

Preparing children for school



Focus this month – Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge focus -

- Joining in with children's play to model speaking and listening
- Playing their games and following their lead. For example, when the children are playing vets and we play the part of the vet, the receptionist or the animal to model language and stretch their learning through their self-chosen play scenario.
- Taking children on outings – we talk about where we are going and who we might talk to and give the children lots of ideas for language they might use.

Throughout the month we will also work on

Letters and Sounds aspect 3 –

- general sound discrimination –
- body percussion

Maths focus –

- Money; estimating
- Illustrated maths songs – 10 fat sausages; here is the beehive

Preparing for school focus – developing school vocabulary

Dear Parents,

We need to help children develop the **vocabulary** they will need for school where they will need to be able to ask questions in the classroom and show an interest in what is happening around them. They must be able to say their own name and age and talk about their home and family lives.

Activity ideas to promote speech and language and develop vocabulary might include –

- Joining in with children's play to model speaking and listening
- Playing their games and following their lead. For example, when the children are playing vets and we play the part of the vet, the receptionist or the animal to model language and stretch their learning through their self-chosen play scenario.
- Taking children on outings – we talk about where we are going and who we might talk to and give the children lots of ideas for language they might use.

Where possible, we incorporate all areas of learning including literacy, numeracy and technology into focussed learning sessions to help develop children's vocabulary. For example, we use the computer and introduce word / letter / number games to support learning, concentration, fine motor skills, hand eye coordination, awareness of how to use technology etc.

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Linking learning to C & L (communication and language)

What do I need to do?	What can practitioners do?	What can parents do?
Ask and answer questions <i>Communication & language</i>	Ask me lots of open ended questions that challenge me to think about what I am doing	Answer my questions when I show an interest in something – this links to British values – showing respect
Communicate when I need something eg the toilet <i>Communication & language</i>	If children cannot use English to say what they want, we will work to find other ways of supporting them	Take me into social situations and groups so I can learn to talk confidently to other adults
Say my name and how old I am – talk about myself <i>Communication & language</i>	Planning a morning routine to talk about the child, their name and age, the weather outside, the day and month etc	Call me by my name – talk about my age – teach me my address – this links to children knowing their place in their world
Listen to a story without shouting out <i>Communication & language</i>	Encourage my listening skills by taking me on a listening walk and singing and reading with me every day	I need to be able to listen as well as share my views – read to me and then ask me to join in during a second read through
Follow directions from an adult <i>Communication & language</i>	Playing games to help me develop my attention eg Simon Says. Giving me fun instructions to follow eg hunts in the garden.	Helping me develop independence by asking me to do things that will help me around the house eg sweeping up in the garden

Children's communication skills are an important part of being heard in a busy classroom – if they do not have the vocabulary and confidence to say when they need to go to the toilet or when they are feeling ill, they will struggle.

Partly these skills are learned when children know they are listened to... when adults around them give them time to speak and hear what they are saying.

Linking learning to PD (physical development)

What do I need to do?	What can practitioners do?	What can parents do?
Snip with scissors <i>Physical development</i>	Giving me some old cards to cut up and make jigsaws or collages	Buying me some child-safe scissors and letting me practice – reminding me to carry them safely and only cut the paper
Know when it is ok to say 'no' <i>Physical development</i>	Playing 'yes' and 'no' games with different scenarios Teaching children the PANTS rule (NSPCC)	Respecting my child's right to say 'no' – this links to British values – showing respect
Use fine motor skills confidently <i>Physical development</i>	Setting aside time every session to do a puzzle, thread, draw or create something together	Using playdough with me to help me strengthen my hands and arms ready for writing
Use the bathroom and wash my hands independently	Talking to parents about using the toilet and independence skills to support me when I show an interest in toileting	Letting me do things by myself – I need lots of time and practice before I can do things such as putting on my coat and fastening up my shoes. You can help by, for example, buying Velcro.
Move confidently in lots of different ways <i>Physical development</i>	Setting up movement challenges in the garden and encouraging me to learn how to do them	Taking me to the park and soft play

We need to encourage their independence – they will need to do a lot of things by themselves when they go into a busy classroom. We can help by, for example, sending girls in socks rather than tights for PE and making sure they can fasten their own coats.

Linking learning to children's PSED (personal, social and emotional development)

What do I need to do?	What can practitioners do?	What can parents do?
Separate from my parent with confidence <i>PSED</i>	Promoting independence skills – more ideas to follow...	Letting me do things for myself – plan plenty of time so I can keep on trying (this links to the learning characteristics)
Recognise my emotions and how I am feeling <i>PSED</i>	Using emotions books, puppets and posters to help me recognise how I am feeling during the day	Talking to me about how I am feeling and acknowledge when I am happy or sad
Take some responsibility for my actions – recognise cause and effect <i>PSED</i>	Helping me to accept I might have got something wrong by gently explaining things to me	Don't make excuses for my behaviour: I need to learn right and wrong (this links closely to British values – rule of law).
Respond to some boundaries <i>PSED</i>	Finding out what my classroom rules will be and use them in the provision	Be totally consistent when helping me to learn rules so 'no' always means 'no'
Interact with other children <i>PSED</i>	Taking me to groups so I can play with other children	Enrolling me with a childminder or in an nursery / pre-school so I can make friends and learn social awareness

Teachers need children to walk into the classroom ready to learn... they should be happy to wave their parents 'goodbye' and sit down at their desks or on the carpet.

We tell parents that they have to help prepare their children for this by being positive about school and telling stories, reading books and role playing scenarios where the characters are confident and know the day lasts for a certain length of time and then parents or carers will come and collect them.

Linking learning to literacy

What do I need to do?	What can practitioners do?	What can parents do?
Recognise and have a go at writing my name <i>Literacy</i>	Making me a name card to copy when I am writing Use phonics to sound out words	Using upper case first letter and lower case following letters when showing me how to write Making writing fun and multi-sensory using silly soap or sand
Hold a book and have some understanding of the story <i>Literacy</i>	Bringing stories alive with puppets, silly voices, role play, small world toys etc	Reading a couple of books to me every night before I go to bed

Linking learning to maths

What do I need to do?	What can practitioners do?	What can parents do?
Recognise some number shapes <i>Maths</i>	Planning lots of activities with me to teach me my numbers in fun ways	Buy some fridge magnets and talk to me about them
Count numbers in order up to 10 <i>Maths</i>	Singing number songs and rhymes that count up and down	Playing games with me to help me learn my numbers eg counting down for a rocket to take off
Recognise different times of the day <i>Maths</i>	Planning the day with the children so they have an overview of what they will be doing and when	Talking to me about my daily routine using words like 'next', 'before' and 'after'
Know the names of some of the most common shapes <i>Maths</i>	Playing shape games with stickers – making dinosaurs, robots and people with different shapes eg Sally Circle and Steve Square	Taking me on a shape walk and spot shapes in nature

Linking learning to understanding the world

What do I need to do?	What can practitioners do?	What can parents do?
Take an interest in the world around me <i>Understanding the world</i>	Taking me on outings to meet friends and have new experiences	Using magnifying glasses in the garden together – looking for creepy crawlies and interesting shapes or textures.
Show an interest in something new <i>Understanding the world</i>	Planning lots of fun activities for me to learn about from my home life, the local community and further afield	Talking to me about family and friends and involve me in discussions and decision making; asking my opinion and listen to my views.
Use technology <i>Understanding the world</i>	Giving children opportunities to use different types of technology and to explore how computers etc work	Showing your child what you are doing when you use a phone, computer or tablet – put some games onto it which they can play.

Linking learning to expressive art and design

What do I need to do?	What can practitioners do?	What can parents do?
Recognise some of the most common colours <i>Art & design</i>	Playing colour matching games together	Letting me help you peg out the washing and talk to me about the colours of the pegs
Sing and dance to favourite songs and rhymes <i>Art & design</i>	Planning a singing and dancing session every day	Singing with me at bedtime or when I am in the bath
Use craft materials and scissors, glue, stencils etc confidently and safely	Letting me explore with a range of different media	Taking an interest in and develop my enjoyment of artwork
Get involved in role play scenarios to help me learn about my family, local community and the wider world	Providing dressing up clothes and time for children to experiment with being someone else	Taking me on lots of outings so I learn about the world around me – this links to British values – living life in modern Britain.

Literacy focus - Letters and Sounds aspect 3 – general sound discrimination – body

Planning...

1. Becoming aware of parts of the body
2. I am the music man
3. Listen to the beat
4. My body sounds

<p>Body awareness – becoming aware of parts of the body</p> <p>Singing the song 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' with the children to teach them about different parts of their bodies – there is little point teaching body percussion if they cannot recognise what body parts are where. Sing the song...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slowly• Quickly• Missing out different body parts but still touching them	<p>I am the music man</p> <p>Singing - I am the music man I come from down your way, and I can play... what can you play?</p> <p>I play the...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Piano• Guitar• Big bass drum• Violin• Saxophone etc... <p>Watching the song performed on YouTube and join in with some of the verses / actions.</p>
<p>Listening to the beat</p> <p>Playing rhythms using body percussion eg claps, clicks with tongue, taps, stamps, patting knees. Introduce descriptive words –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fast and slow• Skip• High and low• Up and down• March• Gallop etc... <p>Keeping the game simple – introducing more words as the children are used to playing.</p>	<p>My body sounds</p> <p>Making noises with different parts of the body –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sniff• Yawn• Clap• Tap• Pat• Snore etc...

Body percussion – I can...

- Name different parts of my body
- Perform a song with actions
- Perform an action to match an instrument
- Perform actions varying speed as necessary
- Use my voice to sing at different volumes
- Identify and copy a body sound
- Make slow, fast, quiet, loud, long, short sounds
- Move my body in response to an instrument sound

Maths focus -

Money

Make a coin display – gluing one of each coin onto thick card and writing the amount of money the coin represents underneath. Using it for sorting and to allow the children to feel the coins and copy them.

Loose coins can also be used for rubbing.

Taking the children shopping regularly and letting them see us handling money – using money to buy smaller items in local shops. Letting the children handle the money (fully supervised)

Setting up role play shopping games linked to the children's current interests eg florists, greengrocer, toys and games, corner shop etc. Making cards showing what each item in the shop costs and help the children to find the right coins.

Resource – giving the children a till with real and pretend money. Showing the children how to count out the money, comparing the sizes, colours, weights and shapes of the various coins. Putting the money into piles – can they balance the different coins?

Extension – sorting coins into different bowls. Can the children find all the 1p pieces?

Songs – singing '5 currant buns in a bakers shop, round and fat with a cherry on the top. In walked a child with a penny one day, bought a currant bun and ate it right away – yum!' Change the song to buy different things at different prices.

Money problems – challenging the children with some simple money problems which teach them about 1 more and 1 less – adding on – taking away.

Example activity idea – exploring more and less with the children. Counting money and talking about whether we have more or less pennies than each other. Providing paper and pencils so they can record their calculations.

Supporting home learning – asking parents to collect some pennies and 2p pieces with their children at home. When the children bring them in, counting them to see who has brought the most..

Estimating

Children need to learn to guess – they shouldn't be expected to get every answer right!

Putting some toys in a basket – guessing how many – counting to check – praise the guess as well as getting to the right answer... providing paper and pencils so the children can write down their estimate and the correct answer.

Vocabulary – estimate – suggest – guess – close enough – good enough – nearly – about – around – check – more – less – higher - lower

Focus books – 'Mama Panya's Pancakes' (Barefoot Books) – when the little boy invites all the neighbours home for pancakes, Mama Panya tries to estimate how much of each ingredient she needs to buy.

'How many seeds in a pumpkin?' by Margaret McNamara – buying some fruit and guessing how many seeds are inside each. Can the children count? What about pumpkin seeds – are there a lot or a few?

Watch and listen – with the older children to the 'estimate song' on YouTube

Pebbles in a jar – during the week, when children are sitting or listening well, adding a pebble to a big glass jar. At the end of the week counting the pebbles with the children –getting everyone guessing 'how many pebbles do you think are in the jar?' first!

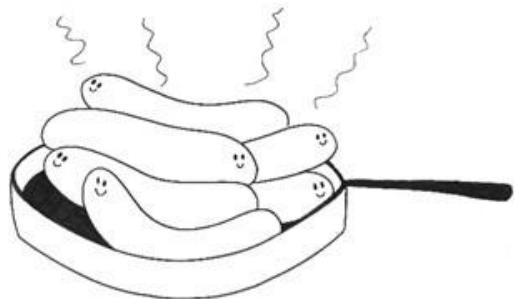
Example activity idea - giving each child a small jar – an empty herb jar is perfect. Asking parents to make sure whatever they choose to put in the jar can be counted! Then asking them to fill it with something at home

– they can choose anything small they want such as hair bobbles, peas, pennies – it's only small so they will need to be creative. When they bring the jar back we will line them up on the shelf and each child will have a go at estimating how many objects are in the jars. When everyone has guessed the amount of objects in the jars, we will tip them out and count together.

Supporting home learning – suggesting parents to talk to children about times when they guess before knowing the correct answer such as when they are working out the shopping bill or guess the number of sweets in the jar at the local fair.

10 fat sausages

10 fat sausages sizzling in the pan
10 fat sausages sizzling in the pan
1 went POP and the other went BANG
There were 8 fat sausages sizzling in the pan
...count down to 0



Final verse –

0 fat sausages sizzling in the pan
The pan got hot and the pan went... BANG!!

Example activity ideas – 10 fat sausages

- Show me 5... show me 10... start singing or chanting the song
- Teaching the children how to high 5 – low 5 – slide 5
- Making sausages out of playdough to go in the role play frying pan
- Encouraging all the children to join in and clap when the sausages go 'bang'
- Making up some more words to describe sounds eg pow, pop, splash, splat!
- Making playdough and squash it into sausage shapes – can you join them together? What shapes can you make?

Observing – do the children understand how to make up words to describe sounds? Link their learning to Letters and Sounds Phase 1 – body percussion and alliteration.

Support home learning – suggesting parents to cook sausages for tea one night and sing the song with their child

References



Here is the beehive
But where are the bees?
Hidden away where nobody sees.
Watch and you'll see them come out of the
hive...
One, two, three, four, five.
Bzzzzzzz... all fly away!

Example activity ideas – here is the beehive

- Showing the children how to hide the bees in their hands
- Making a buzzing sound and run (safely being aware of space) around the garden
- Making other animal / bird sounds with voice – hoot like an owl, growl like a bear, squeak like a mouse, meow like a cat etc
what do the children know about bees? Are they frightened of bees? Most bees do not sting – they want to be left alone to go about their business
- Drawing bees with black and yellow stripes
- Finding out more about honey and try some on toast – have the children ever seen honey comb? See if you can find some in the shops

Observing – do the children know the various sounds animals make?

Support home learning – explaining that we have been playing sound games with the children and encouraging parents to do the same at home.