

Playing with sounds



What we know

Spoken languages are made up of many different sounds.

Babies play with making the sounds they hear around them from a very young age.

Have fun with your baby making the sounds that will become words that have meaning for others.

Talking playfully with your baby like this helps them to feel safe, secure and loved. Responding to their babbles lets them know you care about what they are saying.

What to do

Mimic the sounds your baby makes and see if you can get some giggles. Make funny faces while making sounds.

Vary the speed, pitch, rhythm and volume.

Clap, stamp and click to the sounds you make.



A book to read

Clippity-Clop
by Pamela Allen



Things to say

'Let's see what sounds we can make:
ooohly ahhhly... shooosh... woosh...
ping, ding, bong!'

'Look at my mouth opening and closing.'
'Watch my tongue wagging and wiggling.'
'The dog is saying arrooof, arrooof!'
'Your shoes are going cerlunk, cerlunk,
cerlunk on those steps!'

'Craaak-click goes the gate!'
'Here comes the vacuum cleaner...
vroooooom!'
'Skreek skreek goes the tap!'
'Here comes the water... awooosh,
splash!'

Mirror, mirror

What we know

When babies are first born, they do not understand that they are separate from their mothers.

Looking in mirrors helps babies build their own identities. Your baby starts to learn they are separate from other members of their family.

Playing 'mirror, mirror' is a fun way for babies to learn the names of important people in their lives.

Learning to respond to their own name and yours gets your baby ready for social interaction. Learning that you will respond when they use your name teaches them security.

What to do

Find a small mirror you can hold easily. Make sure it doesn't have sharp edges – your baby might reach out to touch it.

Start by showing your baby their own face in the mirror.

Now, sit behind your baby. Hold the mirror so they can see *your* face.

When their reflection is in the mirror, say their name. When *your* face is in the mirror, say your name.

Encourage other family and friends to join in.

A book to read

Dear Zoo
A lift the flap book
by Rod Campbell



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Look! There is Mummy!'
'Look! There is (baby's name)!'
'Where is Daddy? There he is!'
'Where is (baby's name)? There she/he is!'



Got it!

What we know

In this activity your baby practises stretching, reaching and grasping with their hands.

This encourages your baby to develop body control and thinking.

Your baby is learning to open their fingers and, eventually, hold and release an object.

Your baby is thinking about whether what is offered is of value or interest to them.

When you spend time with your baby and delight in what they are doing your baby will feel loved. This strengthens the relationship and connection you have.

What to do

Choose a toy, block, ball or a small object from the kitchen like an egg cup or spoon. Make sure it's not too small and it doesn't have sharp edges.

Sit your baby up or prop them up against a cushion, then sit down facing them. Hold the object just out of their reach—not too far because eventually you want them to grab it.

Encourage your baby to lean forward and grasp the object.

When they reach it, use lots of encouraging words or sounds to congratulate them.



A book to read

Ten Little Fingers
by Annie Kubler



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Look! I have a ball!'

'You get the ball... that's right... a little further... well done. Hooray!'

'Mummy will get the ball now.'

'Can Grandma get the ball?'

'Got it!'

Peek-a-boo!

What we know

Many babies and young children enjoy the element of surprise that comes with this hide and seek activity.

Playing peek-a-boo can help a baby or young child understand that although something or someone cannot be seen they still exist.

With practice, some young children will begin to predict when and where the face will reappear.

When you play games that involve disappearing and reappearing your baby is learning about separation and how to manage this. With practice they will feel more secure, knowing that when you have gone, you can come back.

What to do

Sit face to face with your baby and look into their eyes.

Gently place a scarf or a soft piece of cloth over your face. Then slowly remove it and say 'Peek-a-boo!'. Do this a few times.

Now, gently put the scarf over your baby's face and try it again.

Try talking to your baby while your face is covered.



A book to read

Peek-A-Boo
by Janet &
Allan Ahlberg



Things to say

'Peek-a-boo... peek-a-boo!'

(You might have some different words to say in another language.)

'I can't see you... where have you gone? Peek-a-boo!'

'Can you see me? Where have I gone? Peek-a-boo!'

Rock paintings

What we know

Painting helps children develop their imaginations.

Young children see how they can make changes in the world around them.

Water painting gives children a chance to practise using their eyes and hands together.

This can be a quiet and gentle activity that allows children to explore their world in a creative way. It teaches children confidence in 'mark making', which is the first step towards drawing and writing.

What to do

Put some large rocks on the ground outside or on the floor inside (on newspaper or a plastic sheet).

Dip paint brushes in a cup or tub of water and, together, gently paint the rocks with the water.

You can put on some gentle music while you paint, or sing a gentle song.



A book to read

Imagine
by Alison Lester



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Look at the beautiful shapes you are making!'

'Let's try a different shape.'

'Let's try a different rock.'

'Look! The water has dried up! Let's paint some more pictures.'

Dirt drawings

What we know

Playing with natural materials allows children to practise physical skills and use their imaginations.

Making lines and patterns helps very young children learn that they can control what their hands do.

With practice, these marks can be repeated to be early symbols of communication. This is the very beginning of writing.

What to do

Choose a bare patch of dirt in a garden, a park, or in the bush.

Find a long stick and use it to draw shapes in the ground.

Let your child hold the stick with you and make shapes together. Name the different shapes as you draw them in the dirt.

Try making snake shapes, moon shapes and house shapes. Try trees, leaves, rainbows, faces and simple animals.

When you want a clean surface, encourage your child to run over the dirt with their feet to create a blank canvas to start again.



A book to read

Animals: An Indigenous First Discovery Book
by Debbie Austin



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'What shape is this?'
'Look at this moon/snake/house!'
'Look what you've drawn!'
'Time to rub out the shapes and start again.'

Follow your nose



What we know

Smells give a lot of information about the world around us.

Showing children how to smell different things can stimulate this vital human sense.

With practice, children can learn to recognise the smells in the world around them.

When you talk about particular smells, you help to build your child's language. Respond positively to their words and sounds. They will know you care about what they are saying.

What to do

Choose somewhere to walk: a park, garden, or along the street.

If your child can walk, hold their hand; if they can't walk yet, hold your child in your arms facing outward or sit them in their pram/stroller.

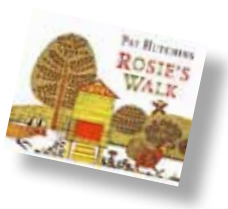
As you walk along, find flowers, leaves, plants, herbs or other things in your local environment that have a scent.

Show your child how to smell something. Describe the smells together and talk about how they make you feel.



A book to read

Rosie's Walk
by Pat Hutchins



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Mmm... that smells nice!'

'This smells like lemons! This smells like dinner!'

'What does this smell like? Do you like this smell?'

'Aahhh! That's nice!'

'Oooh, yuck!'

Water drop

What we know

Playing with water often stimulates, calms or provides a focus for young children.

When you explore water together you are teaching your child ideas from maths and science: heavy/light; float/sink; shallow/deep; full/empty.

You are also teaching your child how to start and finish an activity and increasing their concentration.

Relaxing activities such as these will further develop the bond between you and your child.

What to do

Fill up a large bowl with water. Collect some small rocks, shells, blocks, wooden or plastic toy animals.

Sit down next to the bowl with your child.

Give your child one object at a time to hold and drop in the water.

As you do this, name the object, listen to the sound it makes as your child drops it, then look for it in the water. Does it float or sink? Does it splash?

Encourage your child to pull the objects out of the water and begin again.



A book to read

Who Sank the Boat?
by Pamela Allen



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Here we go... let's drop this one in the water.'
'Splash! Kerplop!'
'Look! This one floats!'
'This one is sinking!'

Looking for mini beasts

What we know

Nature has many ways for children to learn how the world works.

The insects and creatures of the garden often appeal to young children.

Looking at how these creatures move, eat, hide or survive can help to stimulate your child's curiosity through questions, observations, comments and other ways of expressing themselves.

Exploring the creatures that live around you is a great way for your child to learn about the environment.

What to do

Explore in a garden, park or balcony. Look for insects and talk with your child about where these 'mini-beasts' live and what they eat.

Talk together about the size and shape of insects such as ants, caterpillars, snails and beetles. This encourages your child to learn to categorise things by size, colour, type and shape — maths!

You can collect an insect in a bug catcher but make sure you let it go again.

Act out the wiggling worm, the sliding snail and the flapping butterfly.



A book to read

Miss Spider's Tea Party
by David Kirk



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

- 'What do you think we will find?'
- 'Where can we find some small insects in the garden/ park/ balcony?'
- 'Careful! We must be very careful not to hurt them.'
- 'Will we find a worm? What do worms do?'
- 'Will we find a grasshopper or a butterfly?'
- 'Are there any ants on our path?'

Bubbles

What we know

Many children are delighted by seeing bubbles, trying to catch, touch or hold them.

Blowing bubbles comes from well-controlled breathing, and can be difficult for young children to do themselves. Some might like to try. This is a great way for them to develop an understanding of their breathing.

Playing with bubbles can help children begin to understand that their actions will result in something.

When you play with your child they are learning that they are loved and important.

What to do

Make or buy some bubble mixture and blow some bubbles together.

Talk about their shape and what the bubbles feel like when you touch and pop them.

Talk together about what is in the bubble – air.

Count the bubbles together.

Give your child a turn at blowing the bubbles.



A book to read

Bubble Trouble
by Polly Dunbar



Things to say

'Let's blow some BIG bubbles!'
'Look, they are floating away, high into the sky!'
'Can you pop them with your feet? What does that feel like?'
'Pop! Splat! Where did they go?'
'Well done – all gone!'

Make your own bubbles

Gently mix:
1/3 cup sugar
3 cups warm water
1 cup dishwashing liquid
1/4 cup glycerin

Try adding a couple of drops of food colouring to make coloured bubbles.

Fingers, hands and toes



What we know

Children are often curious about their bodies.

Learning to name different body parts helps children understand how their bodies work.

Finding and practising different ways to move parts of their bodies helps children to build confidence in and coordination of body movement.

Children enjoy having fun with their parents and carers. Spending time together like this provides an opportunity for children to feel safe, secure and loved and to build positive relationships with you and other family members.

What to do

Find somewhere comfortable to sit with your child, inside or outside. Wiggle your fingers and then ask your child to wiggle theirs. Now do some wiggling with your toes.

Next, nod your head, make circles with your elbows, shake your legs and stomp your feet. Work through different parts of the body, wiggling, shaking and stomping.

Move from sitting, to standing, and lying on the floor.

A book to read

Hand, Hand, Fingers, Thumb
by Eric Gurney



Things to say

'I'm going to wriggle my fingers, just my fingers, can you do it too?'
'I'm going to shake my hands, just my hands, can you do it too?'
'I'm going to stomp my feet, just my feet, can you do it too?'
'How many fingers do you have? Hands? Toes? Feet? Let's count!'
'Do your fingers like dancing? Do your toes?'
'What can your hands do?'
'What can your fingers make?'

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Build a tower

What we know

Young children like to build up and knock down towers.

In building activities your child learns about shapes and balance, and plays with ideas of stability and wobbliness.

Children use their imaginations when they create and recreate their ideas.

Activities such as these will further develop the bond between you and your child.

What to do

Collect empty boxes, tubes or blocks of different shapes and sizes. Help your child build a tower.

Call it a castle/airport/building/control tower and encourage your child to add different toys. It could be a waterfall or a rocket ship.

Talk with your child about what they have made.

When it is time to pack their creation up your child may enjoy pushing it over.



A book to read

Islands in my Garden
by Jim Howes



Things to say

'Look at these things! Let's put them all together and see what we can make.'

'What shall we build? How shall we start?'

'What else do we need to add to this building/rocket/tower/castle?'

'Do you think this big box will balance on this little box?'

Sensory walk

What we know

Walking with your child through the neighbourhood and your home can help to stimulate their senses.

Talking with children about what they hear, smell, feel, taste and see builds on their understanding of the world around them.

You are building your child's relationship with you and giving them the experience of how their environment can affect them.

What to do

Go for a walk in your neighbourhood or through your house and talk about what you hear, smell, feel, (taste) and see.

Listen to different sounds: cars, buses, trains, silence, people, birds, insects, wind in the trees.

Stop to smell leaves and flowers or soap, onions, herbs and spices. Notice how different the air smells in different places.

Try walking barefoot on the grass and footpath; the carpet and doormat. Talk about how different they feel.

Look high. Look low. Look in bright places. Look in dark places. Notice shadows and movement.



A book to read

Diary of a Wombat
by Jackie French



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Let's go for a walk – what can we see?'

'What can we find to touch? Soft grass under our feet? Crunchy leaves?'

'What can we find to smell? A flower or gum leaf?'

'What can we find to hear? Our footsteps on the pavement? A noisy car?'

Food Shopping

What we know

Including your child in regular tasks helps to build their sense of belonging to the family group.

Children's self-esteem is supported when they are able to have a way of contributing to the work of the family.

Children can begin to have some responsibility for tasks or actions that have an impact on themselves and others.

Talking about what you do together will increase your child's ability to listen to others, understand simple instructions and answers questions.

What to do

Make a shopping list with your child. A simple activity like this teaches your child how to start and finish tasks.

Help your child to name and select items from the market/shop or from your garden.

When you come home, name and sort your groceries on the table together.

Let your child put the lids on and take them off jars and containers when putting the food away.

Make a pretend supermarket with empty boxes and containers for your child to play with.

A book to read

Wombat Stew
by Marcia K Vaughan



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Hmmm... what do we need to get today?'
'What's this? What kind is it? What colour is it?'
'Time to unpack the shopping. Where do these go?'
'Can you put the fruit in a bowl?'
'How many apples did we buy?'
'What should we put in the fridge?'



Making dinner

What we know

Most young children like to be involved in real jobs around the home. Including children in regular tasks is a good way to teach them about helping and builds their sense of belonging to the family group.

When you prepare meals together you are sharing skills and knowledge with your child.

This is a great way to pass on family traditions, values and positive attitudes to food and shared mealtimes.

Talking with your child about the food, the processes and the measurements you are using adds to their language and mathematical knowledge.

What to do

Let your child help as you prepare dinner. Find small jobs for your child to do so they feel like they are contributing.

Let your child help to measure and mix the food. Talk together about the quantities and processes.

Show pictures in a cookbook.

If you are making something that you used to eat when you were young, talk about how you used to eat the same meal as a child.

Encourage your child to cook with other family members.



A book to read

Possum Magic
by Mem Fox



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Would you like to help me make dinner?' 'What shall we cook?'
'Here's what we're going to do...'
'Here is a job for you to do!'
'Can you please help me do this?'
'Let's mix, mix, mix. Stir, stir, stir!'
Yum! That smells delicious!'

Time to relax

What we know

Young children can experience stress, and benefit from finding ways to manage these times.

Learning to relax is an important way to manage stressful situations. Children can learn to calm themselves by slowing down, being still and breathing deeply.

Learning to become quiet in their body and their mind can be difficult for young children, and so it helps to guide them through the steps.

Children are particularly responsive to their carers' emotions so when you take time to relax with your child, they will respond to this in a positive way.

What to do

Sit or lie down with your child.
Play some relaxing music to encourage quiet time together.

While the music is playing, gently speak to your child about their favourite flowers, beach or quiet space.

Use your voice to guide them to think about the forest, outer space or the waves lapping on the sand.

At first, do this for a few minutes. Next time you can extend the experience. With practice, your child will learn the best way for them to become relaxed. This can work well in the long term to teach children to calm themselves down, stop and think – and we all know what an important skill that is.



A book to read

Whoever You Are
by Mem Fox



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Listen to the quiet music and shut your eyes.'

'Imagine you are in a forest, at the beach or floating in space.'

'Let's pretend we can see a forest and we are going for a walk.'

'What would we see in the forest?'

Let's pretend

What we know

Some children like to pretend to be someone different.

Pretending to be someone or something else can help your child understand the people, the creatures or animals, or the relationships they see around them.

Pretending can be a way of trying new ways of being. As well as having fun, children can explore who they are, the people they know and the people they come across.

Children can imagine what it is like to be different, can become more confident in themselves and can find new ways to express themselves.

What to do

Find a box and fill it with dress-ups. They might be from your own cupboard or from family and friends. Include hats, gloves, bags, scarves and anything else you can think of.

Keep the box handy and encourage children to dress-up when they play.

Add pieces of material that can become a cape, a skirt or a bed on the floor.

Include men's and women's clothes; children like to explore what others wear. They might create new and imaginative characters.

Look at books with pictures of people from different cultures and talk about what they are wearing.



A book to read

Children Just Like Me
by Barnabas and
Anabel Kindersley



Things to say

'Look! Here is an old hat, a scarf, some gloves, a shirt, some beads and a pair of sunglasses!'

'Let's put them on and pretend to be someone else.'

'Who are you in that hat? Are you Grandma?'

'What are you now? Are you an elephant? Giant? Dinosaur? Bus driver? Teacher? Doctor? Mummy? Daddy?'

'Look! A little bunny rabbit with long white ears!'

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Collecting and sorting



What we know

Young children enjoy collecting and carrying different objects.

Teaching your child to sort objects according to shape, colour, texture and size is an early maths game.

Handling objects from a range of places stimulates your child's language development and knowledge of the world around them.

When you ask your child to share time with you, you are teaching them that you value them.

What to do

Go outside together and collect some fallen leaves, sticks, stones, seedpods, shells – whatever you can find. You can also walk around the house and collect some things.

Use some empty containers (bowls, tubs or boxes) to sort the objects into groups such as rough, smooth, wood, plastic or green. Encourage your child to notice the similarities and differences.

Empty the containers and start again using different groups.



A book to read

One Sunday
by Libby Gleeson



Things to say

'Let's go outside for a walk and collect some things.'
'Let's sort them into groups that are the same and different.'
'Look, these are all round shapes and these are all green!'
'Where do these go?'
'What other groups do you think we can make?'

Chalk drawings

What we know

When children are interested in drawing and writing they learn to express their own ideas in a creative way.

Your child develops drawing and writing skills through practice using many different tools.

Drawing with coloured chalk is a great way for your child to experiment with making deliberate markings. It encourages them to use their imagination and gain confidence in drawing.

When you spend time with your child doing activities like this you are developing your relationship. Through relationships, children discover who they are and learn to understand others.

What to do

Together, use chalk to draw on a paved area, pathway or pavement.

Explore using different colours and creating different lines and shapes. This is a great way for your child to experiment with making deliberate markings. This is the very start of learning how to write.

Talk about the lines and shapes and what they could represent.

Draw lots of scribbles.

A book to read

Lulama's Magic Blanket
by Mari Grobler



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6



Things to say

'Let's go outside and make some pictures on the ground!'

'What colours shall we use?'

'We can make big and small pictures!'

'Let's draw some lines... and now some circles!'

'You draw a picture, I'll draw one too.'

'What will happen to our chalk drawings when it rains?'

Making body shapes



What we know

Children's growing awareness and control of their bodies can be guided into dance and creative movement.

Your child will often enjoy the challenge of finding more complicated ways to move and manage their body.

With encouragement and practice, your child's body will become stronger, more flexible and more mobile.

Combining movement and music can add an visual or dramatic element to this activity.

What to do

Make some shapes with your body and ask your child if they can do the same: small, tall, wide, low, spiky, straight, curved.

Make different shapes while holding hands with your child.

See what shapes you can make while touching feet, touching noses and touching elbows.

Take it in turns to name an object and make your body into the object: a mountain, a tree, a wall, a chair, a car, a rabbit.

Play some music that you enjoy while you do this. Using music allows your child to connect the body with music.



A book to read

Giraffes Can't Dance
by Giles Anrae



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'What shapes can we make with our bodies? Let's try a circle!'
'If we join our bodies together we can make different shapes.'
'Can you make your body tall? Small? Wide? Curvy?'
'Let's make a rabbit!' 'A dog!' 'A mountain!' 'A chair!'
'Let's touch noses. What sort of shape are we making now?'

Kitchen garden

What we know

Living life can be a great experience in discovering how and why things happen.

In the world of nature, there are many ways of exploring the how and why.

Growing food is one way to find out about how plants grow, what plants can give us (food, beauty, shelter), what plants need for growth, and how we can sustain our environment.

When you spend time like this with your child you make them feel special. This will build their confidence in themselves and strengthens your relationship.

What to do

With your child, find a place to grow things: cherry tomatoes, radishes, strawberries, potatoes, parsley.

You can plant seeds or seedlings in empty strawberry punnets, pots or in the ground. Water them together and watch them grow.

Talk about the growth you see. Talk about shoots, roots and soil. There are endless things to talk about in the garden.



A book to read

The Gigantic Turnip
by Aleksei Tolstoy



Things to say

What shall we grow?'

'What do the plants need? How will we care for them?'

'How tall do you think this will grow?'

'What will this flower turn into? A strawberry?!'

'Will this vegetable grow under the ground or on a bush?'

'Is this ready to eat yet? Can we pick it? No, not yet!'

Telling stories



What we know

Stories are all around us to share with each other.

Some stories are in books, some are on paper, some are in our heads and hearts. We can hear or tell them, read or listen to them, and we remember them.

Stories connect us to other people, places or times; stories can be true or made up.

Stories can change how we feel, or think, and we can make and change our own stories.

Children can create stories too. Sharing stories strengthens the connection between you and your child.

What to do

Snuggle up together and tell a story from your family history: a wedding, a birth, what you did when you were little or where your parents lived as children.

Create stories together about an event in your child's life: a birthday, a holiday, when they got their first pet. Or make up a story about a pretend character.

Write down the stories you have created to make 'books'. Illustrate them using collage and drawings and photographs.

Keep the books you have made on your bookshelf and read them together.



A book to read

Beware of the Storybook Wolves
by Lauren Child



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Let me tell you a story about...'

'Do you remember when...?'

'Let's create a story. What will it be about?'

'What characters shall we have in our story? Who shall we choose?'

'What will the setting be – where does our story happen?'

'What happens? What happens next?'

Writing a letter

What we know

When we see the marks a child makes in drawing or writing, we often give a response – maybe a word, a hug or a smile.

Your child learns that marks like this can mean something to another person.

Children can see how our writing or drawings – a shopping list, a telephone message or a greeting card – can be a way to pass on information.

Understanding that writing is another way to communicate with family, friends and the community is an important part of children establishing a sense of belonging.

What to do

Find out which family member or friend your child would like to send a letter to.

If your child wants to tell you what to put in the letter, write down the words.

Ask your child to add to the letter: a scribble, a drawing, their name.

Address the letter and talk to your child about the street name and house number. Talk about stamps and what they are for.

Post the letter together. Talk about where it will go and who will take it there.

When you receive a response to the letter let your child open it. You can read it aloud.



A book to read

The Secret Birthday Message
by Eric Carle



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Let's write a letter. Who will we write to?'

'Where are our pencils and paper?'

'What will we say in our letter?'

'Would you like to write or draw something in our letter?'

'When we are finished let's go for a walk to put our letter into the letter box.'

What number is that?

What we know

Your child will want to find out how to use numbers.

Number knowledge helps us to make good choices for ourselves and our families every day.

Important number knowledge includes 'too much', 'too many', 'not enough', 'too big/small', 'one each' as well as your age, telephone number or address.

Knowing about numbers helps us to have a deeper understanding of how the world works.

When you spend time talking with your child like this you are developing your relationship. Through relationships, children discover who they are and learn to understand others and their world.

What to do

Talk about numbers in your day-to-day routines to teach your child that numbers have meaning.

Go for a walk with your child and look at house numbers. Start with your own. Point out how they get bigger or smaller as you walk down the street.

Look at the numbers on car number plates. Look at the prices on items in shops.

When cooking, talk about how many cups, items or spoonfuls you need to make the food.

Talk about the ages of the people in your family.

Count the fruit in the bowl.

Sing any counting songs you know together.

A book to read

Bim Bam Boom
by Margaret Wild



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'Let's go for a walk and see if we can find any numbers.'

'What numbers can you see? Can you see an eight? A four? A twenty-four?'

'How many legs does that dog have?'

'Let's measure out three cups of flour.'

'We need two onions.'

'Let's count these apples.'

'How old are you? How many candles were on your cake?'



Looking for words

What we know

Written symbols, signs and information guide our lives: street signs, shopping, advertising and instructions.

Learning to make sense of written symbols is a very complicated process for the brain.

Children learn about the importance of written symbols (letters, characters, numbers) from their families and other people important in their lives.

Your child can begin to make sense of written symbols through play, practice and purpose.

Spending time with your child shows them that you value and love them. When children feel safe and secure they are more receptive to learning new things.

What to do

As you go about your day, point out to your child the different words you see and talk about their meaning. Look for signs and shop names in your neighbourhood.

Write labels and place them in your child's room: 'bed', 'lamp', 'drawers', 'teddy's chair'.

Look for large-print words in any old magazines and newspapers you have. Cut them out and help your child paste them into a 'word book'.

Look in picture books for words your child knows and show them some new words.

Make signs using large letters and attach them to everyday objects and furniture.

Make signs to identify each family member's room.

A book to read

ABC of Things
by Helen Oxenbury



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'That sign tells us the name of the street we live in.'

'Can you see that sign over there? Let's go and read it. What does it tell us?'

'Can you see the writing on that STOP sign?'

'Can we find words that begin with the same letter as your name in the newspaper?'



Kitchen orchestra

What we know

Music is a language like no other, and making music with others is fun.

Music is in the sounds all around us, everyday.

When your child explores how they can make sounds with 'instruments from life' they begin to learn a new way to communicate with others.

Practising music-making (hearing, listening, singing and playing) opens a window for a fresh connection with family, community and the world.

What to do

Collect together some safe kitchen utensils. Try pots and pans, plastic tubs and containers, spoons, empty plastic bottles.

With your child, hold each kitchen utensil and experiment with all the different sounds each 'instrument' can make.

Try an eggbeater going fast, shaking a half-full bottle of water or scrunching a chip packet.

Try soft and loud sounds.

Make shakers by filling containers with dried pasta, peas, lentils or rice. Make sure the lids are secure!

Explore stopping and starting.

Gather friends together to make an orchestra and dance to the music.

A book to read

Ernie Dances to the Didgeridoo
by Alison Lester



ISBN 978-0-9871210-6-6

Things to say

'What happens if we shake this container with rice in it?'
'Let's bang this saucepan with the wooden spoon really fast!'
'What else can we find in the kitchen to make music with?'
'Let's bang these two saucepan lids together. Ready, set, GO!'

