



# My book of big learning: Now I'm Getting Bigger



In partnership with:



**Tameside**  
Integrated Care Partnership



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# welcome to grow

Grow is here to help and support you with your journey from pregnancy to your child starting school, offering the most up-to-date advice for families in Tameside from services such as Health Visitors, Family Hubs and Midwives.

For more information about local services and support, including what's available at your local Family Hubs visit [www.gotogrowtameside.co.uk](http://www.gotogrowtameside.co.uk)



@growintameside

## Welcome to the Grow learning activity booklet

Do you know your child is watching everything you do and say? They're learning all the time. Everyday conversation of what you can see around you, helping put the shopping in a basket or hanging up washing are all learning opportunities if you make them fun and involve your child.

Early years of life is an exciting time where close and loving relationships are everything – learning to talk and listen, using your body, developing

emotions, and expressing yourself as well as developing an understanding of the world around you.

This booklet contains suggestions for fun, easy to do, age appropriate learning activities. All activities are for children to share with parents supervising\*, guiding and nurturing curiosity. There are 3 types of activities **physical development, communication and language, personal, social and emotional development.**

\* Please ensure you consider any potential for allergic reactions to handling materials or substances and all activities should be closely supervised.



# cloudy dough

## Here's how to do it

For an older toddler, mix corn flour and hair conditioner or vegetable oil until you have the required texture – add food colouring to provide colour. With messy activities you could use an old shower curtain or plastic table cloth to protect your furniture and floor.

## Extending the fun

Add tools such as spoons or rolling pins. Use lots of language to describe how it feels such as wet, cold, squishy or smooth.

## Your child is learning...

...to develop their early motor skills using their fingers, wrists, arms and shoulders.

# rock star!

## Here's how to do it

Using a range of pots and pans and wooden or metal spoons – let your child express themselves making their own music. Play along with them pretending you are at a rock concert and your child is the star of the show. Follow your child's leads and imitate the sounds they are making.

## Extending the fun

Try and bang the drum to the beat of the music. Try slowing down and speeding up, pausing, starting and stopping.

## Your child is learning...

...the beat, about rhythm, volume, starting and stopping and the joy of music.



# hidden treasures

## Here's how to do it

In a box, bury a few small objects in sand, soil or shredded paper. Encourage your toddler to uncover the treasure using different tools such as spoons, spades and a colander for sieving.

## Extending the fun

Talk about your play and what you are doing. What different treasures can you find? Perhaps you could use old jewellery to be your hidden treasure?

## Your child is learning...

...language, anticipation and excitement through this sensory experience.



# create a cosy book area

## Here's how to do it

Sharing a book where there's less distraction is a great activity to encourage lots of communication skills. Can you re-tell the stories, how about using teddies as the characters?

## Extending the fun

Visit the library to borrow free books. How about making a cosy book area with a box of books. You could make a den using old bed sheets, big umbrellas, tarpaulin or anything in your house that might be suitable. Add lots of cushions and teddies and get cosy with a book.

## Your child is learning...

...to listen, understand, point and make sounds that become words. They will tune into the expression of your voice and the rhythm of the text during this special time together.



# getting creative

## Here's how to do it

Use torn paper from an old magazine and get sticking with some glue to create a colourful collage. As your child gets older you could shred up some newspaper, make gloop from mixing flour and adding water and cover old boxes, tubs and plastic bottles, gluing them together to create a model.

## Extending the fun

How about adding wool, string or paint? Don't forget to allow your child to lead the way in creating their own masterpiece. Create your own alongside them.

## Your child is learning...

...how to handle equipment, problem solving and making choices.



# mark making



## Here's how to do it

Explore mark making with chalk, crayons, paints or pens. Draw alongside your child describing what you're doing. Can they make marks too? Children will explore mark making with both hands.

## Extending the fun

Use chinks on a patio or even water and a brush on a fence to mark make outside. The back of an old wall paper roll allows for really big artwork.

## Your child is learning...

...muscles development in their arms, hands and fingers – these are the skills they'll need for early writing.

# going on a hunt

## Here's how to do it

Hide a familiar toy around your home and garden and encourage your child to look for it. Practice language such as – look high, low, in there, underneath, on top of etc.

## Extending the fun

Take turns to hide or seek the toy.

## Your child is learning...

...listening, instructions, language, exploring, excitement of finding and the joy of playing together.



# what's in the bag?

## Here's how to do it

Put some items from around the house into a canvas, paper or gift bag. Try to find different shapes and textures such as soap, pegs, sponges, spoons or objects that make a sound. Ask your child to put their hand in the bag and describe the object – how does it feel, is it hard or soft, rough or smooth, warm or cold. Can they guess what it might be?

## Extending the fun

Play again and again with different objects, involve the whole family in describing and guessing.

## Your child is learning...

...to use senses to explore objects, new words and the fun of playing together.





# natural resources hunt and collage



## Here's how to do it

Go on a walk to find natural resources, putting them in a container to take home. Find different items such as flowers, twigs, sticks, grass etc. Create a collage with the resource at home. Talk about what you've found.

## Extending the fun

How many different colours could you find? Describe the shape of each item and how they feel. What do they like about each item?

## Your child is learning...

...that the outdoors is fun to explore with opportunities for problem solving, making choices, developing language and being creative with what you find.



# playdough



## Here's how to do it

To make your own dough mix 2 cups of plain flour, 1 cup of salt, 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, 1 cup of cold water and 2 drops of food colouring kneading it together. Can you find some household objects that will print patterns into the playdough e.g. a sieve or potato masher?

## Extending the fun

How about adding objects from the outdoors such as sticks or feathers to make decorations or models you can keep? Practice using utensils to help develop fine motor skills. Copy and talk about what your child is doing – squash, roll, squeeze, flatten and ball!

## Your child is learning...

...sensory exploration of texture and use of fine motor skills encouraging your child to gain strength in the tiny muscles in their hands as they squeeze, pinch and poke the mixture.

# magic potions

## Here's how to do it

Can you make some magic potions together – mix water, food colouring, glitter in a bowl. Talk about what you're doing, how do you think they'll look, what magic might they do?

## Extending the fun

Explore the garden to add flowers, herbs or leaves.

## Your child is learning...

...to develop their senses, exploring nature, what happens when you mix things together?



# washing windows

## Here's how to do it

Get a washing up bowl of warm soapy water and place outside a patio door or window and allow your child to use sponges, cloths and squeegees. Use the opportunity to introduce new words such as 'Swish', 'Drip Drop', 'Pitter Patter'.

## Extending the fun

Find other outdoor objects to clean – how about the car, bikes or toys? Can they make patterns in the bubbles with their fingers? Use a paintbrush to make water marks on paths or fences.



## Your child is learning...

...to develop early writing skills, understanding of how water moves and handling objects.

# obstacle course



## Here's how to do it

Scatter cushions and blankets and encourage your child to climb over, step on or crawl under (safely!) This is a great opportunity to develop gross motor skills.

## Extending the fun

Use cushions as stepping stones. Can you get across a space without touching the floor?

## Your child is learning...

...how to move their bodies and balance.

# make a sensory bottle



## Here's how to do it

Use old plastic bottles, add water, glitter and cooking oil or paint to make a sensory bottle. Seal the lid with some tape. What happens when you shake the liquid?

## Extending the fun

Add rice or lentils to plastic bottles – these can be used as shakers when singing nursery rhymes.

## Your child is learning...

...about sounds, colours and how materials move.

# Follow the line

## Here's how to do it

Use some coloured tape or chalk to mark some wiggly lines, zig zags or spirals on the floor. Can you walk along the lines?

## Extending the fun

Draw stepping stones to jump across, hop or jump along the line. How about having some running, hopping or jumping races?

## Your child is learning...

...practicing skills, balance and co-ordination, following instructions such as 'ready, steady, go'



# copy cat

## Here's how to do it

What actions can you do that your child could copy – pretend to be a plane, gallop like a horse, tip toe round the house, crawl along the floor. You could sit face to face and be a mirror, create gestures and expressions to copy.

## Extending the fun

Allow your child to take the lead and copy their actions. Can you guess what they are pretending to be?

## Your child is learning...

...from what you do and copying you. By practicing funny faces you develop the muscles for speaking.



# jumping practice



## Here's how to do it

This is a great age for your child to learn to jump. Hold your child's hands and practice jumping together on the flat surface.

## Extending the fun

When they're able to confidently jump on a flat surface, hold their hands whilst they learn how to jump off a low step, then over something small like a toy car. What about a splash into a muddy puddle?

## Your child is learning...

...body co-ordination and balance.

# sock puppets



## Here's how to do it

Find a clean old sock – draw on eyes or even sew button eyes to make a puppet. Create a character that can talk to your child. Using two puppets, encourage your child to make the puppets talk to each other, you could even use silly voices.

## Extending the fun

Can you recreate a familiar story with the puppets or make up your own? Use the puppets to talk about feelings.

## Your child is learning...

...to use their imagination, practicing their language, expressing emotion and taking turns to talk in conversation.

# tea party



## Here's how to do it

Sit down with your child and use plastic cutlery, plates and cups and have a pretend tea party. This is a really great time to have lots of conversation about the pretend food you're eating and practice fine motor skills.

## Extending the fun

You can invite the teddies and dolls too! Have a snack time or real tea party with the whole family.

## Your child is learning...

...copying through role playing, sharing, talking and caring for others.

# mini disco



## Here's how to do it

Turn down the lights and have a dance to your favourite music. Can you copy dance moves or stamp and clap to the beat?

## Extending the fun

Explore holding torches or glow sticks. Can you use shakers that you have made?

## Your child is learning...

...how to move their body in different ways, responding to the music and expressing themselves. Recognising familiar phrases in the music.





# shadow puppets

## Here's how to do it

On a sunny day notice your shadows when you're outside. When you're inside you can shine a light behind you to explore making shadow puppets, describe the shadow – what's it doing?

## Extending the fun

Create a mini projector – cover an old toilet tube end with cling film. Stick a shape or sticker on the cling film and shine a light through the toilet tube – you have your own home made projector. What shapes will you add?

## Your child is learning...

...about light, shadows and shapes. Don't forget to talk about what you're doing.





# pouring & scooping

## Here's how to do it

Children love to pour and scoop – you can provide sand or water for this activity along with different sized containers.

## Your child is learning...

...the meaning of full and empty and how their movements control what is happening.

## Extending the fun

Talk to your child about how full or empty the containers are. What about adding in ladles, spoons and measuring jugs?

# counting & grouping

## Here's how to do it

Give your child groups of identical items – for examples two trains, two balls and two blocks. Mix them up and help your child to re group them. Encourage your child to count each group and also how many altogether.

## Extending the fun

Use a variety of different objects and choose a category to sort them into such as colour, shape or size. Discuss what you're doing.

## Your child is learning

...to recognise what's the same and what's different. You can practice early counting too.



communication  
and language

# storytelling

## Here's how to do it

Get all cosy and make up a story or re-tell the events of the day – you could use photos on your phone to remember what you've done together. Be sure to use exaggerated words, facial expressions and lots of body movement. Point at the pictures and talk about them.

## Your child is learning...

...to develop memory and communication skills. This activity also makes them feel valued.

## Extending the fun

Children love to hear about what they've been doing. Can your child join in with the storytelling?



communication  
and language

# playing with blocks



## Here's how to do it

Buildings come in all shapes and sizes, what can you build together – what can be balanced? Young children love to knock towers down. Blocks and buildings can also be made using empty cartons or boxes.

## Extending the fun

Build more complex structures, can you build 2 the same? How tall can you make a tower before it falls down? Remember to count the blocks.

## Your child is learning...

...about problem solving, balance, co-ordination, and finding out how their movements control what is happening.

# gloop

## Here's how to do it

Mix cornflour and water until you get a gloop mixture and put in a bowl or onto a tray – it's great for young children to explore the texture and make marks with their fingers. Gloop can dry skin – apply cream after play as necessary.

## Extending the fun

Add some utensils or add colour, a drop of peppermint oil, lavender or orange to encourage different senses.

## Your child is learning...

...to use their sense of touch, smell and sight. Physically they are developing large and small muscle control.



# shape sorters

## Here's how to do it

Help your child to recognise shapes. Cut shapes out of a cardboard box and see what household objects will go through.

## Extending the fun

Start with simple shapes; square, circle and triangle. Move onto more interesting shapes like rectangle, stars, hexagons, and pentagons etc. Your child may need help in matching the shapes and putting them in the sorter at this age.

## Your child is learning...

...problem solving and shape recognition.



