



**A parents' guide to how a child
grows and learns**

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 4 Social, Emotional and Behavioural
- 6 Cognitive
- 8 Speech and Language
- 10 Gross Motor
- 12 Fine Motor
- 14 Useful Links



Introduction

Through the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC), the Scottish Government wants to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

What is the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative?

It is a Scottish Government initiative which asks local organisations with parents and children in their Local Authority area to work together to improve our children's future.

Why?

Many studies have shown that what happens from pregnancy to starting school has the largest bearing on how a child is going to live the rest of their life.

This includes:

- How healthy they are
- How long they will live
- How well they will do at school
- How much they are likely to be able to earn
- If they are involved in the community
- How they behave as teenagers and adults

Each local Collaborative is working on 7 main areas or workstreams:

1. Pre-birth to 15 months
2. 15 –30 months
3. 30 months –P1
4. P2 –P4
5. P5 – P7
6. S1 –S3
7. S4 –S6+

All workstreams will be working closely together to provide the best outcomes for children but this booklet is concerned with outcomes for workstream 3.

The aim for workstream 3 is for children to have met all their expected developmental skills and abilities by the time they reach primary school. Using a Developmental Milestones Toolkit your Early Learning and Childcare providers will be working with you towards this aim.

This booklet outlines what you can do at home to support your child's development in the following key areas:

- **Social, Emotional and Behavioural**
- **Cognitive**
- **Speech and Language**
- **Gross motor**
- **Fine motor**

The ideas are linked to the **wellbeing indicators**, Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (**SHANARRI**) associated with **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)**.

All children are individuals and will develop at different rates. This can vary across different aspects of development and one aspect may impact on another.

Using a **Developmental Milestones Toolkit** your Early Learning and Childcare providers will be working with you towards this aim.



It's not 'Just Play'

It is important to remember the crucial importance of **PLAY** to young children's development.

'Play is an essential part of early learning. It is the life blood of the learning process. As children play they are developing the cognitive, socio-emotional and physical skills they will need to take them into a successful adulthood.'

They are developing their curiosity, problem solving, intentionality, flexibility, verbal and non verbal skills.

Socio-emotionally they are developing their emotional intelligence, learning confidence, cooperation, negotiation, sharing, empathy and how to communicate appropriately.

Physically their fine motor and gross motor skills are being practised and developed.

It's not 'Just Play' they are skills for life'

MHC Early Childhood Solutions



Social, Emotional & Behavioural

Babies and children have feelings and emotions from the moment they are born. As children grow, they become more aware of themselves and others. To develop positive images of themselves, a child needs love, security and a feeling of trust. It is important that children are encouraged to learn about being co-operative, positive and caring towards each other. Having significant trusted adults in a child's life who are positive role models helps children develop self-esteem and a positive image of themselves and

others. Children need to be given clear, realistic, consistent boundaries; this helps to avoid confusion and gives them a sense of security. When children are encouraged to have a go, feel valued, and know that their opinions and decisions are listened to, they become happy, confident individuals.



SAFE

Set clear and realistic boundaries for your child to help keep him/her safe. Be consistent in your expectations.

HEALTHY

Encourage your child to play lots of turn taking games like hide and seek.

ACHIEVING

Make time and give lots of opportunities to practise and master new skills. Give praise for effort and not just for results.

NURTURED

Respect your child's feelings and choices and he/she will learn to respect himself/herself and others.

ACTIVE

Give your child lots of opportunities to be an individual, to make decisions and take forward their own play.

RESPECTED

Listen to your child and discuss his/her ideas with him/her, building his/her confidence in his/her ability to contribute to decisions that involve him/her.

RESPONSIBLE

Give your child responsibilities. Encourage him/her to do things that he/she is capable of doing for himself for example getting dressed to go outside.

INCLUDED

Provide opportunities for your child to play with others and make friends.



“Parents need to fill a child’s bucket of self-esteem so high that the rest of the world can’t poke enough holes to drain it dry”

Alvin Price

Cognitive

Cognitive development refers to thinking skills such as remembering, understanding, applying, reasoning and creativity. Children develop cognitive skills by learning about causes and effects in play and everyday life activities, and noticing similarities and differences in things around them. Thinking skills help make all experiences more meaningful to children. You can help your child develop his/her thinking skills at home.

SAFE

Talk to your child about common dangers in the home and how to keep safe when you are out and about. Answer the “why” questions.

HEALTHY

Encourage your child to talk about his/her feelings and to think about how others might be feeling. A quiet time would be ideal for this perhaps as part of the bedtime routine.

ACHIEVING

Encourage your child to notice objects which are the same and different. Collecting shells and pebbles from the beach or sorting and matching everyday objects: clothes, socks or pegs.

NURTURED

Give your children choices everyday, but not too many. Talk to him/her about the choices he/she makes and what his/her preferences are. Help your child to understand about time. Talk about the routines and events of the day for example getting ready for nursery. What will you be doing after lunch? What will you be doing tomorrow or at the weekend? Help your child to remember and talk about events which have happened in the past.



ACTIVE

Imaginative play fuels creativity where children build on what they already know and change objects into new things, seeing things in new ways. Provide lots of open-ended resources for your child to develop his/her imagination. Cardboard tubes and boxes as well as attractive pieces of fabric and material are ideal.

RESPECTED

Be a good listener, value your child's opinions and questions. Help him/her to describe and think through problems he/she comes up against and help him/her to think of possible solutions.

RESPONSIBLE

Encourage your child to be responsible by tidying up his/her own room, books and toys. Give him/her small manageable tasks to do. Make it fun by playing beat the clock or putting on some music and praise his/her efforts.

INCLUDED

Help your child develop a sense of belonging and manage conflict by validating his/her feelings whilst encouraging him/her to see things from the point of view of others.

“Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve”

Roger Lewin



Speech and Language

Speech, language and communication are an essential part of our everyday lives. Children develop communication skills from birth discovering that they can communicate their needs through their first sounds, facial expressions and body language. Talking is one of the most important skills your child will learn. The process of developing speech occurs naturally when appropriate stimulation occurs in which you have a very important role to play. Talking and listening to your child while going about your daily routine will help him/her to build an understanding of words, sentences and conversations and help him/her learn how to talk. Singing simple songs and reciting nursery rhymes with your child are an excellent way of helping her/him to catch the language they are learning.

SAFE

Look at ways to cross roads safely by using pedestrian crossings and traffic lights. Read or tell stories that promote safety. Talk about car safety, booster seats and seats belts.

HEALTHY

Talk about choices of healthy foods, encourage your child to experience different tastes, colours and smells. You could even prepare food together. Where possible have meals together as a family. Involve your child in shopping for healthy foods and making shopping lists together. When at the shops, ask your child to recall some of the items on the list.

ACHIEVING

Share songs and rhymes daily that require actions which will help reinforce the language they are learning. Use sequencing words such as: first, after, last, when talking about everyday activities. Indoors and outdoors, play word games such as I Spy.

NURTURED

Establish the habit of having a special quiet time to read, talk and listen to your child for a short time every day without distractions.

ACTIVE

Explore the different signs you see when out and about. Talk together about what they mean as well as about different shapes, colours and numbers. Count things you see as you are going along, flowers, birds, dogs, blue cars. Talk about seasonal changes in the environment. Develop a sense of rhythm by clapping, tapping and dancing to music.

RESPECTED

Encourage your child to express his/her feelings and opinions and deal with them in a positive way.

RESPONSIBLE

Help children to learn their address and telephone number. Make your child aware of emergency services and how to contact them. Involve children in planning an outing.

INCLUDED

Encourage your child to talk about his activities with his friends.



“If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales”

Albert Einstein

Gross Motor

Gross motor skills are those which require whole body movement and involve the large muscles of the body to perform everyday functions such as standing, walking, running, and sitting upright. It also includes eye/hand coordination skills such as ball skills. Children develop their large movement skills, co-ordination and strength as they explore physical play. Providing opportunities to play physical games at home will give children the opportunity to practise and develop confidence in managing movement challenges such as running, balancing, climbing, crawling, jumping, bending and stretching and also throwing and catching.

SAFE

Where possible climb stairs together rather than use escalators or lifts. Provide regular opportunities for your child to practise climbing by playing on large obstacles or equipment such as a climbing frame or large logs and tree trunks.

HEALTHY

Encourage your child to develop his/her balance on low beams, low walls or large fallen logs. Why not go for a walk? You can encourage your child to jump off low heights and land with 2 feet. Jumping in puddles is also great fun!

ACHIEVING

Have races to a familiar landmark giving your child an earlier start or let her use a scooter or bike. Construct an obstacle course, make it more challenging by using timers or tunes. Draw with chalk on the pavement.

NURTURED

When cooking or baking, involve your child in whisking and stirring activities. Paint a fence outside with water. Encourage your child to wash the car or wash his/her own toys and equipment.

ACTIVE

Encourage your child to take part in physical activities in your own local area which will help his/her body to develop, for example: walking, swimming, dancing, mini-kickers, tumble tots, soft play, rough and tumble, roly poly, paddling in the sea, den building.

RESPECTED

Encourage your child to choose activities you can do together from your Play@home book.

RESPONSIBLE

Encourage your child to play safely, stay within designated boundaries and consider his/her own safety and that of others during play.

INCLUDED

Encourage your child to join in with friends in physically active, turn taking games, for example: Hokey Cokey, Ring a Roses, What's the Time Mr Wolf?

"Kids don't remember their best day of television"

Anon



Fine Motor

Fine motor skills are the movements produced by the body's small muscle groups in precise use of the hands and fingers enabling grasping small objects, pointing, using cutlery, drawing and fastening clothing. These movements involve strength and dexterity and hand-eye co-ordination and you can help your child develop these skills at home.

SAFE

Supervise your child when using scissors, knives etc at home and teach him/her basic safety rules for using and storing them.

HEALTHY

Make fruit kebabs at home encouraging your child to cut up fruit and place on skewers. Provide opportunities to practise pouring skills with water or milk.

ACHIEVING

Provide boxes/blocks/plastic tubs for your child to build towers.

NURTURED

Encourage your child to be independent by showing him/her how to fasten clothes and give him time to practise.

ACTIVE

Make playdough at home and encourage cutting and rolling. Make treasure bags/boxes/ lucky dips. Help your child make and play the fishing game in Play@home.

RESPECTED

Give your child a choice of materials for threading e.g. pasta. Collect buttons, cardboard tubes which he/she can then decorate using paint, glitter etc.

RESPONSIBLE

Encourage your child to tidy away small toys / craft objects etc in appropriate containers which have screw top lids.

INCLUDED

Join in with your child in action finger rhymes and encourage him/her to join in with others. Go to 'Bookbug' sessions.

“Behind every young child who believes in himself is a parent who believed first”

Matthew Jacobson



Useful websites/links

Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative

<http://www.cypic.co.uk>

Play@home Activity Sheets

<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/20735.aspx>

Scottish Book trust—Parents' site

<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading/parents>

Ready Steady Toddler Hands-on Guides

<http://www.readysteadytoddler.org.uk>

Infant and Toddler Forum Support

<http://www.infantandtoddlerforum.org>

