Family Booklet



Play Matters!

SEND Occupational Therapy Team & Speech and Language Therapy Team

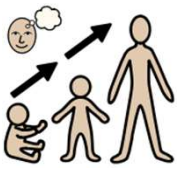
This workbook has been created by the SEND Therapy Team as a resource for families that have attended the Play Matters training.
Thank you for attending.



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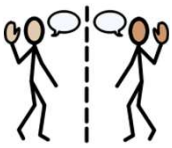
Building Skills Through Play

When we think about play, there are lots of things we can do to support children in building skills



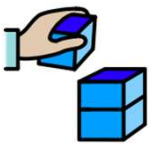
Think about their developmental stage

Children develop at different stages and ages; tailor your activities to the development stage they are at now and not their chronological age. Try and find the level where your child can still achieve and feel confident



Follow your child's lead

Children are more likely to play for longer and to let you be close to them when they are playing if you show an interest in what they are doing and join in. There is no wrong way to play!



Model simple actions

Actions such as rolling, stacking or mixing – encourage them to copy you to learn



Offer both structured and unstructured play

- **Structured play** is a guided activity, such as Simon Says or games with instructions which are often adult-led. They help to build turn-taking and shared play skills
- **Unstructured play**, such as play dough or Lego, is more child led play with fewer rules. It encourages exploration, creativity, and imagination



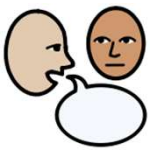


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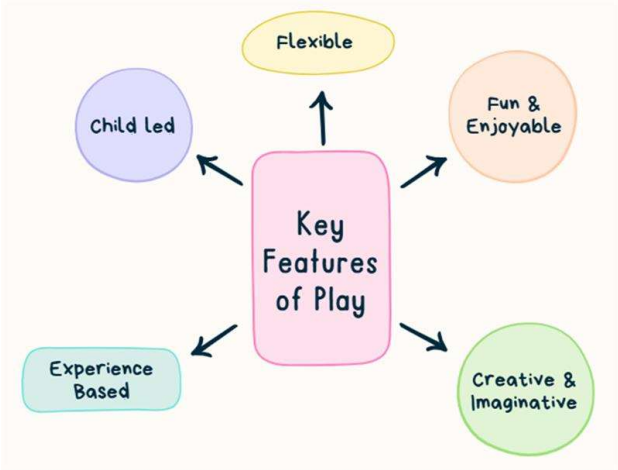
Create a safe, accessible play space

Having an environment that is supportive and encouraging can help children explore and learn about their emotions



Build language naturally through play

Your child will learn words and sentences from **you**. When they are playing, it gives great opportunity with no pressure to learn such as making the noise of the animal they are playing with



Communication Through Play

How Children Communicate Through Play

Communication is not just about talking, it's important to accept **all types of communication** (not just speech) and respond to them

Before words, children communicate through:

- Gestures - such as pointing, reaching, giving objects
- Joint attention - Looking at you, then back at the toy
- Smiling and eye contact
- Babbling or making sounds

These are invitations to join in and connect



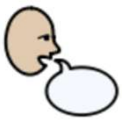
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Building Communication Through Play



Use simple language

Don't use complicated words or long sentences



Comments instead of questions

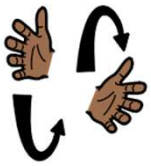
Instead of asking 'What is This?' make a comment about what you are doing, for example describing an action such as 'running' or 'jumping' or labelling an item such as 'a red car' or 'look, t's a 'baby!'

Depending on your child's developmental age you can ask open ended questions such as 'Tell me about this' when they have built a tower or drawn a picture for example



Repetitions

Letting children hear a word or phrase multiple times can help them remember it



Gestures

Support what you are saying with pointing, an action or even Makaton signs. If children use gestures, model the word out loud for them.



"One more word" strategy

Add one more word to what they are using, for example

if they say 'car' you could say '**red** car'



Pause to give your child time

A pause allows them time to process what you have said and respond. They made need longer than you think!



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Everyday Objects Make Great Toys!



- **Boxes and other recyclable materials** can be used to make dens or rockets



- **Buttons, coins, wooden sticks, pebbles, shells, and fabric** can be sorted by colour, shape, size, or special features



- **Leaves, stones or petals** can be used for arts and crafts activities, including painting, sticking and glueing



- **Empty bottles** can be used for shakers or filling with different materials such as lentils, rice or glitter



- **Pegs:** You can attach pegs to each others clothing and reach around to see who can remove all their pegs, or use the pegs like tweezers to pick up small items



- **Pots, pans and other utensils:** They can be used to make music and beats



- **Clothing & shoes:** Involve children in sorting into piles, pairing socks and shoes or playing dress up



- **Playdough:** can be used to have a dough disco (videos on YouTube) to make shapes/letters and pictures out of, or you can use cutlery to cut, pick up or scoop the dough pieces



- **Teddy bears** Have a picnic or play pretend school with the teddies

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Play Ideas to Try at Home



- **Bubbles:** blow bubbles and use Ready Steady Go! (wait for the child to look, gesture, or vocalise before saying ‘Go’)
  Model simple words such as “pop”, “more”, “big bubble” or “up and down’’



- **Water play:** use equipment cups, funnels, spoons, sponges.
  Model action words- “pour”, “squeeze”, “splash”, “fill” etc.
  Provide a space where mess is ok and your child can have a go at pouring themselves.



- **Exploratory trays:** fill trays with different materials such as rice, pasta, lentils, sand, shredded paper etc.
  Use describing words e.g. “soft”, “rough”, “loud”, “quiet” etc. Try activities such as threading string through pasta or using tweezers to move things around.
  (try this with edible items for those children who like to put things in their mouth)



- **Cooking and baking:** they can help with measuring and mixing, follow the steps using pictures, talk about different textures and smells



- **Nature Walks:** collect crunchy leaves or shiny stones, talk about what you can see or hear, look for changes in different seasons (eg different coloured leaves or flowers)

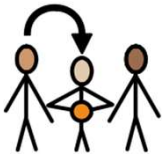


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Play Ideas to Try at Home



- **Gardening:** encourage your child to get involved in gardening or growing plants and vegetables



- **Simple turn-taking games:** such as rolling a ball to each other or I Spy. Talk about 'my turn' or 'your turn' (this may need to be 'mummy's turn' / 'Anna's turn' instead)



- **Household chores:** such as sweeping and dancing at the same time or putting the shopping away and talking about colours



- **Choosing and reading a book together:** you can do silly voices or act out the characters, talk about what you can see on the page or imagine what could happen next

Tiny Happy People Videos

Scan the QR codes to watch videos about:

Playing games with a box
https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/z4ffscw

Sensory play using everyday objects
https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/z2q7jsg

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Pretend Play & Storytelling

Pretend play and storytelling are great ways to model language to your child and introduce new vocabulary into their day-to-day activities

Pretend play helps children to:

- **Understand routines**
  You could act out getting ready for school or going to the dentist

- **Build imagination**
  Play restaurants or shops with imaginary food

- **Develop early conversation skills**
  You can model giving dolls or teddies voices and having a conversation.
  You can also copy any babbling or noises



- **Learn social roles**
  Model conversations in a pretend shop or playing schools for example

BCHC SaLT Support Video

Scan the QR code to watch a video about supporting language development through play.

https://vimeo.com/710279184?fl=pl&fe=sh

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Supporting Emotional & Social Skills

Play can also help children build their emotional and social skills and help them to learn how to act or cope in certain social environments.

Co-regulation through play

Use a calm voice, slow movements, and predictable routines. Support your child to understand their emotions by explaining and labelling emotions e.g. 'I feel happy today'

Social play dates

Join local children's groups or have friends and family around to play



Role-play for social skills

Pretend play (tea parties, shops, doctors) can help children prepare and familiarise themselves with different social situations

Turn-taking games

Such as board games, ball games, joint tower/block building, & copying games (Simon Says, action songs) are all great for relationship building

.

Tiny Happy People Videos

Scan the QR codes to watch videos about:

Playing shopping games
https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zbhyf4j

Why kids play pretend
https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/articles/zyy3p4j

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Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) Signposting

NHS BCHC Paediatric SaLT Website

Free access to support for children with a range of specific speech, language and communication difficulties and those with difficulties swallowing, eating and drinking.

https://www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/childrens-SLT

BCHC SaLT Advice Line

Education staff or parents can speak directly with a Senior Speech and Language Therapist to seek further advice/strategies. Please leave a message and we will call you back.

0121 466 6231 (9am-4pm Monday to Friday)

BCHC SaLT Support Videos

Free videos to support communicating general information about speech, language, and communication needs to families as well as providing strategies to support children's development.

https://www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/childrens-slt-videos

Tiny Happy People

Free access to support with developing your child's language skills, with simple activities and play ideas, as well as advice around early development.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people

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Occupational Therapy (OT) Signposting

NHS BCHC Paediatric OT Website

Free access to advice packs such as home, productivity and sensory. These packs detail strategies to support children to engage in their occupations and both home and school.

www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/child-OT

BCHC OT Advice Line

Education staff or parents can speak directly with a Senior Occupational Therapist to seek further advice/strategies.

0121 683 2325 (9am-4pm Monday to Friday)

SEND Therapy Website

Free access to bite sized webinar videos on a wide range of topics. The page also details the SEND OT team offer and how you can access further support.

Social Media

Follow us on social media for more ideas on how to support your child or to see other training sessions that we offer.



@BCHC_Childot

BCHC Children's Occupational Therapy

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