



Getting dressed

Dressing teddy



- Find some clothes that will fit onto a large teddy bear or doll and encourage your child to have a go at dressing them.
- Making getting dressed in the morning fun by turning it into a game. You could get your child to lay out the items in the order that they will put them on and then time how long it takes. Start with just 2 items and then build up to more.

Shoes & socks



- Make sure your child's socks and shoes are easy for them to put on by themselves.
- Allow enough time before going out so they can go it by themselves. Put your shoes and socks on at the same time and talk about how you are doing it.
- Have fun with shoes by finding a selection from around your home and trying them on, look at the different ways they fasten.
- Practice rolling down socks and getting them onto your toes before pulling them up

Coats



- Watch The preschool coat flip and then have a go yourself!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wRKDeKbAcl>
- Collect different clothing with zips and buttons and Velcro fasteners and practice trying to do them up.

Toilets

Washing hands



- Talk about germs and explain that they are invisible but can make us unwell so we need to wash them off
- Use something like wet oats or paint mixed with rice and dip your hands in it. The oats or rice stick to your hands a bit like germs do and now you need to wash them off. You can even shake your sticky hands with someone else to illustrate how we can pass germs on.
- Practise singing Happy Birthday while you wash your hands!
- The WHO have partnered with Peppa Pig to make a simple handwashing video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAnSkaPgviY>

Using the toilet independently



- Encourage your child to be as independent as possible when using the toilet.
- If your child is reluctant to wipe themselves, build up to it gradually. Start by just tearing off the toilet paper ready for you to use.
- Your child could 'practise' wiping a teddy or doll's bottom.
- Try not to say anything that will make your child anxious about what using the loo at school will be like.
- Read stories together such as 'I want my potty' by Tony Ross

We all need help sometimes!



- It can be helpful to talk to your child about what to do when they need some help. Pick a good time when your child is feeling relaxed and at ease.
- Reassure your child that everyone needs help sometimes. You might tell them about something that once happened to you and how you needed some help.
- Find out the names of the teacher and teaching assistant so you can talk to your child about who they can ask help from.
- If you feel you might need more advice on how to support your child with toilet training, there are some really helpful tips on the ERIC website

<https://www.eric.org.uk/potty-training-resources-downloads-and-links>

Lunchtime

Lunch box containers



- Find as many different containers as you can. Choose different shapes, sizes, lids etc. Try to include clip on lids and screw on.
- Have fun opening and closing and sorting. Say which one you find hardest to open/close. Explain that you are going to practise.
- Put different foods, play or real into the containers.
- Order them by which size, shape, easy or hard to open.
- Make a picnic and choose which containers to use, find somewhere nice to eat it!
- There are lots of great ideas for packed lunches here...
<https://www.bristolearlyyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Mix-Up-and-Munch-1-4-Years.pdf>

School dinners



- Find some foods that are easy to cut with a knife and fork such as banana, strawberries, mushrooms, toast and have a go. You could play a game where you throw a dice and then try to cut the food into that many pieces. Have a go at using your fork to eat each piece with. You could take turns at choosing which piece the other person eats!
- After meals encourage your child to carry their own plate and cutlery over to the sink or dishwasher. Let them have a go at scraping any food waste into the recycling bin.
- Encourage your child to drink water with their meal rather than squash or fruit juice. Maybe serve it in a special glass to make it more appealing if they are not used to drinking water.

Packed Lunches



- Make a list together of foods to go in a lunch box. You could have some 'rules' such as one treat, one fruit one savoury etc.
- Make your packed lunch together. Take your time and let your child do the cutting & spreading, don't worry if it's a bit uneven.
- Try a week of eating packed lunches together at lunchtime. Talk about trying to choose the savoury item first and saving the treat or pudding until last.
- Chat about which foods give you lots of energy etc., use the internet to find out more.
- You could find some lunch box recipe ideas online and then make one together.
- Collect food packets and look at the ingredients, talk about which ones are 'every day' foods and which ones are 'sometimes' foods.

Making friends

Teddy Bears picnic



- Find some small figures/animals or cuddly toys and set up a picnic or other imaginary scenario.
- Join in the play and model useful 'social oiling' phrases that the figures/animals might say, eg 'Please can I play?', 'Hello my name is...' etc.
- Use the figures/animals to act out some possible scenarios that might happen at school and encourage your child to join in by using another figure/animal.

Turn taking games



- Now is a good time to try some simple turn taking games with your child. You could use a board game such as snakes & ladders or dominoes. Some games can be quite long so you might need to introduce an adapted shorter version so your child doesn't lose interest.
- Some children don't enjoy board games but would be very happy to turn something like building a marble run, making a Lego model or constructing a train track into a game where you take turns to choose which piece comes next.
- Car journeys are also good opportunities for turn taking games such as 'I spy', 'I went to the shops and I bought'...where each person adds another item to the list.

Playing collaboratively



- Role play/imaginary games can be good opportunities to encourage collaborative play. Make up a story together and take turns to add different ideas. Sometimes you could try suggesting an alternative idea to your child eg they say 'I will be the driver and you can sit on the train' you could say 'I don't think I want to sit on the train, I want to collect the tickets' Playing with an adult is a safe way to practise compromise!
- Planning to build something together also involves collaboration. You could make a list of ideas or draw a picture or just chat about what you might do; the important thing is to model listening to each other's ideas.

Communication

Chatting



- Making time to chat with your child is one of the most important things you can do. Try to find times in the day when you can just chat in a relaxed and informal way together.
- It can help to think of a conversation as being like a game of catch where two people throw a ball back and forth to each other. Try to 'catch' conversational balls your child 'throws' to you and throw it back to them. Don't change the topic of conversation, see how long you can keep your conversation going.
- Remember that giving your child opportunities to express themselves is actually one of the best ways to prepare them for early reading and writing.
- There are lots of great ideas on the Small Talk section of the National Literacy Trust website <https://small-talk.org.uk/3-5-years/>

Top tips for talking



- Try to comment on what your child is doing rather than asking too many questions, e.g. 'I've noticed that...' and then waiting show that you are interested can increase confidence to respond.
- Children often need a lot longer to think than we give them. Allow them time to think before they respond to something you've asked them about.
- Starting with phrases such as 'I wonder what ...' or 'Tell me about...' can encourage your child to feel confident to share their ideas.
- Using puppets and toys to talk can be easier for many children too.
- If you are at all worried about your child's communication do talk to your child's Nursery or Pre-school or contact your local Children's' Centre for advice.

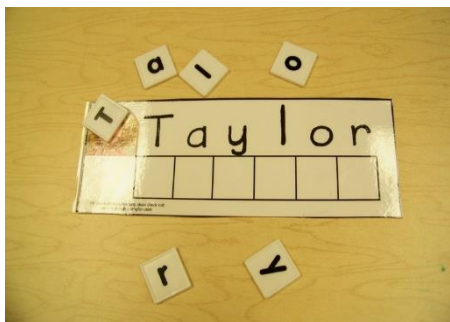
Games



- Old phones can be fun for having a conversation with your child.
- Car journeys are great opportunities for chatting. You could play 'I Spy', take turns to tell each other a made up story, rhyming games with made up words, tell a joke and see who laughs most...
- Choose a number of objects eg plastic farm animals. Take turns at describing one to see if the other can guess which one it is.
- Pretend to be a robot and explain to your child that you can only move if they give you directions.
- Sing songs and simple rhymes, lots of these will help your child with counting and maths as well. Making routines like getting dressed fun with singing can also be helpful as well as fun. There are some ideas here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3FoYftgGp4&list=PLQA1R8PV2ZwaNYz4H5rYQ_wRTWJi38Py&index=1&safe=active

Reading & Writing

Recognising names and symbols



- Point out familiar signs and symbols to children, shop signs, road signs etc. Knowing that a symbol means something is the first step to reading.
- Hide and seek games with names will help your child to become confident in recognising their own name. Start by just using their name on small card and hide around the house for them to find. Next time add in another family member's name or two and then sort them out when you've found them all.
- You could make a simple game like the one in the picture Point out other words that begin with the same letter as their name when you are out and about e.g. Tesco and Taylor!
- Praise and value all children's attempts to write their name, it takes a long time to master it!

Books



- One of the best things you can do for your child is to read with them, try to do every day if you can.
- Some children prefer non-fiction books on a subject that interests them or even a specialist magazine or comic.
- Use natural everyday opportunities to read with your child such as cooking using a recipe book, shopping, following instructions for a DIY project.
- You could choose books that will give you opportunities for talking about subjects that might be particularly relevant for your child such as starting school, making friends, eating lunch etc.
- Borrow books from nursery, libraries or your local children's centre.
- There are lots of good websites with ideas for books you might choose <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/1/100-best-0-5/>

Writing



- Always make sure any mark making is fun.
- Be creative and use different things to make marks with and in, eg sticks and mud, fingers in sand, chalk on pavements.
- Children need to develop gross motor skills as well as fine motor skills to help them with writing. Outdoor physical play is good for gross motor skills e.g. swinging, climbing, pushing & pulling heavy objects.
- Let your child see you write. Use everyday opportunities to model writing e.g. making a shopping list, telephone messages etc. they might like to make their own.
- Encourage your child to make up their own stories and write them down for them. Writing involves ideas and language as well as paper and pens.
- Fine motor skills are developed as children use small construction to build such as Lego, help to peg out the washing, thread cheerio cereal hoops onto a straw etc.

Numbers



- Go on a front door number hunt. Find your favourite number. Can you find door numbers with a 'double' number e.g. 66? Taking a clip board can be fun. Make a simple chart with the numbers 1-5 or higher depending on your child, so that you can tick off every time you find that number.
- When you are shopping ask your child to choose 5 carrots or 2 tins of tomatoes.
- Look out for numbers on car number plates – can they find the number that matches their age?
- Remember it's not just objects that can be counted, you can count how many steps you walk, jumps or claps.
- More ideas can be found here:

<https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Children-and-families-services/Early-Years/More to Maths the counting booklet.pdf>

Shapes



- Go on a shape hunt. You could choose a shape and then see how many you can find on a walk down the road, around your house or in a book. You could have fun taking photos of the things you find.
- Use shape cutters when you are playing with playdough. Name the shape you've cut out and then squash it into a ball and make another one.
- Make shape sandwiches, use cutters to make different shapes or ask your child to see if they can cut their rectangular piece of bread into triangles.

Everyday Maths



- Cooking is a great way of doing some Maths with your child.
- Set the table together, check how many more chairs, or forks or cups you need for a particular meal. You might say – “Oh dear we've only got three spoons. I'd better get two more so there'll be enough for everyone.”
- Put the shopping away with your child. You might say, for example, “The small box goes on the top shelf” or “The bag of rice needs to go behind the other two”.
- Sort the washing and put all the socks into the correct pair. Compare different sizes, using language such as bigger, smaller, smallest etc.
- More ideas can be found here:
<https://family.co/blog/covid-19/helen-williams-maths-at-home/>

