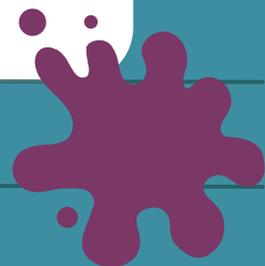
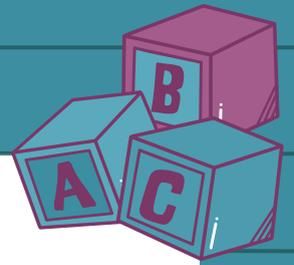
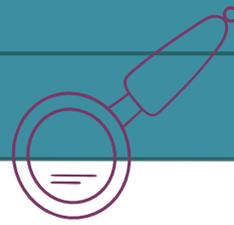
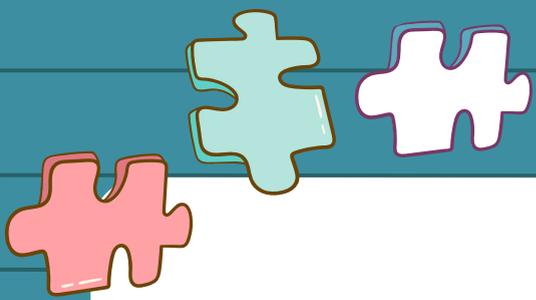


The Village

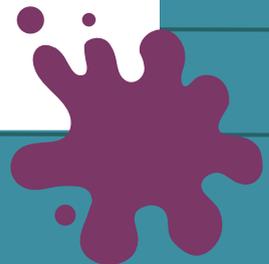
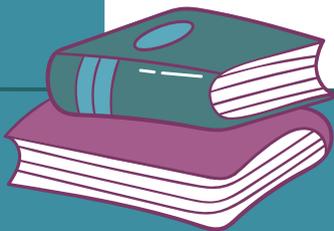
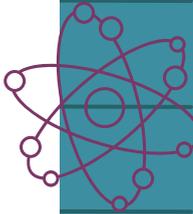
Activity Suggestions 0 - 5 years





Activity Suggestion 0-6 months

- Eye Contact (lots of it)
- Tummy time
- Baby massage
- Reading stories
- Singing songs
- Sensory play items
- Treasure baskets
- Peek-a-boo
- Mirror Play
- Sensory bottles



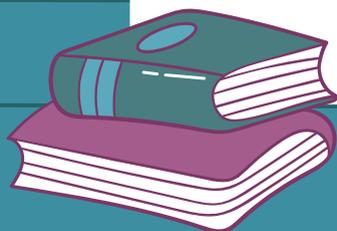


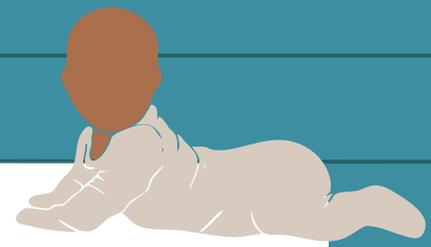
Eye Contact (Lots of it)

Spend time cuddling your little one and looking into their eyes. Make playful faces, chat to them, and enjoy those quiet moments together. Eye contact in the first months helps your baby feel safe, strengthens your bond, and supports their early language skills.

Babies are born ready to connect. They love watching your face, your mouth as you make sounds, and the way you light up when they look your way. When you notice their little cues—like sticking out their tongue, shifting their gaze, or moving their arms and legs—and respond back to them, you help grow your connection.

These simple moments matter. Warm eye contact and a gentle, happy voice help your baby feel secure. Watch for their early attempts to communicate and respond with interest. Every shared look and tiny exchange strengthens your relationship.



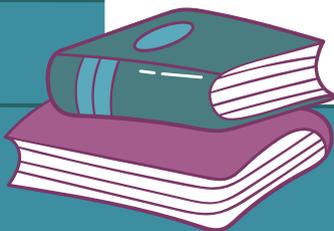
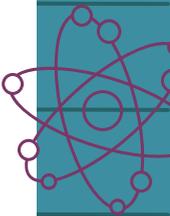


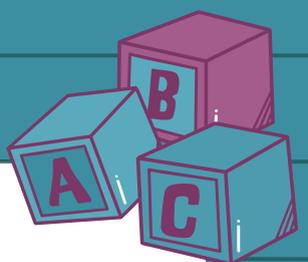
Tummy Time

Tummy time helps your baby build strong core, head, neck, arm and leg muscles. It often leads to early crawling, which supports co-ordination and healthy brain growth. It also strengthens tiny hands, helping them as they get older.

This is why Health Visitors put so much focus on tummy time. It feels unusual for babies at first, and lifting their head can be hard work. Some little ones need extra reassurance before they settle, so here are a few ideas to make it easier.

Try tummy time on your chest, your forearm or across your lap before moving to the floor. Build up the time bit by bit. Use mirrors, gentle sounds, bright toys, play mats or water mats to distract them. These small moments each day make a big difference.



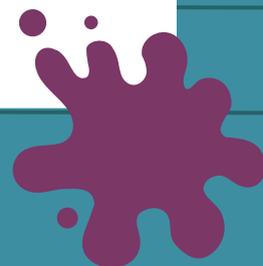
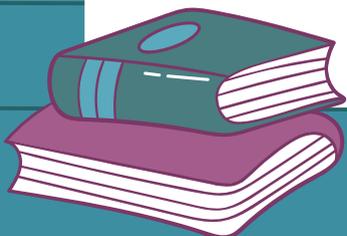
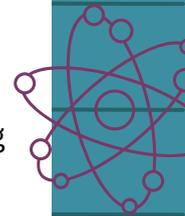


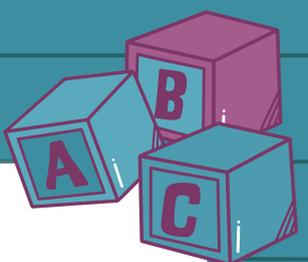
Baby Massage

Baby massage is a gentle way to connect with your baby while supporting all areas of their early development. It brings so many amazing benefits!

Baby Massage can begin once your baby has had their 6-8 week check by the GP. The massage will help strengthen your bond, support better sleep, help your baby with constipation, wind and colic, as well as improving their circulation, muscle growth, skin wellbeing and their immune system. It also encourages early communication as you are encouraged to talk and sing during this experience.

If you're currently a parent within The Village, we can teach you how to massage you baby online, just let your Village team member know this is something your interested in. There may also be some organisations who are local to you offering free baby massage classes, for example Early Years Scotland. Charity organisations can receive funding to provide baby massage because the benefits are so valuable to families.





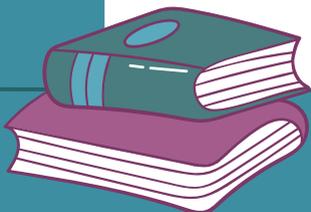
Reading Stories

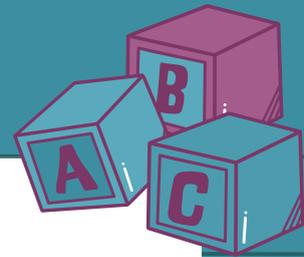
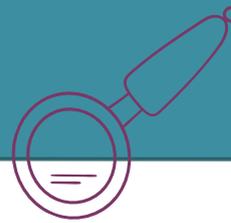
Reading stories is a warm and lovely way to help your baby learn to talk, spark their imagination, and support their growing brain from the start. It's also a gentle moment for the two of you to relax together and build a strong bond. Even if reading doesn't feel natural to you, your baby will simply enjoy hearing your voice. Hearing the same story again and again helps them learn new words and ideas, so even if the book feels old to you, it's still exciting for them.



If you haven't already, chat with your Village team member about the **Dolly Parton Imagination Library**. You child may be entitled to receive some free books in the post every month.

As your baby listens to you, they'll begin to babble and make new sounds. Copying their sounds encourages them to keep going. This is the very beginning of their speech, and it will grow throughout their childhood.



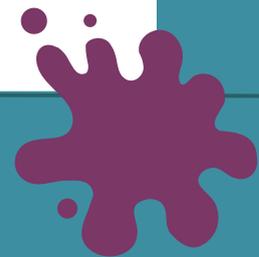
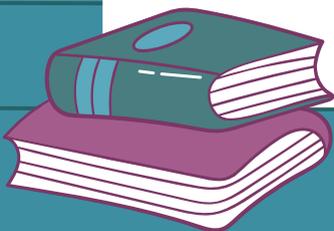


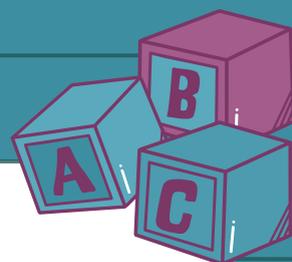
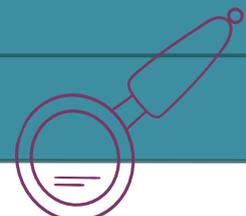
Singing Songs

Singing songs with babies and young children is a lovely way to connect. It helps calm their bodies, supports early learning, and encourages them to move as they grow. Rhythm feels good to little ones, and singing together can quickly become a favourite shared moment.

There's no need to sound like a superstar. Babies simply enjoy the warmth of your voice and the joy you share with them. As they listen, they build important early skills too.

The Bookbug app is free to download and is full of simple children's songs to get you started. It also gives your little one a gentle boost in speech and language development.





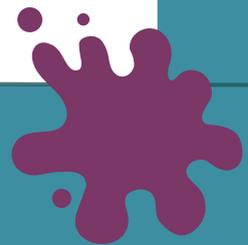
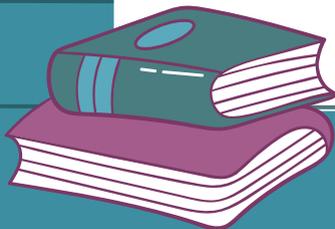
Sensory Play

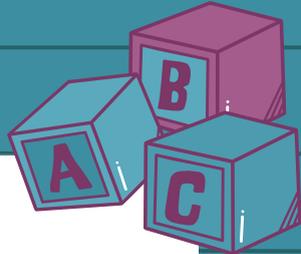
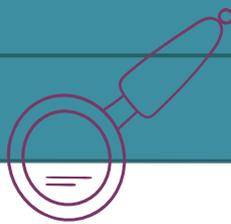
Parents can help little ones learn by offering chances to look, touch, listen and move. Babies explore with their mouths too, so safe items matter when your encouraging them to hold and discover new things.

The Village offers a free sensory play bag which has simple items and a short video full of ideas to support your baby's early learning. Ask your Village team member how to access a sensory play bag if you have not already got one.

Inside our sensory bag you'll find a maraca, ball, scarf, feather, foil blanket and bubbles. With gentle singing and warm eye contact, these items can create calming moments that nurture physical, social, emotional, cognitive and communication development.

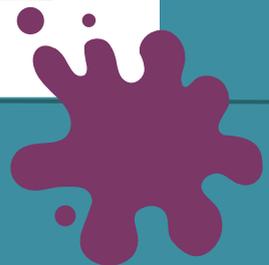
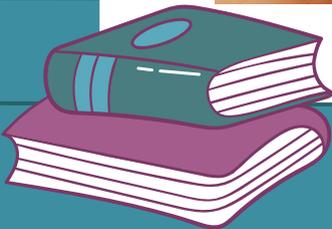
Some items, like the bubbles, foil blanket and feather, are for adults to use with their babies and so they should never be left alone with them

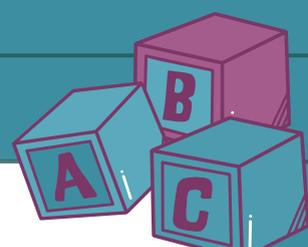




Treasure Baskets

Treasure baskets promote curiosity, fine physical motor skills, speech and language development as well cognitive brain development. They are also really easy to put together at home with no additional cost. Get a container of some description, cardboard box, tub, plastic bowl and fill it with items that your baby can safely explore including with their mouth (It's important **NOT** to add any small items they can fit fully inside their mouth as this is a choking hazard!) babies put everything in their mouth as their tongue is sensitive, so they can really feel items with their tongue. Ensure any items you add are clean and safe, so no little bits will come off into their mouth. Here are some examples below:





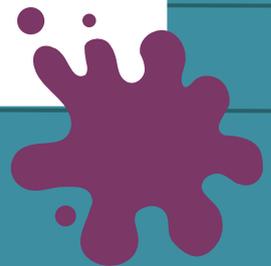
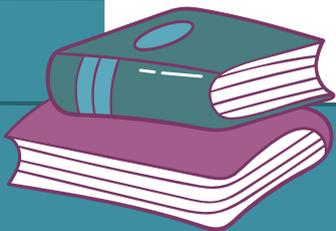
Sensory Bottles

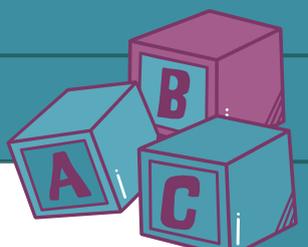
Sensory bottles are an inexpensive way of stimulating your babies senses through sight and sound, supporting eye tracking, listening skills and cause and effect.

Some of the quieter sensory bottles can also help babies and toddlers feel relaxed.

All you need is plastic bottles of various shapes and sizes and you can fill with things you might have around the house, for example uncooked pasta, lentils, rice and beans or other small objects that make different sounds when shaken inside the plastic bottle. You can also add water (plain or coloured) and oil (baby oil or cooking oil) and add items that can float around such as glitter, sequins, googly eyes, loom bands etc... there are lots of options. Using glue inside the lid when putting it back on, or taping the lid down with duct tape will ensure nothing can get out and cause a choking hazard if the lid were to loosen.

Please always check the lids are secure before giving them to your child.

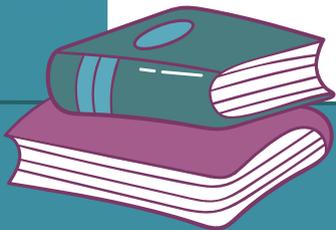
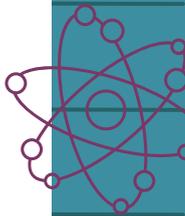


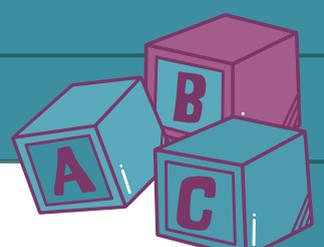
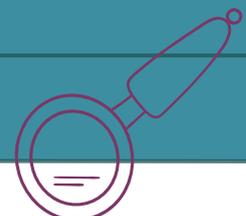


Peekaboo

Peekaboo is an activity that all babies and toddlers love. It supports their social and emotional development through a fun interaction, often resulting in laughing together, providing a positive social experience, as well as feeling anticipation, surprise and joy.

They also learn about object permanence, meaning if something is out of sight it still exists, as babies don't know this to begin with. It can help with eye tracking and as they grow they will start to actively join in, working on their hand and eye coordination or gross motor skills. Peekaboo also helps with language and communication as they learn the words are associated to an action.

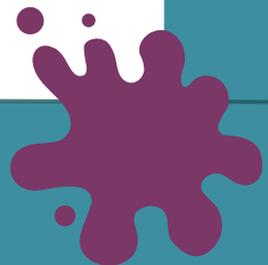
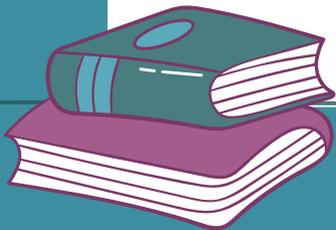




Mirror Play

Mirror play is fascinating for your baby. They love faces and it can help develop their vision. They love interacting with the familiar faces of their parents in the mirror whilst watching their own reflection, which they don't understand is their own initially, and helps them practice their social skills. Over time, this will aid self recognition which is great for cognitive brain development. They can watch their body and facial expressions as they babble and move, encouraging more movement and speech development.

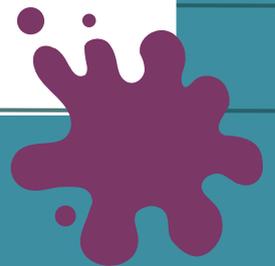
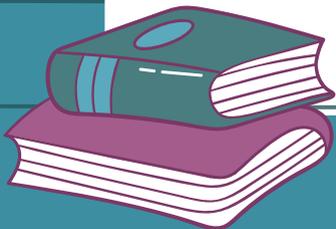
It is important to use mirrors that are safe so preferably not glass. You can get baby mirrors for tummy time, which are a great distraction, but if using other mirrors please do so under supervision at all times.

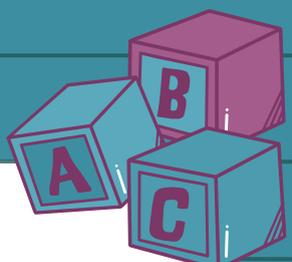




Activity Suggestion 6-12 months

- Edible messy play
 - Sensory play items
 - Making music
 - Sharing books and stories
 - Building/stacking
 - Making marks
 - What's in the bag?
 - Singing songs/rhymes
 - Copy cats
- 



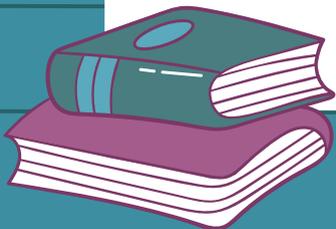


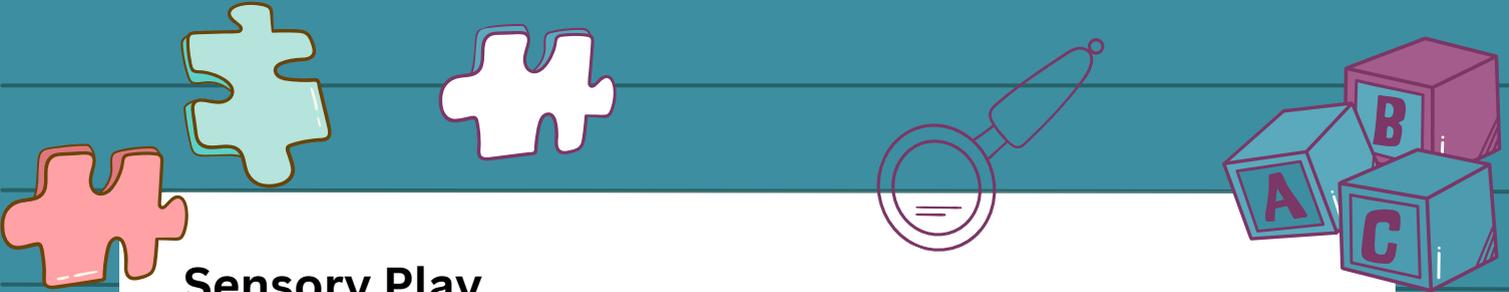
Edible Messy Play

6-12 months is an ideal time to start introducing food into your play as your little one may have started weaning. Babies explore the world by putting objects in their mouth as the mouth is full of sensory nerve endings and this helps babies learn what objects are.

Cooked pasta, cereal and jelly are all good examples of foods that can be used in taste safe activities. During messy play with food, children will stimulate their senses as they explore different textures, colours, shapes and smells. This also helps to develop their fine motor skills and hand eye coordination as they lift the food to their mouth.

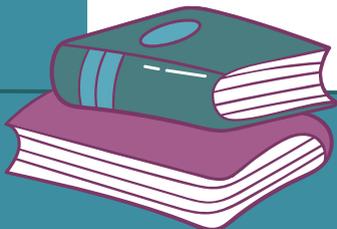
Edible messy play ideas include: playing with cooked spaghetti, making sand from blended/crushed cereal and playing with jelly. You can also make gloop using water and cornflour which creates an unusual texture. As cornflour is used in cooking, it is ok for little tummies if your child decides to pop their fingers in their mouth! As your baby explores, it is important to talk about what is happening and how things feel, as this encourages their language development. Don't be put off by the word "messy" as this type of play is valuable for babies - just be sure to wear old clothes!

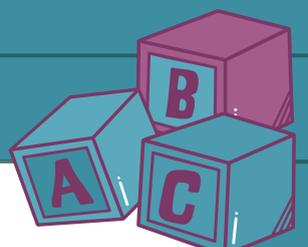




Sensory Play

When you think of it, so many activities that our babies do in their day to day play can be considered sensory play as it includes any activity which stimulates any of their five senses. Sensory play helps the brain's pathways to build new nerve connections through very simple activities. For little ones aged 6-12 months, this could be something as simple as blowing bubbles. This helps to stimulate your baby's sense of sight and touch, whilst the popping of the bubbles will provide a new sound. Bubbles is also a great way for babies to learn problem solving as they follow the bubbles and try to determine the best way to catch them. Supporting your little one to explore different textures such as sand and water is also another great sensory activity which helps develop their fine motor skills through tactile play.



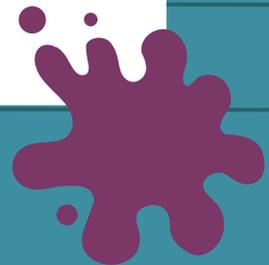
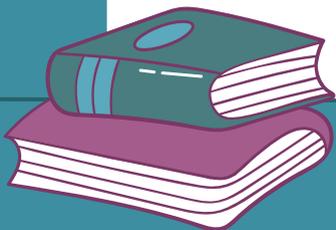
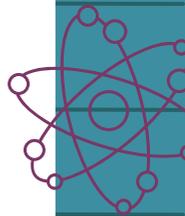


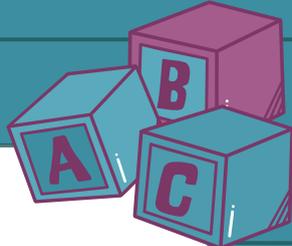
Making Music

Music is one of the only activities that uses both sides of the brain, meaning it is very important for brain development. Babies can develop their language and social skills through listening to and making music.

You and your baby can make music easily using household items such as pots/pans and a wooden spoon or their hands to make drums. Filling tubs or bottles with dried pasta or rice is another good way to make a shakeable musical instrument for your baby.

Showing your baby how to use these instruments allows them to realise that moving/banging an object creates a sound and helps develop early rhythm awareness. As well as listening to a variety of different music, playing with music can brighten both you and your baby's mood! (As long as they don't bang their drums too loudly!)



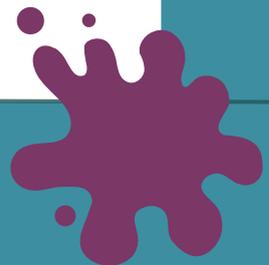
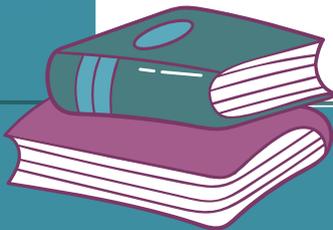


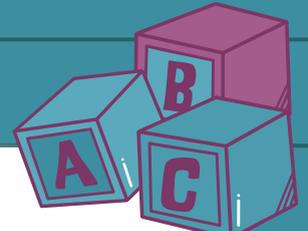
Sharing books and stories

Reading with your baby is a great way to increase their language and thinking skills, whilst strengthening your connection as they hear your voice.

Babies learn many things from books about the world around them as well as hearing different emotions and expressive sounds as you read. At this age, your baby might like board books with really simple pictures and few words. It is good to let your wee one hold the book and turn the pages if they can, but don't worry if they turn straight to the back page or prefer one page in particular. 'Touch and feel' books are also a great way to make reading fun whilst supporting hand eye coordination.

Reading is a fantastic way to help our babies relax at bedtime after a busy day. This is the perfect opportunity for some one to one time, which we sometimes need just as much as our babies do!

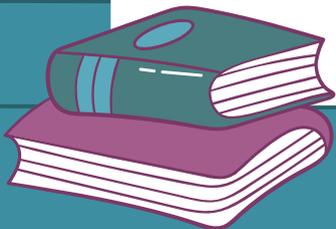
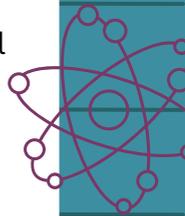


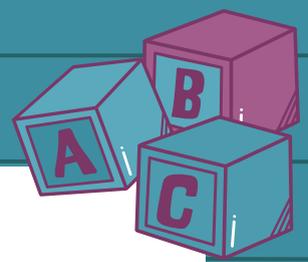


Building/Stacking

Building and stacking activities will help develop your babies cognitive skills and strengthen their coordination, whilst helping them to learn about cause and effect. Using soft blocks or stacking cups, you can build a small tower between you and your baby and allow them to knock it down and start again. Talking to your little one whilst doing so will help support their language skills and just simple phrases such as “ready, steady - go” or counting the blocks as you build will help you interact with your baby.

During this activity, don't be afraid to let your baby hold the blocks or stacking cups - even if only to chew them! This helps them to feel involved in the activity and allows them to learn by watching you build. As your baby gets older they will begin to copy you and start building towers of their own.

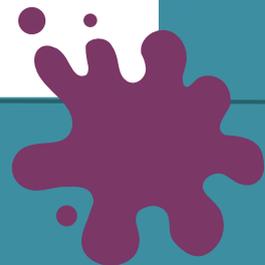
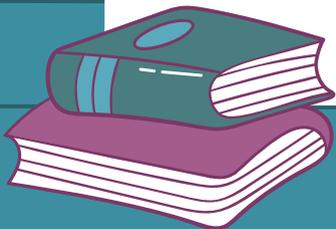


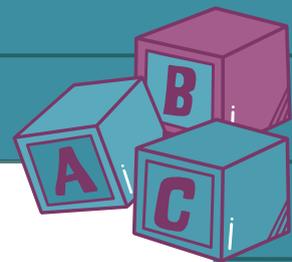
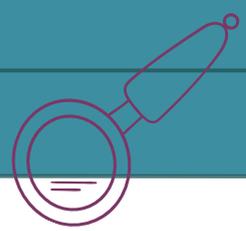


Making Marks

Our babies are able to take part in mark making activities long before they are able to hold a pencil. This can be done by something as simple as making marks in yoghurt or foam on a tray. At this age your wee one may also enjoy making simple patterns on paper or cardboard with water using their fingertips.

Mark making activities like these helps to develop finger dexterity and fine motor skills, needed later on for things like writing in school. These activities also allow your child to be creative. Encouraging mark making from the earliest age, develops an understanding of print as a form of communication and expression of ideas and feelings.

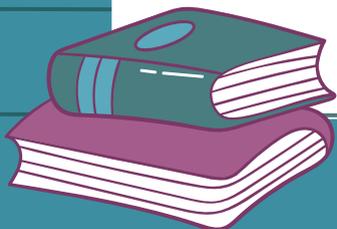
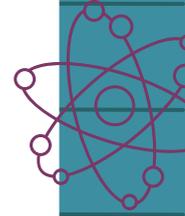


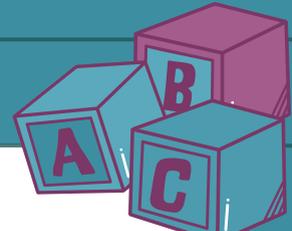


Singing songs/rhymes

Singing is a great way to bond with your baby as they love to hear the sound of your voice! Listening to songs and rhymes helps your baby's cognitive development and introduces new words that they may not have heard on a daily basis. Introducing nursery rhymes like "humpty dumpty" or "Jack and Jill", with repetition and words that rhyme are great at this age as this helps early pattern recognition.

You could also add actions into your rhymes as this will keep your baby engaged and will encourage them to move along to the music. This will help develop their motor skills and coordination. Singing to your baby as you cuddle increases a hormone called oxytocin in the brain, which is known as the love hormone. This reduces stress and increases relaxation, so it's great for both you and your baby!





Copy Cats

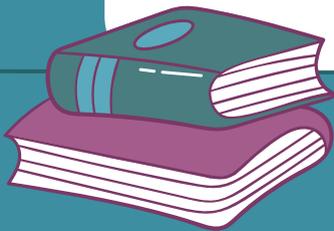
Imitation is when your baby copies or repeats an action or sound that you make, such as moving arms or “ooing”. This is really important as it teaches your baby the back and forth of communication, which is great for their early conversational skills.

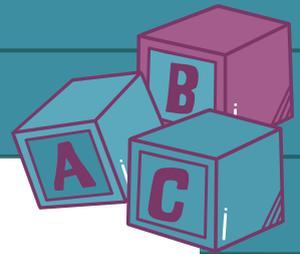
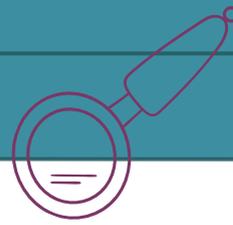
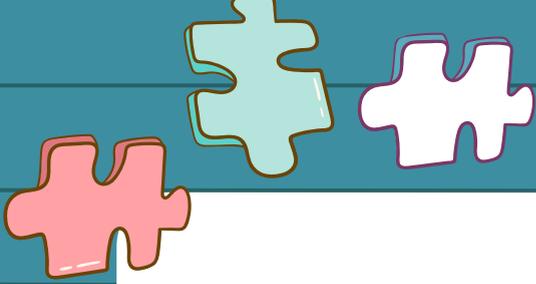
The best way to do this is to get down to your wee ones level and give lots of eye contact. Don't be scared to copy gestures or noises that your baby makes as this is their way of communicating with you and encourages them to move their body. Babies do process a lot slower than adults so make sure to give them some time to try and respond back, then you can try again.

Your baby may not be ready to copy actions such as clapping and waving yet, but you can take their hands and help to guide them through the action. It will likely take some time before they are able to do these independently but lots of repetition will help.



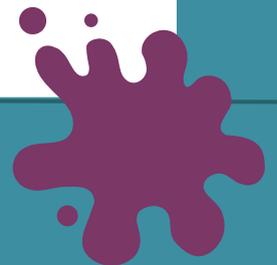
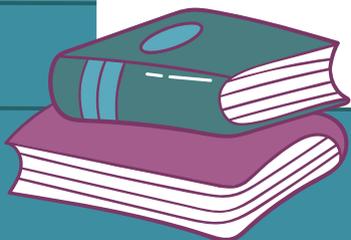
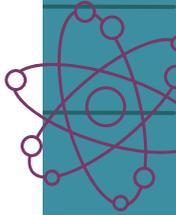
Lastly remember - facial expressions are really important too as babies can pick up on these. A smile is one of the earliest facial expressions that a baby displays and we all know how much this can brighten our day!

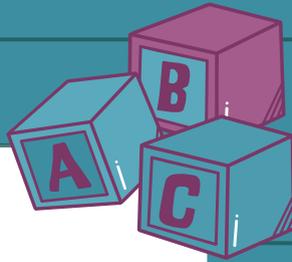
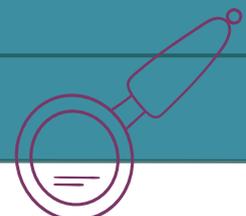




Activity Suggestion aged 1-2

- Free the toys
- Posting Box
- Paper ball throw
- Shape Matching
- Bubble Wrap Road
- Den Building
- Painting Bread
- Cardboard Tube Bowling
- Green Pea Sensory Bag

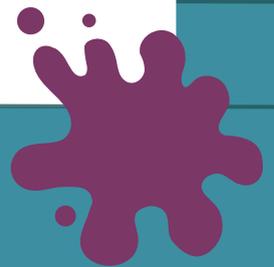
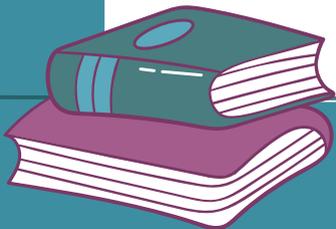


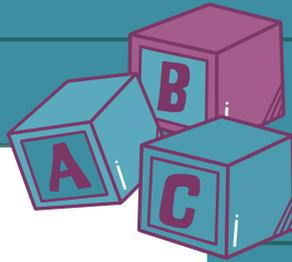


Free the toys

This is an activity that can be used with things already in your house and can be altered each time you and your child play it. All you need to do is tape down your children's toys or different objects using masking tape and let them 'free them'.

You could make this more or less challenging by adding in toys in various colours which they then have to group once the toys are free. This will allow your wee one to develop fine motor skills through peeling away the tape and will also help with colour recognition and sorting skills. If your child has a number of musical toys you could tape these down and let them rescue the instruments before having some musical fun together afterwards.

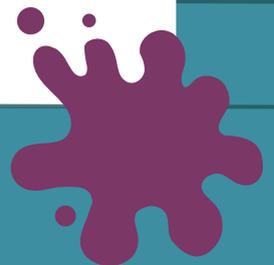
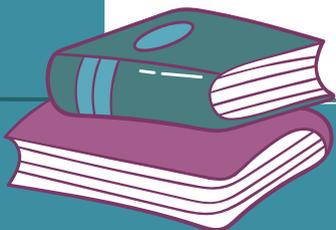
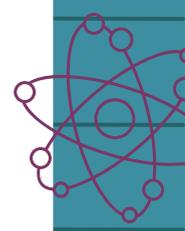


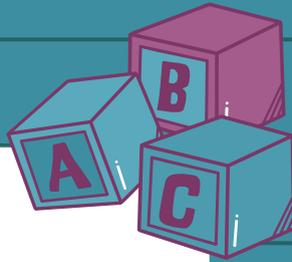


Posting Box

Creating a safe and inexpensive posting activity for a 1-2 year-old can be both fun and educational, encouraging fine motor skills and problem-solving abilities. Start by finding a small, sturdy box or container with a lid, such as an empty tissue box or a shoebox. Cut a few holes in the top or sides of the box, ensuring they are smooth and large enough for items to pass through but not so large that little hands can get stuck. Next, gather household items that are safe, non-toxic, and too large to be a choking hazard. Examples include large wooden blocks, lids from jars, or curtain rings etc. Avoid anything small enough to fit through a toilet paper roll, as these can pose a choking risk.

Next demonstrate how to drop the items through the holes and let your child explore independently. Young children love the repetitive action of posting and emptying the box, which also helps develop hand-eye coordination. Always supervise your child during play to ensure safety and encourage their curiosity and joy in this simple yet engaging activity.



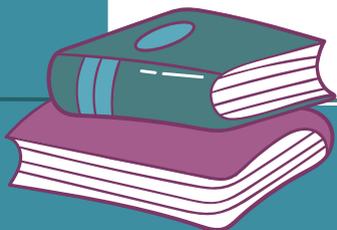
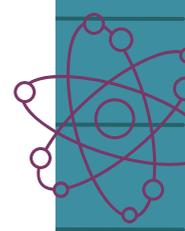


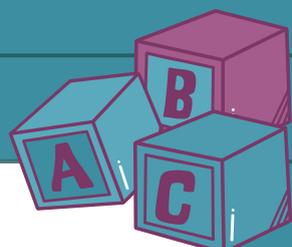
Paper ball throw

Here's a simple and fun activity for your little one! Grab some colorful paper, scrunch it into balls, and get an empty cardboard box or basket. Place the box on the floor where your child can easily reach it. Now, encourage them to pick up the paper balls and toss them into the box.

This playful game helps them in many ways! As they aim for the box, they're practicing hand-eye coordination. The gripping and throwing motions boost their fine motor skills too. Plus, focusing on the task helps improve their attention span.

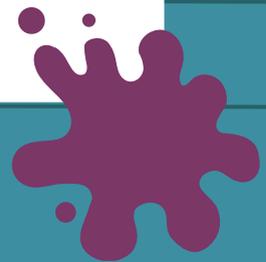
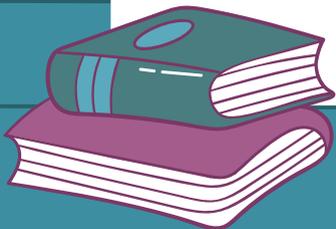
One-year-olds will love this activity because it's lively and interactive. They enjoy the thrill of throwing and watching the paper land in the box. The bright colors of the paper make it even more exciting! Don't forget to celebrate their successes with claps or cheers—this will make them eager to continue playing and learning, .

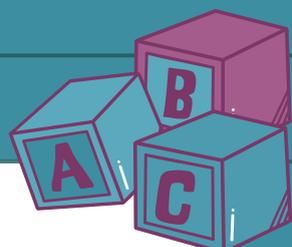
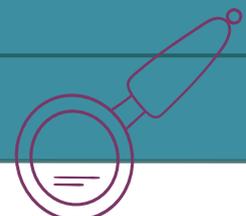




Bubble Wrap Road

Create a bubble wrap road on the floor for your little ones to drive their vehicles along. Ensure that the bubble wrap is taped or held down so it doesn't move too much and you can make it feel more like a road by using a sharpie to mark the road markings down the middle. Get your little ones involved to see if they want a straight road or make it more interesting with junctions or a racetrack. As they push the cars over the wrap, the popping sound creates an exciting auditory experience for them. If they decide to walk along the road themselves they will be rewarded with a tactile element to their play.

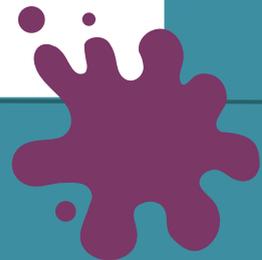
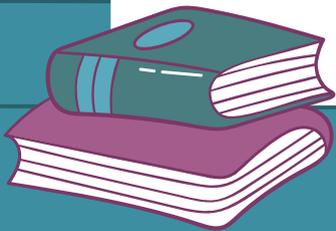
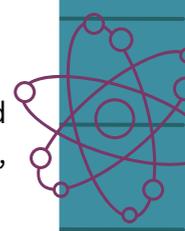


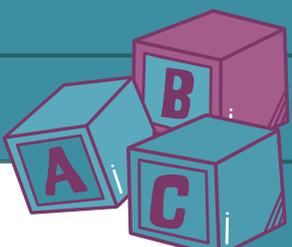


Den Building

Building a den with your toddler is a fun and meaningful way to help them grow. While your little one might not help much at first, they will enjoy being part of the process as they get older. Using cushions, blankets, and pillows, you can create a cosy space for them to play. It might be as simple as placing a blanket over a table and allowing them to hide underneath, or a big cardboard box can also be a fun den where they can crawl inside and imagine all sorts of adventures. Decorating the box with crayons, paint, and stickers makes the activity even more exciting. Toddlers are still learning how to move safely, therefore having someone nearby helps prevent bumps or falls while they explore.

This simple playtime helps them learn about space and improves their motor skills. As they grow, the den becomes a magical place for stories, role-playing, and playing with friends, boosting their imagination and social skills. With supervision, your child can enjoy the activity freely while staying safe.

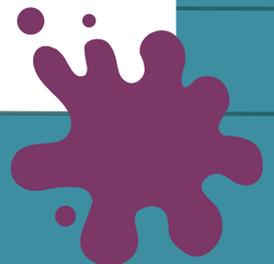
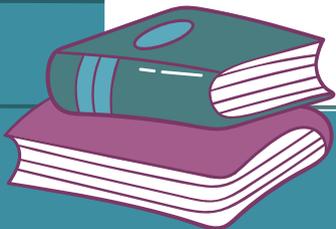


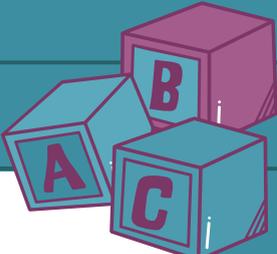
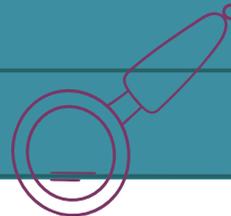


Painting Bread

Who doesn't love a fun edible painting session? This one involves allowing your little ones to get creative and develop their imagination and fine motor skills. You will need some slices of white bread along with an ice cube tray or mini pots with gel food colouring and a little milk added to make the 'edible paint'. Using a paintbrush allow your wee one to paint onto the bread slices. Once they're done painting, the bread slices (if the bread isn't too soggy!) they can then be toasted for a fun and colourful snack.

It is highly likely your child may end up having just as much fun mixing the colours on their tray, and it could get messy so old clothes for this one would be advised.

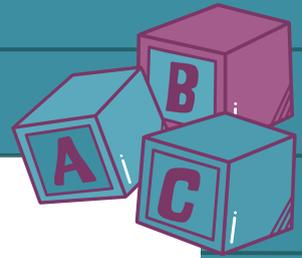
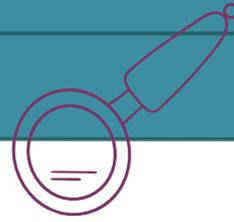




Cardboard Tube Bowling

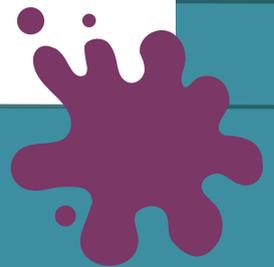
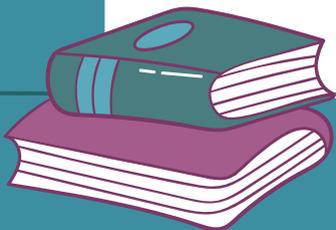
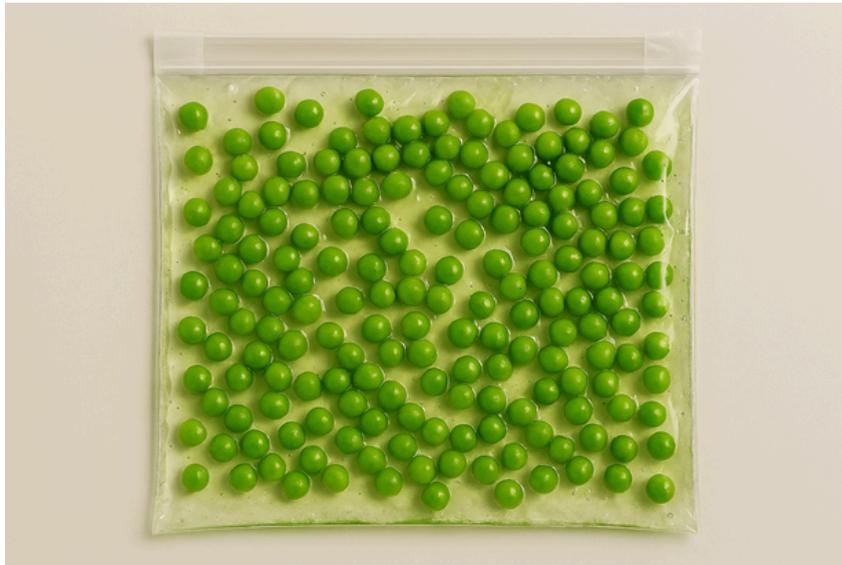
DIY bowling is an easy activity to set up at home for you and your child. All you need is some saved toilet roll or kitchen roll tubes. These can then be set up on the floor in a triangle where you and your child can then take it in turns to roll a ball towards them to see how many can get knocked down. This is a great way to develop motor skills for your child alongside hand-eye coordination. You could begin by just having a few tubes or 'pins' and slowly increasing them the more you can save. Your child will love the sense of accomplishment they get when they manage to knock the tubes over, especially if they manage to knock more down than you.

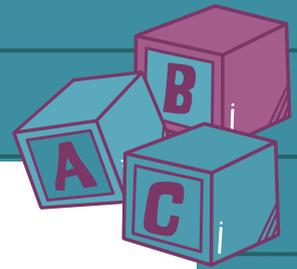
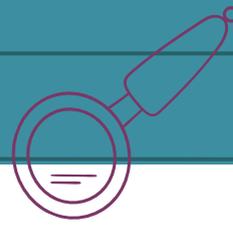




Green Pea Sensory Bag

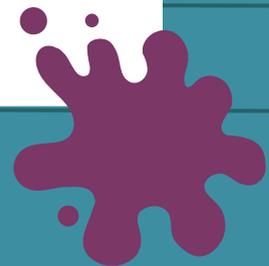
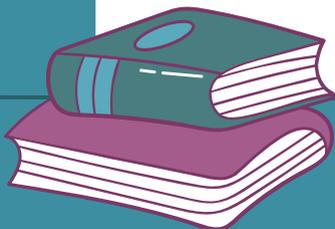
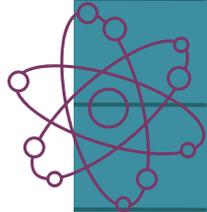
A simple sensory activity for little fingers this - one will keep your little one entertained for a while. All you require is a sturdy, sealable bag such as a ziploc. Pour in some frozen peas to the bag and seal the edges using packing tape for added safety. Your little ones can then have fun trying to squash the peas inside the bag. As the peas move around, this provides little hands with squishy, tactile feedback and visual stimulation.

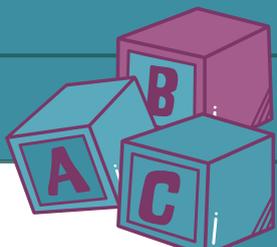
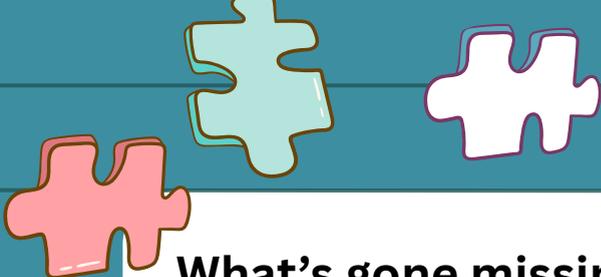




Activity Suggestion aged 2-3

- What's gone missing?
- Stepping stones
- Playdough
- Sharing stories
- Washing toys
- Shape Matching
- Teddy bear's picnic
- Collect the Snow
- Traffic light game
- Finger painting/teabag painting
- I Spy



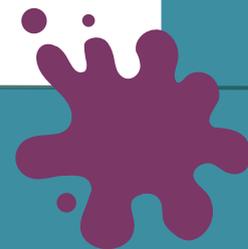
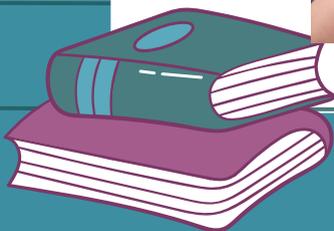


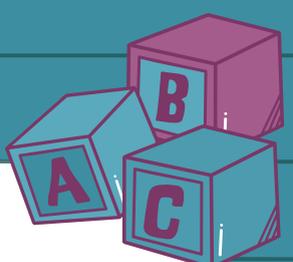
What's gone missing?

This is a great game to develop concentration and memory skills for your toddler, whilst introducing them to new words. This game can be played by gathering three or four things from around the house and allowing your wee one to look and talk about the objects before you cover their eyes. Once you have covered their eyes, simply take one of the items away and ask your child what has gone missing?

During this game, your wee one will develop their attention span and their cognitive skills. Remember to use positive reinforcement throughout this game as this will boost your child's confidence. Be mindful of how long you play for as toddler's attention spans can be quite short.

Using lots of language during your play will help your toddler realise that putting words together can form a sentence even though they may not be able to do this themselves. This is a quick and easy game with lots of benefits to your wee ones development and can be played over and over again with different objects!

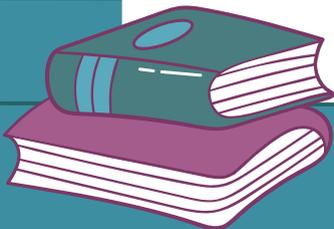
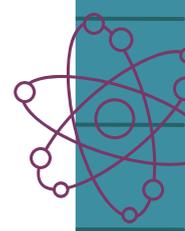


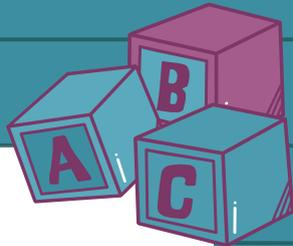


Stepping stones

Stepping stones are great for building gross motor skills, coordination and balance, all whilst having fun! This can be done easily indoors using cushions/pillows and asking your child to move from one to the other, whilst you supervise. This encourages children to take part in active activities such as walking, hopping and jumping (as long as it is safe to do so).

Whilst taking part in this activity, your child will use problem solving and critical thinking skills as they work out how to move safely from one “stepping stone” to the next. This activity is also great for your wee ones imagination as they often incorporate the stepping stones into their play, such as pretending the stepping stones are a bridge over water or that the floor is lava and they need to stay on the stepping stone for safety!

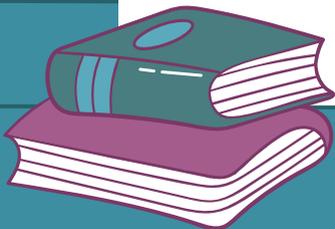
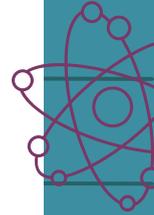


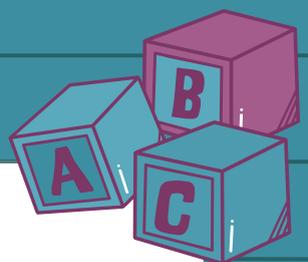


Play Dough

Play dough is a great sensory activity which helps to develop fine motor skills, hand eye coordination and creative skills. This is also a great way for your wee one to develop their imaginative skills as they can make the play dough into anything they want it to be. The good thing about this activity is that there is no end goal, it is a nice and simple way for your child to be creative and bring their ideas to life.

Making shapes out of playdough can introduce maths skills and talking about what they are making is increasing their literacy skills - even if it is you who is doing the talking! The little muscles being used whilst playing with play dough will be the same muscles they go on to use when holding a pencil, so this is a great, fun way to strengthen these. Wee ones love to make things like pizza or cake using play dough and adding simple things like a baking tray or rolling pin to their play can really extend their imagination. Also making your own play dough is a great way to teach your wee one about measuring and how materials can change when mixed together. This can be done by using ingredients that you may already have in your kitchen.





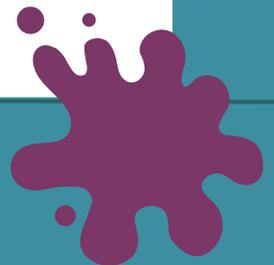
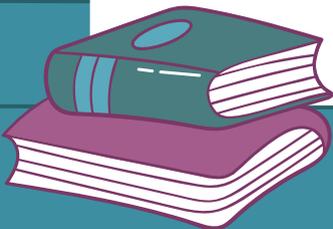
Sharing Stories

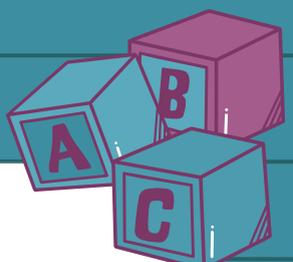
Reading to your child helps to feed their brain with new words and helps them to develop their vocabulary. The majority of brain development happens in the first three years of your child's life so this is an ideal time to develop their interest in books. Your wee one will not only develop talking and listening skills whilst reading, but they will also enjoy the comfort of spending time closely with you. B

At this age, your child may have a favourite book (be prepared to read this over and over!) and many children like books with lots of repetition in them. Don't worry about this as repetition allows your child to form an understanding of words and encourages them to repeat the words they hear. Repetition is extremely important with any activity to support your child's brain development.

Remember you don't always have to read the words of the story, just looking at the pictures and discussing these with your child is enough for them to enjoy it and provide another opportunity for them to be talking, listening and taking turns. You can borrow books for free at your local library, which can be a nice wee day out for you and your child. Here is a link to help find your local library:

<https://www.mygov.scot/find-library>

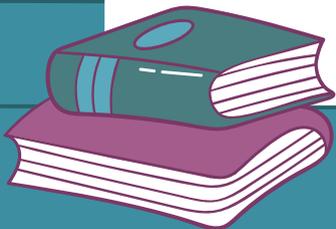
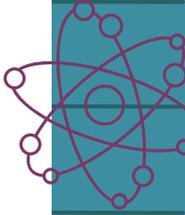


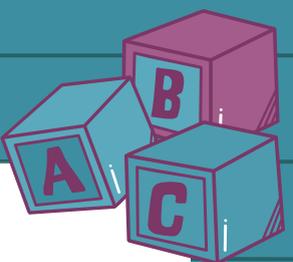
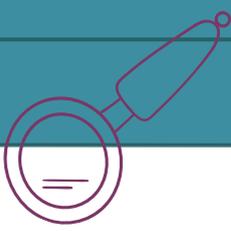


Washing toys

A fun water play activity is to fill a basin with soapy water and let your little one wash their toys. For example, you can add a doll and let them pretend they are giving their baby a bath. This imaginative role-play not only entertains but also fosters cognitive development by encouraging your child to think creatively and simulate real-life situations. You could even further extend this by adding a towel and clothes nearby to encourage drying and dressing the doll, subtly introducing personal hygiene routines early on, which nurtures their understanding of self-care.

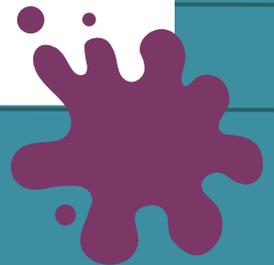
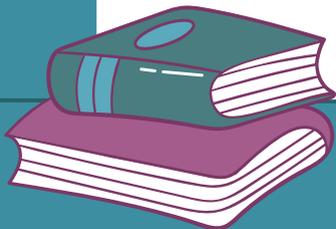
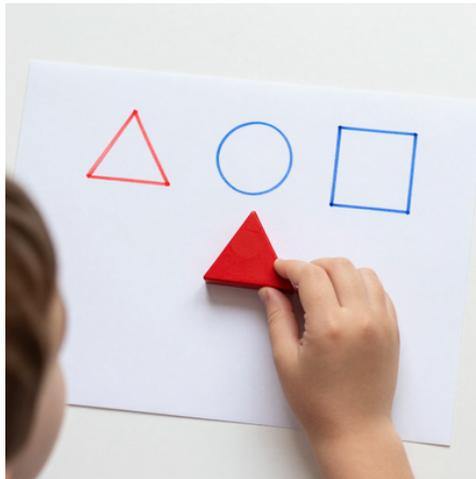
Alternatively, you can turn the basin into a pretend car wash, where your child can clean toy cars, or offer plastic cups and plates for them to "do the dishes." These activities will spark imagination and enhance learning through play. They help develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination, as the children manipulate small objects. By engaging in such playful tasks, children can explore the world around them, understand social roles, and build essential skills in a fun and interactive way.

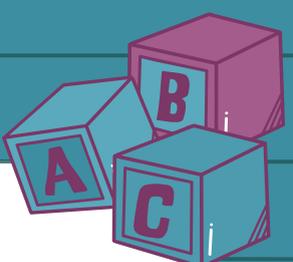
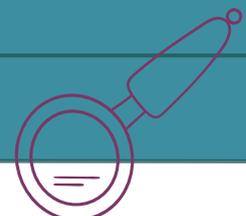




Shape Matching

Shape matching is a great way to get your wee one thinking and developing their problem solving skills and is an activity that can be done in numerous ways. All you need is a range of different shaped items - these could be building blocks or household objects. As long as you can trace round them on the paper and then lay them out your child will have great fun matching them. You can even create your own shapes out of card. Trace around these shapes onto a piece of paper and then allow your child to match the shapes with the drawings on the paper. They will be able to develop their skills through practical learning by testing out and moving the objects round each image to find the one that fits.



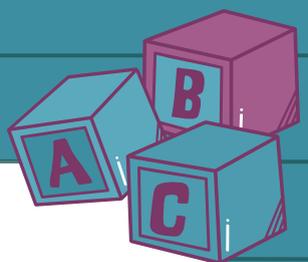


Teddy Bear's Picnic

A teddy bear's picnic is a great way to develop your wee ones communication skills through role play. Letting your child plan the picnic and decide which teddies they would like to invite will help them to develop their planning and leadership skills and will encourage responsibility.

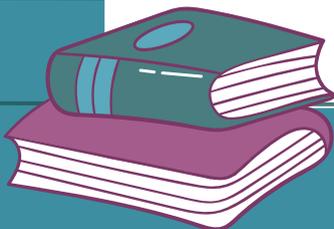
Taking turns with your wee one during this activity helps them to develop conversation skills and learn words to use in new scenarios. This is also a great activity to teach your child sharing as they share the picnic with their teddies/family and encourage them to discuss their actions whilst doing so. This can be a great opportunity to add fun to your wee ones lunchtime routine too as they may tend to eat more if they think their teddies are eating with them. Remember this does not need to be a fancy activity, all you need is a blanket and a few teddies, the rest can come through your wee ones imagination!

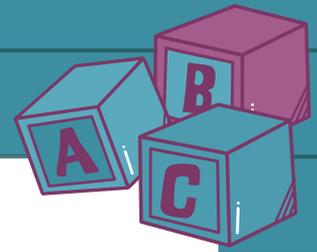
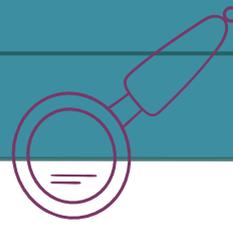




Collect the Snow

Despite being a wintery themed game, this is one that can be played all year round. Using just tongs and some cotton wool balls your child will be entertained for ages. All you need to do to set this up is to scatter some 'snow' on the ground using cotton wool balls and then provide your child with a pair of tongs. Show them how to grasp the tongs and use them to pick up the snow. Once they have got this, set up a tub or an area nearby where they have to gather the snow in and get them to pick up one piece at a time. This is a great activity to help develop fine motor skills for your child as they practice grasping and releasing the tongs to pick up the snow. It also allows them to work on their hand-eye coordination and dexterity which can then be used in other areas of their life, such as when eating or playing.

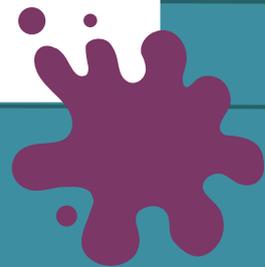
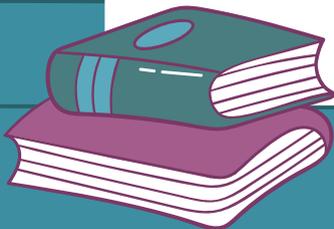


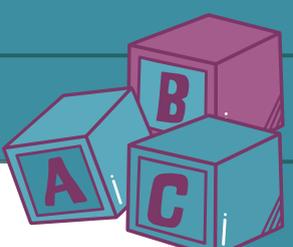


Traffic light game

Playing a simple game of stop and go using the colours red and green helps your wee one connect colours with words and actions. This game helps to develop your child's listening skills and helps them to follow instructions. Your wee one will boost their concentration and improve their memory. You can choose any action to use in this game such as walking, dancing, jumping or hopping, encouraging your wee one to participate in the action when you say green and stop when you say red!

Letting your wee one call out the instructions will help them build confidence and will let them see you participating in the game too! This little game will give your child a wee insight into road safety and encourage them to realise that we stop when we see a red. It may be helpful to show a visual of red or green to help your wee one identify the link between the word and the colour. This game can be set up easily and is a great way to let your child burn off some energy!

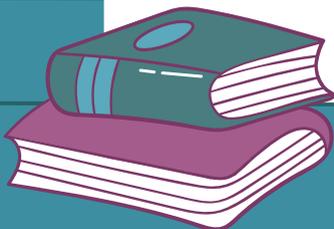
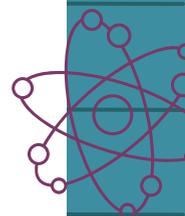


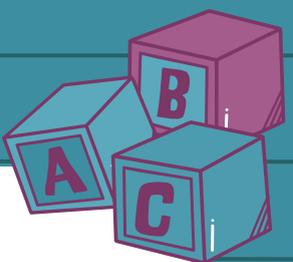


Finger Painting

If you have non toxic, child friendly paints at home, these can be used to allow your wee one to develop their creative skills through finger painting. The good thing about this activity is that it is non structured and it can be led by your child's imagination. This is a great messy sensory activity which will give your wee one lots of fun whilst developing their fine motor skills and hand eye coordination.

Remember to talk to your child during this activity and you can use lots of positive reinforcement as this will increase your child's confidence. Even child friendly paints can be hard to get out of our clothes so remember not to wear good clothes for this activity. Don't worry if you don't have paint at home as teabags are another great alternative. Let your wee one dip the teabag into some water and use the wet teabag on paper to make marks. Using teabags will stimulate lots of senses like touch, sight and smell. Using a variety of teabags will provide different smells and colours for your child. Teabags are also a little less messy than paint ...unless they burst!

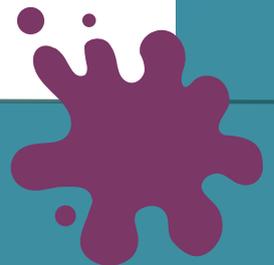
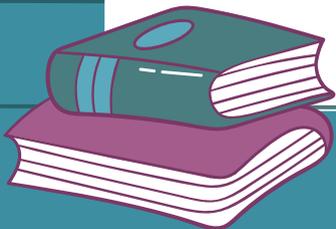


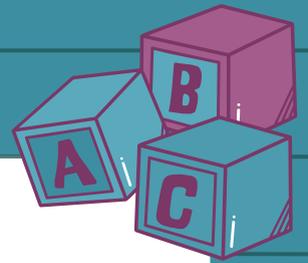
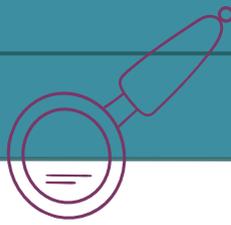


I Spy

Looking out the window with your wee one and discussing what you can see together will help develop their social and language skills. Whilst discussing what you can see, you are introducing them to new words and allowing them to become familiar with sentences.

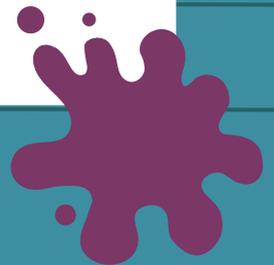
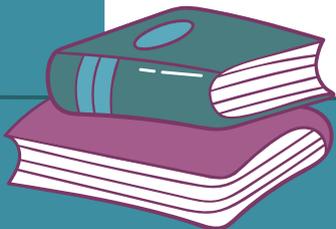
At this stage, your wee one won't play this game using letters but might enjoy clues such as "I spy something in the sky" or "I spy something green". Even if your child is not yet ready for clues, they will still enjoy looking at the world with you and hearing you talk about what you can see. Hearing you repeat words whilst looking at objects will help your child to associate words with objects. Simple games like these help your child to improve their concentration and turn taking skills, whilst increasing their interest in the world around them. This wee game can also be played with older children and can be a great family activity.

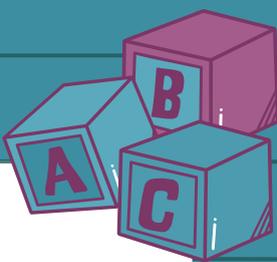
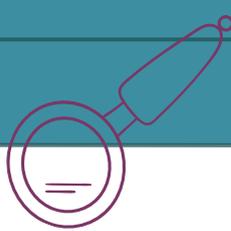




Activity Suggestion aged 3-5

- Simon Says
- Sharing Stories
- Matching Treasure Hunts
- Yoga
- Animal Charades
- Nature Walk
- Nature Art
- DIY Puppet Show
- Float or sink
- Sensory Bins
- Jelly Bins 'Digging for Treasure'
- Balloon Toss/ Balloon Tennis
- Ice Painting

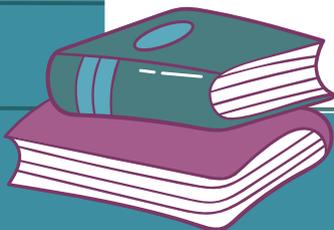
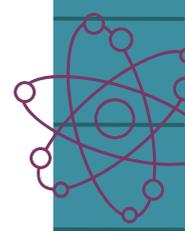


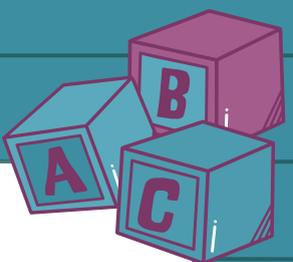


Simon Says

Simon says is a great way of developing your child's listening and concentration skills. This game involves asking your child to complete different actions. You should explain the rules to your wee one and let them know that they should only complete the action if "Simon" says so. You could use actions such as run on the spot, do a funny dance, touch your toes or pull a funny face.

Playing games like this will help your child to develop their problem solving and decision making skills through play. Don't worry if your wee one makes mistakes, this is all part of the fun! During this game, your child will be introduced to new words and will help them to get used to following instructions. It's also a good idea to let your wee one have a turn at giving the instructions as this will help them to build confidence. They will also really enjoy watching you pull a funny face or do a funny dance!

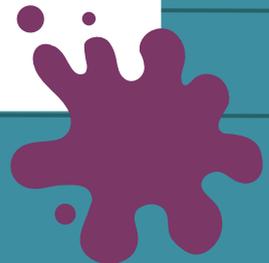
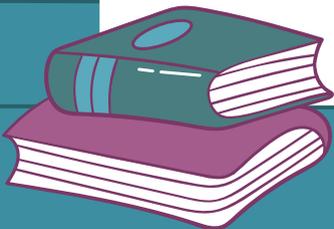


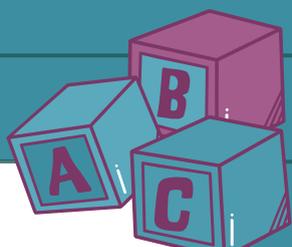


Sharing Stories

Sharing stories with your wee one is the perfect way to spend quality time together, whilst developing their literacy skills. Reading stories with your child helps develop their listening and concentrations skills, but also helps to stimulate their imagination. At this stage, your child might enjoy retelling you the story. Don't worry if it is completely different from the actual story, what's important is that they are increasing their vocabulary and confidence whilst doing so!

After reading a story to your child, you could try asking them questions about the story and see if they are able to recall their favourite part. This helps to show that your wee one is understanding what you are reading. There is no right or wrong way for your child to practice telling stories, they may just talk about something that has happened during their day. What matters is that they are enjoying your time together!



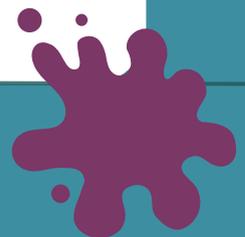
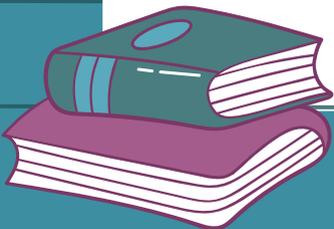


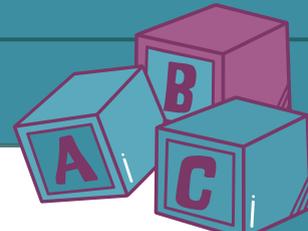
Matching Treasure Hunts

Completing treasure hunts around your home can be a great way to engage your child in decision making, team work and physical activity. There are various types of treasure hunts including looking for colours, numbers and letters.

Using post-it-notes, place them around the house for your child to find. Start off with colours for younger children before working up to numbers and letters as they age. Once they have found a post-it-note get them to bring it back to you where you will have a piece of paper with colours, letters or numbers on it for them to match the correct note to.

It's a good idea to let your child know how many post-it-notes have been hidden around the house so they can keep track of how many they have found or still have to find. Encouraging them as they go is a great way to help keep up their momentum and attention to the game. you could extend this game further by asking your child to find something in the house of each colour etc.

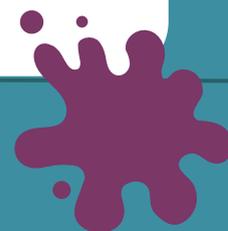
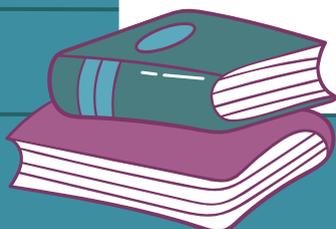


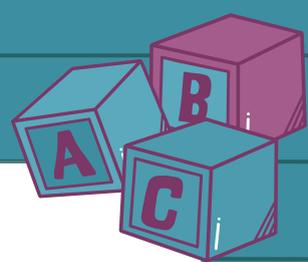
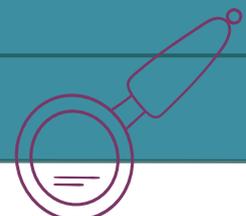


Yoga

Exercising together with your wee one is both beneficial and fun. There are a lot of family friendly yoga videos of varying lengths available on YouTube to try in the comfort of your own home.

Doing yoga together not only boosts confidence , it is a great way to help teach children how to relax and find calm. Allowing your child and yourself to try new poses and skills helps build self esteem and boosts concentration. Don't worry if you can't always do the moves perfectly, you will both just enjoy having a giggle together and your wee one will just enjoy spending the time with you trying something new.

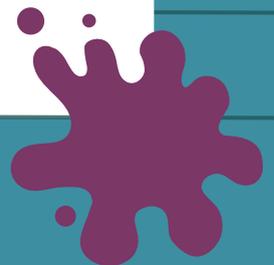
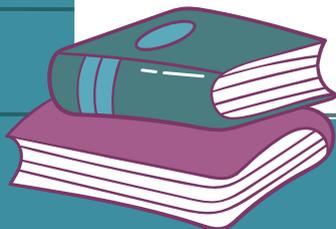


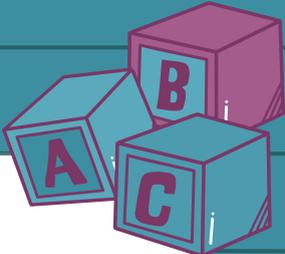
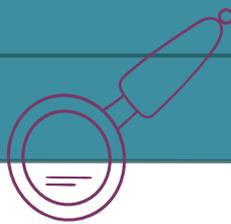


Animal Charades

Charades is a great way to develop your child's communication skills and imagination whilst providing a fun and engaging activity. Start by creating cards or a sheet with different animals on to help with prompts later on. Then explain the rules to your child that they have to pick an animal without telling you and have to act out how they think that animal would act whilst you guess what they are. You then swap over and they have to guess what animal you are.

This will help develop their problem solving skills whilst finding it hilarious to see you pretending to be an elephant or a monkey. This is a game that can be played with a minimum of 2 people and you could make this as easy or as hard as possible by including rules such as no noise or noise depending on ages of those playing.

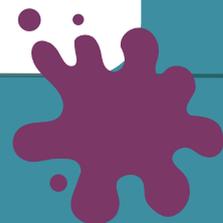
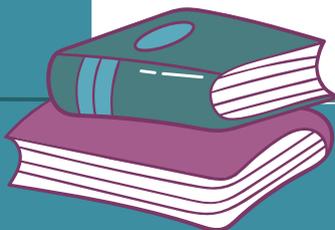


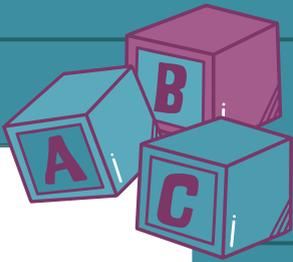
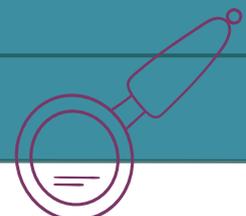


Nature Walk

Getting out in nature is beneficial to everyone that can experience it. This doesn't have to be far, it could just involve getting out to a local park or green space that is nearby. Being outdoors promotes mental health, reduces stress and can improve sleep quality for you and your child. When going for a walk in nature there are different ways this can be explored. It can help develop curiosity in the world around them and get them interested in the outdoors. You could encourage this curiosity by asking them what they can see, hear and smell - engaging their senses and promoting physical activity.

Before heading out on a nature walk with your little one, use sticky tape and make a loop with it around their wrist (sticky side out). They can then use this on the walk to attach different things to it such as leaves and sticks to make a nature bracelet. You can set them a task to see how many different items they can collect for their bracelet.

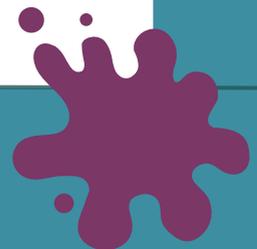
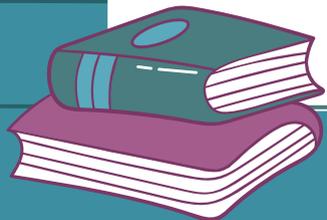


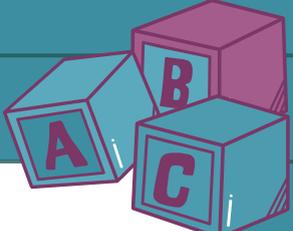


Nature Art

Following on from the previous nature walk, another fun activity to do together with your wee one is to make pictures and art with the items you collected together. This could be in the form of a collage or just on the ground. Using the different items you and your child can work together to decide what you could make from them such as a bird or even a tree scene.

Another great way of making art out of nature is to gather different leaves and when home to paint them and use them as prints. This will help develop fine motor skills, as well as creativity and imagination in your child and everyone loves a bit of messy time painting and sticking.

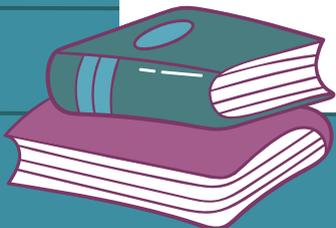
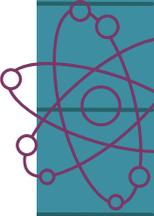


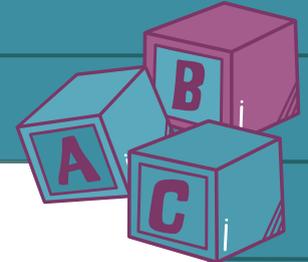


DIY Puppet Show

A puppet show is a great way to experience and encourage story telling and imagination with your child. It can help to enhance creativity and build self-confidence. A puppet show can be done anywhere in the house using everyday items and your children's toys. You could set the puppet show up behind the sofa, in a doorway or behind a bedsheet - practically anywhere that would work for you.

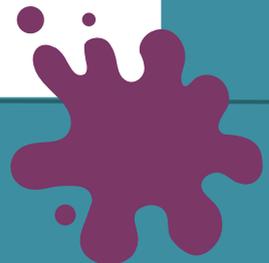
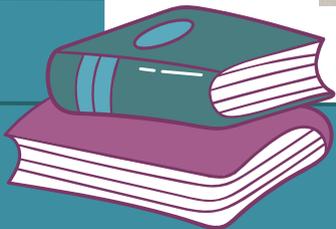
Initially, if your child is younger try doing a puppet show together, maybe acting out their favourite story or a recent adventure you have been on. As they get older they may want to do a puppet show on their own with their favourite teddies or toys. Encourage this as much as possible and don't worry if the story doesn't make sense - just let their imagination run free and boost their confidence as much as possible. If you have the time and resources you could make your own puppets as an art and crafts project but teddies work just as well.

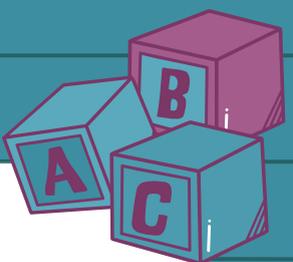




Float or Sink

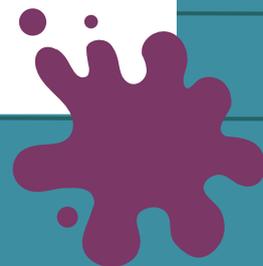
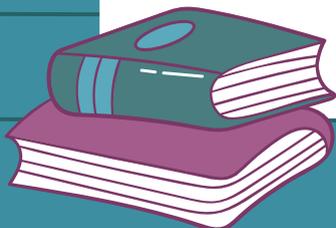
Fill a washing up bowl full of water alongside a handful of toys or objects for your child to play with. Get them to drop each item into the water and see if they float or sink. Then help your wee one to group those that float on the water and those that sink to the bottom together. What do the items in each pile have in common? This is a good way to get your child thinking about differences in items. You could also make this more fun by asking them to guess what they think each item will do before they drop it into the water.





Sensory Bins

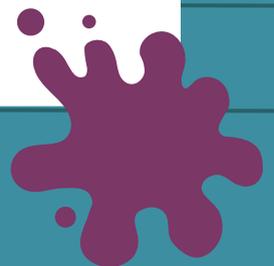
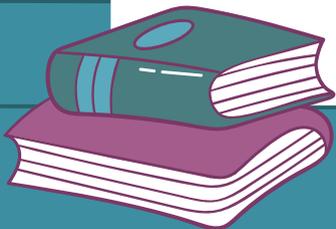
Sensory bins are a simple and effective activity to set up for your wee one and can include different items found round the house including rice, sand and water. Alternatively you could get more creative by utilising shaving foam, play dough or even cooked spaghetti. All you then need to add are some toys and scoops for your child to explore the different textures. Allow them to have one or two tubs filled with the items and then another empty tub and get them to work out different ways to transfer or mix together the items. It might get a little messy but it's a great way for them to explore using their senses.

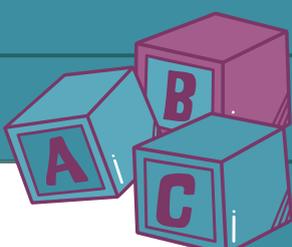




Jelly Bins ‘Digging for Treasure’

Sensory play is a great way to interact with your wee one and a fun option to try is through the use of jelly. Fill a tub with different items your child enjoys - this could be a random selection of toys or you could choose a theme such as dinosaurs or cars. Then fill the tub with jelly and let it set. Once it has set your little one can then dig out the objects using their hands or a spoon. This is a great way for them to develop their fine motor skills and engage their imaginations. You could create a story for them telling them they are an explorer and need to save all the animals, or objects etc. They will love this concept and may wish to add to the story telling themselves.



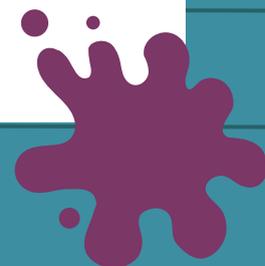
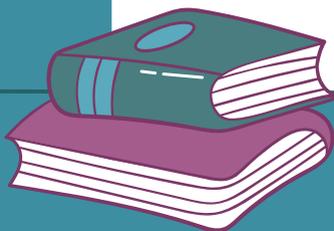
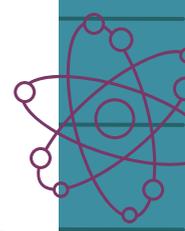


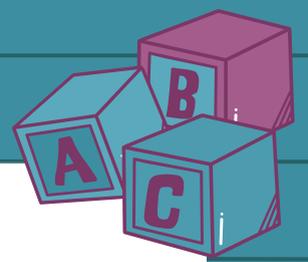
Balloon Toss/ Balloon Tennis

Playing with balloons is an activity that a lot of children enjoy. Here are two ideas for how to use balloons at home.

Balloon toss - fill a few uninflated balloons with some dry rice. Once the balloons are inflated, attach some string then create your 'targets'. These could be chalk circles on the floor or hula hoops. Make a line for your wee one to stand behind and get them to throw the balloon towards the target. This develops their hand-eye coordination and problem solving skills as they work out how hard and far they need to throw their balloon.

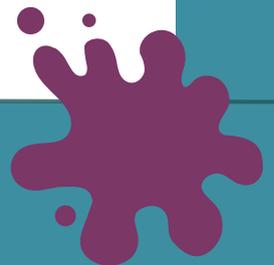
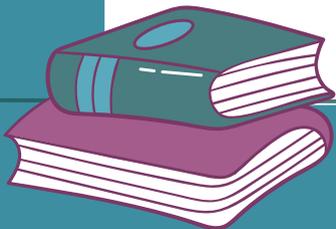
Balloon tennis - inflate a balloon and set up a 'tennis net'. This could be done using a washing line, or something as simple as a blanket strung up between two chairs. As long as the balloon can get patted over it, you can be quite creative. This is a great game to play together with your little one to see how long they can keep the balloon in the air. If they are finding it difficult to hit the balloon over the 'net' you could change the idea to just seeing how long they can keep it in the air. They will have great fun chasing this around the room with you again working on their hand eye coordination.





Ice Painting

Ice painting can be a fun activity for you to do together with your wee one that helps stimulate their creativity and spike their curiosity whilst beginning to get them to explore the effects of how colours can be combined. Fill a washing up bowl or tub with ice cubes. Then put some red, yellow and blue paint into separate bottles (old ketchup bottles are good for this) along with a little bit of water to make them easier to squeeze out. Get your little one to squeeze one colour onto an ice cube and watch it change colour. Then get them to add another colour and take note of what changes. Finally get them to add the third colour. What colour combination has been made now? Don't worry if the ice begins to melt. This just means they now have a new activity of coloured water play!





**If you're a parent with experience of care,
Why Not join The village and build your
social and support networks.**

