



**A parents' guide to how a child  
grows and learns**

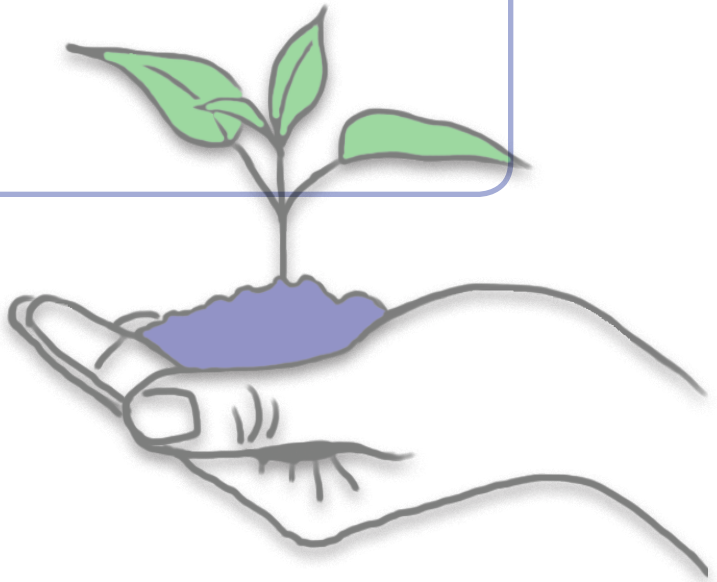


Early Years  
Service



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# Introduction

Through The Early Years Collaborative, the Scottish Government wants to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

## What is the Early Years Collaborative?

It is a Scottish Government initiative which asks local organisations with parents and children in their Local Authority area to work together to improve our children's future.

## Why?

Many studies have shown that what happens from pregnancy to starting school has the largest bearing on how a child is going to live the rest of their life.

This includes:

- How healthy they are
- How long they will live
- How well they will do at school
- How much they are likely to be able to earn
- If they are involved in the community
- How they behave as teenagers and adults



Each local Collaborative is working on 4 main areas or workstreams

- Pre-birth to 1 year
- 1 year to 30 months
- 30 months to the start of Primary School
- Primary 1 to the start of Primary 4

All workstreams will be working closely together to provide the best outcomes for children but this booklet is concerned with outcomes for workstream 3.

The aim for workstream 3 is for children to have met all their expected developmental skills and abilities by the time they reach primary school. Using a **Developmental Milestones Toolkit** your Early Learning and Childcare providers will be working with you towards this aim.

This booklet outlines what you can do at home to support your child's development in the following key areas:

- **Social, Emotional and Behavioural**
- **Cognitive**
- **Speech and Language**
- **Gross motor**
- **Fine motor**



The ideas are linked to the wellbeing indicators, Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (**SHANARRI**) associated with Getting it Right for Every Child (**GIRFEC**).

All children are individuals and will develop at different rates. This can vary across different aspects of development and one aspect may impact on another.

### **It's not 'Just Play'**

It is important to remember the crucial importance of **PLAY** to young children's development.

*'Play is an essential part of early learning. It is the life blood of the learning process. As children play they are developing the cognitive, socio-emotional and physical skills they will need to take them into a successful adulthood.'*

*They are developing their curiosity, problem solving, intentionality, flexibility, verbal and non verbal skills.*

*Socio-emotionally they are developing their emotional intelligence, learning confidence, cooperation, negotiation, sharing, empathy and how to communicate appropriately.*

*Physically their fine motor and gross motor skills are being practised and developed.*

***Its not 'Just Play' they are skills for life.'***

MHC Early Childhood Solutions

# Social, Emotional & Behavioural

Babies and children have feelings and emotions from the moment they are born. As children grow, they become more aware of themselves and others. To develop positive images of themselves, a child needs love, security and a feeling of trust. It is important that children are encouraged to learn about being co-operative, positive and caring towards each other. Having significant trusted adults in a child's life who are positive role models helps children develop self-esteem and a positive image of themselves and

others. Children need to be given clear, realistic, consistent boundaries; this helps to avoid confusion and gives them a sense of security. When children are encouraged to have a go, feel valued, and know that their opinions and decisions are listened to, they become happy, confident individuals.



## **SAFE**

Set clear and realistic boundaries for your child to help keep him safe. Be consistent in your expectations.

## **HEALTHY**

Encourage your child to play lots of turn taking games like hide and seek.

## **ACHIEVING**

Make time and give lots of opportunities to practise and master new skills. Give praise for effort and not just for results.

## **NURTURED**

Respect your child's feelings and choices and he will learn to respect himself and others.

## ACTIVE

Give your child lots of opportunities to be an individual, to make decisions and take forward their own play.

## RESPECTED

Listen to your child and discuss his ideas with him, building his confidence in his ability to contribute to decisions that involve him.

## RESPONSIBLE

Give your child responsibilities. Encourage him to do things that he is capable of doing for himself for example getting dressed to go outside.

## INCLUDED

Provide opportunities for your child to play with others and make friends.



*“Parents need to fill a child’s bucket of self-esteem so high that the rest of the world can’t poke enough holes to drain it dry”*

Alvin Price

# Cognitive

Cognitive development refers to thinking skills such as remembering, understanding, applying, reasoning and creativity. Children develop cognitive skills by learning about causes and effects in play and everyday life activities, and noticing similarities and differences in things around them. Thinking skills help make all experiences more meaningful to children. You can help your child develop her thinking skills at home.

## **SAFE**

Talk to your child about common dangers in the home and how to keep safe when you are out and about. Answer the “why” questions.

## **HEALTHY**

Encourage your child to talk about her feelings and to think about how others might be feeling. A quiet time would be ideal for this perhaps as part of the bedtime routine.

## **ACHIEVING**

Encourage your child to notice objects which are the same and different. Collecting shells and pebbles from the beach or sorting and matching everyday objects: clothes, socks or pegs.

## **NURTURED**

Give your children choices everyday, but not too many. Talk to her about the choices she makes and what her preferences are.

Help your child to understand about time. Talk about the routines and events of the day for example getting ready for nursery. What will you be doing after lunch? What will you be doing tomorrow or at the weekend?

Help your child to remember and talk about events which have happened in the past.





## ACTIVE

Imaginative play fuels creativity where children build on what they already know and change objects into new things, seeing things in new ways. Provide lots of open-ended resources for your child to develop her imagination. Cardboard tubes and boxes as well as attractive pieces of fabric and material are ideal.

## RESPECTED

Be a good listener, value your child's opinions and questions. Help her to describe and think through problems she comes up against and help her to think of possible solutions.

## RESPONSIBLE

Encourage your child to be responsible by tidying up her own room, books and toys. Give her small manageable tasks to do. Make it fun by playing beat the clock or putting on some music and praise her efforts.

## INCLUDED

Help your child develop a sense of belonging and manage conflict by validating her feelings whilst encouraging her to see things from the point of view of others.

*“Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve”*

Roger Lewin



# Speech and Language

Speech, language and communication are an essential part of our everyday lives. Children develop communication skills from birth discovering that they can communicate their needs through their first sounds, facial expressions and body language. Talking is one of the most important skills your child will learn. The process of developing speech occurs naturally when appropriate stimulation occurs in which you have a very important role to play. Talking and listening to your child while going about your daily routine will help him to build an understanding of words, sentences and conversations and help him learn how to talk. Singing simple songs and reciting nursery rhymes with your child are an excellent way of helping him to catch the language they are learning.

## **SAFE**

Look at ways to cross roads safely by using pedestrian crossings and traffic lights. Read or tell stories that promote safety. Talk about car safety, booster seats and seats belts.

## **HEALTHY**

Talk about choices of healthy foods, encourage your child to experience different tastes, colours and smells. You could even prepare food together. Where possible have meals together as a family. Involve your child in shopping for healthy foods and making shopping lists together. When at the shops, ask your child to recall some of the items on the list.

## **ACHIEVING**

Share songs and rhymes daily that require actions which will help reinforce the language they are learning. Use sequencing words such as: first, after, last, when talking about everyday activities. Indoors and outdoors, play word games such as I Spy.

## **NURTURED**

Establish the habit of having a special quiet time to read, talk and listen to your child for a short time every day without distractions.

## ACTIVE

Explore the different signs you see when out and about. Talk together about what they mean as well as about different shapes, colour, numbers. Count things you see as you are going along, flowers, birds, dogs, blue cars. Talk about seasonal changes in the environment. Develop a sense of rhythm by clapping, tapping and dancing to music.

## RESPECTED

Encourage your child to express his feelings and opinions and deal with them in a positive way.

## RESPONSIBLE

Help children to learn their address and telephone number. Make your child aware of emergency services and how to contact them. Involve children in planning an outing.

## INCLUDED

Encourage your child to talk about his activities with his friends.



*“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales”*

Albert Einstein

# Gross Motor

Gross motor skills are those which require whole body movement and involve the large muscles of the body to perform everyday functions such as standing, walking, running, and sitting upright. It also includes eye/hand coordination skills such as ball skills. Children develop their large movement skills, co-ordination and strength as they explore physical play. Providing opportunities to play physical games at home will give children the opportunity to practise and develop confidence in managing movement challenges such as running, balancing, climbing, crawling, jumping, bending and stretching and also throwing and catching.

## **SAFE**

Where possible climb stairs together rather than use escalators or lifts. Provide regular opportunities for your child to practise climbing by playing on large obstacles or equipment such as a climbing frame or large logs and tree trunks.

## **HEALTHY**

Encourage your child to develop her balance on low beams, low walls or large fallen logs. Why not go for a walk? You can encourage your child to jump off low heights and land with 2 feet. Jumping in puddles is also great fun!

## **ACHIEVING**

Have races to a familiar landmark giving your child an earlier start or let her use a scooter or bike. Construct an obstacle course, make it more challenging by using timers or tunes. Draw with chalk on the pavement.

## **NURTURED**

When cooking or baking, involve your child in whisking and stirring activities. Paint a fence outside with water. Encourage your child to wash the car or wash her own toys and equipment.

## ACTIVE

Encourage your child to take part in physical activities in your own local area which will help her body to develop, for example: walking, swimming, dancing, mini-kickers, tumble tots, soft play, rough and tumble, roly poly, paddling in the sea, den building.

## RESPECTED

Encourage your child to choose activities you can do together from your Play@home book.

## RESPONSIBLE

Encourage your child to play safely, stay within designated boundaries and consider her own safety and that of others during play.

## INCLUDED

Encourage your child to join in with friends in physically active, turn taking games, for example: Hokey Cokey, Ring a Roses, What's the Time Mr Wolf?

*"Kids don't remember their best day of television"*

Anon



# Fine Motor

Fine motor skills are the movements produced by the body's small muscle groups in precise use of the hands and fingers enabling grasping small objects, pointing, using cutlery, drawing, fastening clothing. These movements involve strength and dexterity and hand-eye co-ordination and you can help your child develop these skills at home.

## **SAFE**

Supervise your child when using scissors, knives etc at home and teach him basic safety rules for using and storing them.

## **HEALTHY**

Make fruit kebabs at home encouraging your child to cut up fruit and place on skewers. Provide opportunities to practise pouring skills with water or milk.

## **ACHIEVING**

Provide boxes/blocks/ plastic tubs for your child to build towers.

## **NURTURED**

Encourage your child to be independent by showing him how to fasten clothes and give him time to practise.

## **ACTIVE**

Make playdough at home and encourage cutting and rolling. Make treasures bags/boxes/ lucky dips. Help your child make and play the fishing game in Play@home.

## RESPECTED

Give your child a choice of materials for threading e.g. pasta. Collect buttons, cardboard tubes which he can then decorate using paint, glitter etc.

## RESPONSIBLE

Encourage your child to tidy away small toys / craft objects etc in appropriate containers which have screw top lids.

## INCLUDED

Join in with your child in action finger rhymes and encourage him to join in with others. Go to 'Bookbug' sessions.

*“Behind every young child who believes in himself is a parent who believed first”*

Matthew Jacobson



# Useful websites/links

## **Early Years Collaborative**

<http://www.earlyyearscollaborative.co.uk>

## **Play@home Activity Sheets**

<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/20735.aspx>

## **Every Day's a Learning Day Resources**

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/e/everydaylearning.asp>

## **Scottish Book trust—Parents' site**

<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading/parents>

## **Ready Steady Toddler Hands-on Guides**

<http://www.readysteadytoddler.org.uk>

## **Play Talk Read helpful ideas**

<http://playtalkread.org>

## **Infant and Toddler Forum Support**

<http://www.infantandtoddlerforum.org>

## **Ziggy Guide to road safety**

<http://www.gosafewithziggy.com>

