

Home learning ideas

Services for Young Children - Issue 8

This is a guide to help and support you as parents and carers with providing your children with fun experiences in the home and garden.

We will aim to refresh this on a regular basis to help you keep young minds busy and bodies active.

While we will do our best to verify all the websites which we share, information is changing rapidly so please be aware that it is only accurate at the time of writing.



THESE PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL MAY BE HELPFUL:

- I am too Absolutely Small for School (Charlie and Lola) by Lauren Child
- Starting School by Janet and Allen Ahlberg
- Topsy and Tim Start School by Jean and Gareth Adamson
- Harry and the Dinosaurs Go to School by Ian Whybrow and Adrian Reynolds
- Come to School too, Blue Kangaroo! by Emma Chichester Clark
- Going to School Sticker Book and Starting School Sticker Book - Usborne

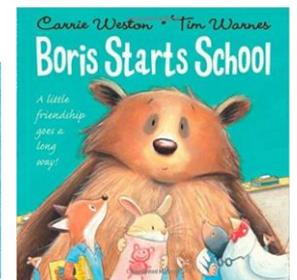
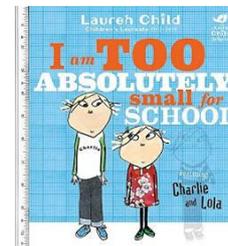
[Pacey: Starting school together booklet.](#)

This is quite a long booklet, but you can just read the top tips stars, such as these...



LISTENING GAMES

Play some fun listening and doing games to help with following instructions. 'Simon says' or 'Can you find?' games are great for this.



There are lots of books to help prepare your child for school.

Your school, pre-school or childminder may have made books with photos of the school or pre-school and the adults who will be there. These are sometimes called social stories

Ready Steady School!

Is your child starting school soon?
Are they ready? Are you ready?



Advice to help you build your child's confidence so that they start school with enthusiasm, curious and ready to learn.

[Ready Steady School!](#) – a leaflet produced by Hampshire with some ideas about how to help the whole family get ready for starting school.



Pet Rock.

Find a pebble, draw on eyes, a nose, and a mouth. Get someone to help write your name and ask if you can leave it by the school gate. See if any other pet rock friends appear!

Play ideas for sitters



Grab a bunch of ribbons, maybe the hanging loops from clothes or ribbons from gifts. Cut them into strips and then hang them from a play gym or a drying rack. Your child will build upper body strength and motor skills as they try to latch onto the ribbons. You could tie some bells to add sound to your child's exploration.

Check the ribbons are not too long. Ensure the ribbon and bells are securely attached.



Curious children.

You can use a tepee, tent or even grab a few blankets and sheets to create a world of discovery right in your living room. For best results, fill the space with all kinds of child-safe toys and household items with unique textures and patterns. Chose items that will fascinate your child and encourage them to explore the objects with all their senses.



Let's dance!

Encourage your child to begin to listen to music, when you sing. Use your child's name, jiggle, and dance around the room with your child to encourage them to tune into the beat. Maybe echo your child's humming/singing so they feel they are leading the singing. For more ideas click on this link [Using instruments effectively with young babies and children](#). YouTube is a great source of songs and rhymes to sing and dance to - [Baby music for playtime](#).

The BBC's Tiny Happy people website has some top tips about why dancing is important for babies - [How dancing helps babies to learn](#).



Do not leave your baby unattended with any of these activities!

Jelly fun

It is ooey, goeey and so much fun for your child! Grab your little one's blocks or other plastic toys, and then pour the jelly mix over them and let it set. Once it is ready, let your child explore the bouncy substance while they dig out their toys from within.



Play ideas for early walkers

Listen to your surroundings

Go outside or open a window and try to be as quiet as you can. What sounds can you hear? Draw a picture of what you think you can hear, use your imagination. Think about recreating some of the sounds or some music that might have some of the sounds in it.

This and other ideas can be found on the following link - [Music at home.](#)



Let's dance!

Why not have a go at creating your own homemade instruments. Here is a link for lots of ideas - [BBC: Bring the noise.](#) Then have a dance as you make music together!



Make a fun game of matching pairs. You will need two of each object. Natural objects are fantastic for this game, such as pinecones, pebbles or sticks, add in a few other smaller toys. Place in a shallow tray and cover with rice (you can colour this if you wish - [Rainbow rice.](#)) You can use torn pieces of paper, pasta or straw.

Making sandwiches

Make sandwiches together for lunch. Let your child choose whether they would like to cut their sandwich into squares, triangles or use a cookie/playdough cutter to make a different sandwich shape. Talk about the shapes. Maybe have a go at making bread dough if you are lucky enough to have any yeast.



Make it even easier by starting with just two matching items and build up sets of pairs.

Play ideas for walkers and explorers



Don't step on the lava

Instead of jumping on your furniture, why not use coloured paper, or old towels on the carpet. Alternatively set this up outside on the grass. This activity will help to develop strong bodies as well as stimulating their imagination! Can you create a path between two places? Or jump to some music? If your child likes sensory experiences, or you would like to develop your child's tolerance, let them have a go bare foot.

Enjoy music together

Encourage your child to enjoy and listen to a range of different music, try to really listen to the music and ask simple questions such as...What sounds can you hear in the music? How does the music make you feel? For lots more ideas about how to encourage children to enjoy music follow this link [BBC: Bring the noise](#). This will be more effective if there isn't any background noise, such as the television.

Can they make up a simple dance routine for you to copy that shows how the different music makes them feel? This can be gentle or energetic! Choose your favourite music.



The government website [Hungry Little Minds](#) has a link to the small talk website. [Small talk](#)

Chat, play, read.



Try listening to one of Andy's raps and have a go at making your own. Draw pictures and make props to help just like Andy. Listen to Andy's raps here - [Cbeebies: Andy's raps](#).

Play ideas for walkers and explorers

To make it easier or harder – try a smaller or larger ball.



When you are out walking collect as many different leaves as you can. Support your child to safely cut the leaves in half to make two pieces the same size. Can you make a symmetrical collage?



Why not use natural materials found on walks or in your garden to create a miniature house.



Kick the cup

Create irresistible targets for your child to aim and kick at. To avoid them kicking too hard, make sure the targets are not too far away. Maybe aim towards a sofa or play outside to avoid any breakages! Try writing numbers or letters on the cups, or stick pictures on instead.

This is a good time to talk to children about the fact that some berries and plants are unsafe to touch and eat.

Natural art pictures

Why not go on a walk and make a collection of natural items such as pebbles, some leaves, fir cones and maybe a few petals. What art can you create with your findings? Use some chalks to add colour and detail.

Make it easier – put the pegs on and count how many. Or say the number and see if your child can find the right number of pegs.



Collect some big leaves and write numbers on them. Ask your child to read the number and add the right number of pegs. This will help them build strong muscles in their hands as well as learn to read numbers.

