Rhymes are engaging and interactive.

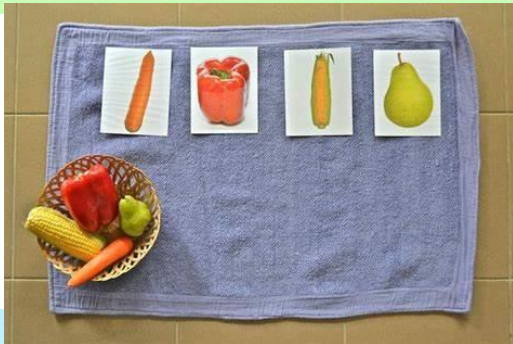
- You can use visual aids such as physical objects (animal toys for old McDonald)
- if your child uses Makaton, these can be used to support alongside the singing
- you can encourage your children to communicate or copy by using hand over hand support or mirroring what you are doing or simply just by them watching you.
- There are some great online Makaton singing videos on YouTube that you may find useful and enjoyable 😊

[SingingHandsUK - YouTube](#)

Choice Making:

Allowing your child to make choices is a great way to begin to encourage and support their early communication and decision-making skills.

- Even if your child is pre-verbal, they can still begin to make choices in other ways such as using an extended eye gaze, or by reaching out or pointing.
- Choices can be incorporated throughout the day with things such as making a choice between what drink they would like, what activity they would like etc.
- Start by offering them a choice of 2 items/objects. Holding them up to eye level can also promote eye contact.
- Use one motivating object alongside another item and say the items as you present them to the child.
- Give them time to make a choice using whatever means of communication works for them, and again name the item as you hand it to them. If you are being supported by a Speech and Language Therapist, this advice may also be advised by them depending on your child's level of need.



Matching Games:

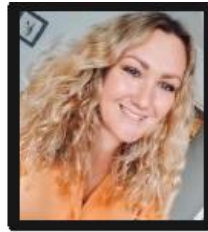
Matching games are a fun activity to help support your child's communication and attention skills.

- You could start by showing them a picture card, or even just a picture on the computer screen if you do not have picture cards. You could ask them to name the object or point to the matching object from a choice of two, depending on their level of need.
- To extend this further, you could also ask your child to find the particular item from around the room, creating an object hunt game.
- Picture Bingo is another nice activity to help support children with recognising objects that are the same. This could be supported by encouraging your child to point to the matching picture or place the card on top. Depending on your child's level of need, you may start off with having two pictures visible for them to match.
- Remember to communicate with your child, what the pictures are as you present them to your child so they can begin to represent objects with their names.
- If they use Makaton, you could also sign the items.
- This is also a good activity for children that need support with transitions between activities, as they could put the items in a box when they have found them or matched them, and when they are all in the box, this shows them that the activity has ended.

We really hope you find these ideas, strategies, and resources useful and accessible from home. If you need any further advice or support, please feel free to contact a member of the Early Years SEND Team. During this challenging time, we hope we can offer you as much support as possible.



Rachel Cooper
Early Years SEND Support
Worker
rachelcooper@southend.gov.uk



Mollie Short
Early Years SEND Support
Worker
mollieshort@southend.gov.uk



Sarah Fuller
Early Years SEND Support
Worker
sarahfuller@southend.gov.uk