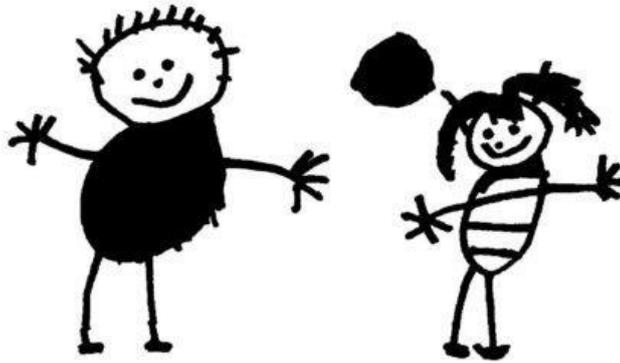


Dunbar Nursery Class



Early Years Activities

Play Activities at Home



For your children **play is vital**, play is child's work and influences their development. You can help your child to develop skills in different areas by **playing together** with lots of activities.

Make Believe Play

Children love to make up their own stories and this allows opportunities to develop their language skills. Set up a mini kitchen, dress up as a firefighter, fairy... or set up a vets/hospital. These activities allow your child to:

- Act out real life and aspects which might be puzzling them.
- Develop mathematical ideas (one-to-one correspondence) by sharing items with you and matching objects together (eg. cup and a saucer).
- Try out roles of different people.

Energetic Play

Young children enjoy being active and need to have time outdoors running around. Set up an obstacle course in the garden, go to a park or play fun ball games with your child. This will provide opportunities for your child to:

- Develop their motor skills, control of their body and balance.
- Judge direction, speed and distance.
- Develop strength and stamina.
- Encourage hand-eye co-ordination as they throw/catch etc.
- Develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Small World Play

Spend time with your child setting up train tracks or roads, laying out furniture in dolls houses or playing with a toy farm. This helps your child to:

- Plan, organise and take charge.
- Develop their fine motor skills by manipulating small objects.
- Learn new words and develop important language skills.
- Develop mathematical concepts by sorting objects into sets eg. cows in one field, blue trains together, kitchen or bedroom furniture for the house.

Sounds and Music

Children love rhythm, dance and music. Sing Nursery rhymes and songs with your child. Listen to music and play instruments, clap along to the rhythm in a song or ask your child to 'copy' you. These activities allow your child to:

- Develop listening skills.
- Identify different sounds.
- Understand more about language and hear the sounds in words.
- Repeat phrases and remember words in songs and rhymes.

Water Play

Give your child a basin of water or let them play at the sink. Provide them with different containers or bottles, cups, watering cans and spoons. Let them tip, pour and mix, this provides them with experiences which will:

- Develop muscular strength and hand-eye co-ordination.
- Understand mathematical concepts eg. full/empty, half full, more and less.
- Provide opportunities to estimate and count eg. How many cups to fill the bucket?

Building Bricks/Blocks

Spend time using building materials with your child. Build towers, let them knock it down and build it again!! Create castles or houses and make imaginary or real worlds! All these experiences, will allow your child to:

- Develop mathematical skills, how many blocks have they used? Is their tower taller than your tower?
- Children have the opportunity to learn about measure and making estimations.
- They also develop their fine motor skills and strengthen the muscles in their hands and fingers.
- Building allows experiences to plan and design, try things out and change them if they don't work.

Most important of all, when playing with your child, talk to them using varied language, give them the opportunity to lead the play and have lots of fun!!

Maths and Numeracy in the Early Years

Number

- Number rhymes e.g 5 little ducks
- Counting aloud as you climb up the stairs/put away toys

- Play games with picture dominoes and dice
- Have fun with games that involve matching and sorting (you can use everyday objects eg. socks, cutlery, shoes)
- Recognising numbers in the environment e.g bus numbers and house numbers
- Be aware of numbers and play with **simple** number games or jigsaws

Money

- Develop awareness that money is used to buy things
- Set up a 'shop' and allow your child to play with money

Measure

- Measuring out ingredients when baking
- Play with water or sand, filling and pouring different containers

Time

- Using language to sequence events e.g before, next, the, after, morning, lunch, night time
- Daily routines
- Awareness of the seasons
- Birthdays - awareness of age

Patterns

- Matching and recognising colours
- Copy and repeat a pattern using colour or shape
- Awareness of dice and domino patterns
- Patterns in the environment e.g road markings, butterflies, bricks

Shape

- Talk about familiar 2D shapes
- Explore 3D shapes- model building with bricks or junk materials
- Understand shapes in context e.g letter box, door, moon

Problem Solving

- Sorting objects into different groups
- Share out items fairly
- Complete jigsaw puzzles
- Play games on a computer (appropriate level)

Playdough Recipe

- 2 cups of plain flour
- 3 tablespoons OR 4 sachets of cream of tartar
- 1tablespoon of oil
- 1 cup of salt
- 2 cups of boiling water

Add colour / essence to the boiling water!

Place all dry ingredients in a bowl and mix.

Then add oil and boiling water mix with a spoon.

Finally you can knead the dough.

Nursery Rhymes and Songs

One of the best predictors of how well a child will learn to read is if they know nursery rhymes. As children develop at different rates, using nursery rhymes will support children's communication and language development at whatever stage they are at - for example, older children may be beginning to learn to rhyme, whereas younger children may still be at the stage of learning new words. Introducing children to a variety of nursery rhymes can help them understand and learn about different sounds. This is an important part of developing those early literacy skills. Listening to different sounds in the environment as well as in nursery rhymes provides children with the foundations in helping them to read and write. As nursery rhymes are fun and full of sounds, children will tune into these sounds. Older children will experiment in combining sounds and blend them together to form a word.

So why is singing nursery rhymes and songs important?

- Rhyming teaches children how language works. It helps them notice and work with sounds within words.
- Rhymes help children experience the rhythm of language. As they recite nursery rhymes they learn to speak with animated voices. Someday they'll read with expression too.
- When children are familiar with a nursery rhyme or rhyming book, they learn to anticipate the rhyming word. This prepares them to make predictions when they read, another important reading skill.
- Rhyming is important for writing, too. It can help children understand that words that share common sounds or share common letters. For example, the rhyming words cat and bat both end with -at.
- Children learn new words and develop their non-verbal communications skill.
- Children understand how words are formed.
- Enables children to copy actions.
- Children learn about different beats and rhythms.
- Provides the opportunity for children to value language and become confident learners.

The role of adults

It is important that adults are confident when singing nursery rhymes and songs as this will be picked up by the children. If adults are having fun children are more likely to respond and have fun too. Is singing nursery rhymes and songs included in your everyday routine? Why not share a song or two in the bath or shower, in the car, on a walk or at story time.

- Be confident
- Sing songs slowly and clearly
- Use a clear tone
- Use props to support the songs
- Involve children
- Use actions and pictures

Baa Baa Black Sheep

"Baa, baa, black sheep have you any wool?"

"Yes sir, yes sir. Three bags full.

One for the master and one for the dame and one for the little boy who lives down the lane."

"Thank you," said the master. "Thank you," said the dame and "Thank you," said the little boy who lives down the lane.

"Baa, baa, white sheep have you any wool?"

"No sir, no sir no bags full. None to mend the blankets, none to mend the frocks and none to mend the woolly gloves or holes in your socks."

Down in the Jungle

Down in the jungle where nobody goes, there's a great big elephant washing his clothes.

With a rub-a-dub here and a rub-a-dub there, that's how an elephant washes his clothes.

He goes stomp, stomp, a boogie-woogie-woogie . Stomp, stomp, a boogie-woogie-woogie.

Stomp, stomp, a boogie-woogie-woogie. That's how an elephant washes his clothes.

Down in the jungle where nobody goes, there's a great big lion washing his clothes.

With a rub-a-dub here and a rub-a-dub there, that's how a lion washes his clothes.

He goes roarrrr, roarrrr, a boogie-woogie-woogie. Roarrrr, roarrrr, a boogie-woogie-woogie.

Roarrrr, roarrrr, a boogie-woogie-woogie. That's how a lion washes his clothes.

Down in the jungle where nobody goes, there's a great big monkey washing his clothes.

With a rub-a-dub here and a rub-a-dub there, that's how a monkey washes his clothes.

He goes ooh, ooh, a boogie-woogie-woogie. Ooh, ooh, a boogie-woogie-woogie.

Ooh, ooh, a boogie-woogie-woogie. That's how a monkey washes his clothes.

Down in the jungle where nobody goes, there's a great big crocodile washing his clothes.

With a rub-a-dub here and a rub-a-dub there, that's how a crocodile washes his clothes.

He goes snap, snap, a boogie-woogie-woogie. Snap, snap, a boogie-woogie-woogie.

Incy Wincy Spider

Incy Wincy spider climbed up the water spout.

Down came the rain and washed poor Incy out.
Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain.
So Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again.
Incy Wincy spider climbed up the trees.
Down came the snow and made poor Incy freeze. Brrr.
Out came the sunshine and melted all the snow.
So Incy Wincy spider had another go.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

"Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.
Row, row, row your boat gently down the river.
If you see a polar bear, don't forget to shiver. Brrr.
Sail, sail, sail your boat gently out to sea.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, back in time for tea.
Rock, rock, rock your boat gently to and fro.
Watch out, give a shout, into the water we go. Splash.
Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream.
If you see a crocodile, don't forget to scream. Aargh.

Two Little Dickie Birds

Two little dickie birds sitting on a wall. One named Peter, one named Paul.
Fly away, Peter. Fly away, Paul. Come back, Peter. Come back, Paul.
Two little dickie birds sitting on a wall. One named Peter, one named Paul.
Two little fishes swimming in a lake. One named Jessie, one named Jake.
Swim away, Jessie. Swim away, Jake. Come back, Jessie. Come back, Jake.
Two little fishes swimming in a lake. One named Jessie, one named Jake.
Two little butterflies flying through the air. One named Colin, one named Claire.
Fly away, Colin. Fly away, Claire. Come back, Colin. Come back, Claire.
Two little butterflies flying through the air. One named Colin, one named Claire.

Gardening

Gardening is the perfect activity to do together, children will learn about nature and growing whilst having fun.

1. Quick start your gardening

A great way to get started is to plant quick-sprouting seeds, so that impatient little ones can see the results of their hard work without much waiting around!

TOP TIP: Sunflower, cress and salad seeds provide really easy results and are a simple way to explain the process of planting seeds and seeing the rewards.

2. Herbs and vegetables

Once you've mastered step one, herbs such as basil and mint or vegetables such as tomatoes and lettuce are a fantastic next step.

TOP TIP: Why not try cooking with the herbs and vegetables you grow together. It helps children to learn where food comes from and it's a fun way to encourage fussy eaters to try new foods!

3. Stimulate the senses

Planting in the garden is a great way to stimulate your child's senses of touch, sight, sound, taste and smell - soft flowers, bushes and plants that rustle, strong smells and bright colours all help to enrich your child's experience of gardening.

TOP TIP: Sensory plants can be particularly beneficial for children with special needs and sensory impairments, as it encourages them to explore and enjoy the garden.

4. Mini tools

If your little one really loves getting out and about in the garden it can be helpful to get a set of child-friendly mini-tools that they can hold and use by themselves.

TOP TIP: Having a little watering can, rake, trowel and spade can really help build your child's sense of independence as well as their physical movement and fine motor skills.

5. Getting down to it

Set aside some old clothes as your little one's 'gardening clothes'. Working in the earth and soil has a high mess factor that children love so it's a good idea to wear something that you don't mind them getting messy.

TOP TIP: Don't forget sun cream and sun hats. Even on days that aren't particularly sunny, long spells in the garden mean that little ones still need skin protection - especially in the middle of the day.

6. Keeping them interested

Children may be completely engrossed in gardening, but this isn't always the case, so be prepared for the fact that they may have a limited attention span and won't be absorbed for more than a few minutes at a time. Asking lots of questions throughout the process can make them feel like they're actively involved.

TOP TIP: It's a good idea to keep things simple and have other gardening related activities up your sleeve to extend your child's interest, such as making plant labels, searching for minibeasts or even building a compost heap!

7. Where next?

Try taking photos or drawing pictures of your plants with your little one at the different stages of bloom. Something like a sunflower works really well to show them how amazing the process of gardening can be.

TOP TIP: Why not stick the pictures in a scrapbook to help your child remember the process of planting and growing, and to remind them how far their plant has come.

Independence

A large part of nursery is building independence and promoting self-help skills, such as changing our shoes and putting our coats on, you can choose a target on the sheet to work on and then highlight it once your child has achieved them.

I can change my shoes	I can put my coat on	I can fasten my coat	I can use a tissue to blow my nose
I can put my sweatshirt on and take it off	I can clean my teeth	I can say please and thank you	I can ask for help from a grown up when I need to go to the toilet
I can run	I can jump	I can balance	I can hop
I can skip	I can climb	I can throw	I can catch
 <p>I can measure</p>	 <p>I can mix</p>	 <p>I wear an apron</p>	 <p>I can pour my drink</p>
 <p>I wash my hands</p>	 <p>I can clean the table</p>	 <p>I can wash my dishes</p>	

Listening at Home

Listening is a special kind of attention—to listen we have to pay attention to sounds. Many children who have problems with listening are good with other kinds of attention. They may be able to sit and watch their favourite film for a long time or they may be able to concentrate for ages on their favourite toy. However they may find it hard to:

- Listen to stories, especially in a group.
- Listen to explaining something.
- Wait for their turn in a conversation

Listening is a really important skill for learning to talk but it also a very important skill they will need at school. A good listener at school is more likely to understand what they have to do, remember new words and join conversations with their new friends. In fact, if you are a good listener, you are more likely to be a good learner.

Just telling children to 'listen!' does not help very much. This is because listening is quite a hard thing to do. It's not just one skill—its several skills. In the approach we use to teach children to listen, we

aim to help children develop the skills that make up good listening.

- **Looking** at the person who is talking
- **Sitting still**
- **Staying quiet**
- **Listening** to all the words.

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- **Looking** at the person who is talking
- **Sitting still**
- **Staying quiet**
- **Listening** to all the words.

You can also help by reminding your child about the following rules during everyday things that you do together that require them to listen.

- Reminding them of the rule before you need them to listen:
- Praising them when you can see them using the skills:
- Being specific about what they are doing wrong when they are not listening:

This will really help them use their new skills in real life.

Here are some activities you could try at home:

Listening for 'go'

What you need:

- A suitable toy such as cars and a car ramp or a marble run.

What to do:

- Encourage your child to hold the car or marble and wait for you to say 'Ready...Steady...Go!'.
- You may need to help your child by putting your hands over theirs and gently encouraging them to wait.
- Try to gradually increase the amount of time your child waits for you to say 'Go!'.

Listening for Name

What you need:

- Bubbles.

What to do:

- This is a good game to play with other family members.
- Blow the bubbles and say someone's name.
- Only the person whose name was called can burst the bubbles.
- Remind your child to keep listening as you may call their name again.

Musical Spots

What you need:

- Music
- Paper to make sitting spots

What to do:

- Try this activity in a small group.
- Put sheets of paper out in a circle, one for each person playing.
- Everyone walks or dances around the sitting spots while the music is playing.
- When the music stops, they can sit down on a spot, trying to keep still.
- Count to three before the music starts again and give praise for keeping still,
- Try to gradually increase the amount of time they have to sit still.

Silent Treasure Hunt

What you need:

- Some 'Treasure' to hide

What to do:

- Send your child out of the room and hide the treasure.
- Ask your child to come back in the room and find the treasure.
- The people in the room cannot tell the child where the treasure is but they can help them find it by looking at where the treasure is hidden.

Pass the Turn

What you need:

- A game or activity that you can take turns in

What to do:

- Choose a game or activity that your child enjoys.
- Explain that you are going to the people in the room a turn, but you are **NOT** going to say their name, you are going to look at them and give them a little nod.
- Then pass the turn to people one at a time by looking at them and nodding.

Traffic Light Waiting

What you need:

- Toy cars
- Stop/Go signs
- Toy cones to mark start and finish points

What to do:

- Set out the cones at either end of the room
- Encourage your child to choose a car and try to keep it still at the start cone.
- They have to wait for you to turn the sign to go and they can push the car as fast as they can to the finish cone.
- Gradually increase the amount of time they have to wait before they can start their car.

Musical Traffic lights

What you need:

- An instrument such as bells or shaker.
- A stop/Go sign.

What to do:

- Encourage your child to play their instrument when they see the go sign.
- When you turn the sign to stop, they must stop playing their instrument.
- You can then count to three before you turn the sign to go again.
- Gradually count higher to see how long they can keep quiet.

Musical Spots

What you need:

- Music
- Paper to make sitting spots

What to do:

- Try this activity in a small group.
- Put sheets of paper out in a circle, one for each person playing.
- Everyone walks or dances around the sitting spots while the music is playing.
- When the music stops, they can sit down on a spot, trying to keep still.
- Count to three before the music starts again and give praise for keeping still,
- Try to gradually increase the amount of time they have to sit still.

Loud and Quiet Instruments

What you need:

- An instrument such as bells or a shaker
- Dino-loud and Mousie-quiet cue cards

What to do:

- Tell your child about Dino-Loud (who likes loud noises) and Mousie-quiet (who likes everything to be quiet).
- Give your child an instrument.
- Put the Dino Loud and Mousie quiet cue cards behind your back and bring one out to show your child.
- Encourage your child to play the instrument loudly when they see Dino and quietly when they see Mousie.

Information taken from Teaching Children to Listen by Liz Spooner and Jacqui Woodcock.