A Know How Guide: Working with 2-year-olds (November 2024)

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A close-up of a brochure

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[tuning-in-to-two-year-olds-booklet (harrow.gov.uk)](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/23719/tuning-in-to-two-year-olds-booklet)

**The emotional environment:**

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| **Area to reflect upon** |  | **What would this look like?** | **Pause for thought** |
| **Attachment:**  Providing a secure base to explore from and a  safe haven to retreat to | •  •  •  •  •  •  • | The key person is introduced to the child and family over time and a 3-way relationship begins to develop.  When the parent leaves the child may demonstrate separation anxiety but can be soothed by the key person in time.  When the child has settled in, they are willing to explore the environment for brief periods of time without the key person.  The child can explore and take risks in their play and learning and return to, or check in with, the key person when needed.  The key person holds the key children in mind and is able to anticipate and tune in to their individual personalities and support needs.  The key person knows when to step in and when to withdraw from the child’s play and learning. The child knows that their key person can be relied upon to be responsive. | -Do we allow plenty of opportunities for the parent and child to become familiar with and build a relationship with the key person?    -Do we recognise that each child’s separation anxiety can be co-regulated by an attuned adult and allow for that?    -Do we recognise the importance of the welcome and hand over as well as the reunion at the end of the session?    -Do we consider how the environment can enable a secure base to be provided through cosy and relaxing places where children can go with adults or alone?    -Do we observe and recognise the importance of each child using their key person as a safe haven, and the contribution of this to the development of the child’s resilience, self-esteem and independence?    -Do we allow for each child to move between dependence, inter-dependence and independence according to their current stage and the demands they may be feeling? |

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**The emotional environment – qualities of the key person:**

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| **Qualities of the key person** | **What would this look like?** | **Pause for thought** |
| Responsive | The key person recognises the wide range of emotional states of their key children and how they express these emotions.  The key person is confident and consistent in being able to adapt their interaction to match the child’s state. | -Do we include questions and information about children’s emotional expression in their ‘All about me’ profiles and settling in discussions, for example: How do I respond to unfamiliar adults? -Do we regularly exchange information about how each child is feeling on a day to day basis? |
| Reliable | The key person offers every key child time for greetings, playing together and building relationships and independence. | -Do we allow time for greetings and departures? -Do we let the children know if their key person is not in on that day? |
| Protective | The key person provides a secure base for children from which to explore new opportunities and experiences. Manages risk and ensures the safety and wellbeing of their key children.  Ensures consistency and dignity in carrying out personal care with their key children. | -Do we have places where children can retreat on their own but still be in sight and hearing of an adult?  -Are we proactive when individual children’s responses change to the environment? E.g. if a child is fascinated by snow? -Is the key person in a group setting responsible for the personal care of their key children? |
| Emotionally intelligent/ attuned/ empathic | The key person is confident and consistent in responding to 2-year olds’ emotions.  The key person can tune into situations and experiences which may impact on the child and provide appropriate emotional support. | -How do we support children in ‘naming and taming’ their emotions and feelings?  -Are staff supported work through children’s emotions with them?  -How do we recognise the impact of the emotional and physical environment on children?  -How do we tune in to and make sense of a 2-year-olds emotional responses to people? |
| Available | The key person offers emotional security, reflecting the growing independence and fluctuating dependence of 2year-olds. | -How do we connect with our key children throughout the day? |

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**The physical environment:**

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| **Learning environment** | **What would this look like?** | **Pause for thought** |
| Social and emotional | A place where two-year-olds know that their feelings are accepted as they learn to express them.    An environment where children feel confident and are willing to try things out and take risks.    Children are supported to play alongside others and encouraged to take turns in cooperative games. | Are there cosy areas with soft cushions where two-year-olds can relax?  Do we create ‘interest’ baskets for individual children, so they can share and discuss their fascinations?  How do we vary resources to maintain interest and develop new experiences?  What resources do we have that support and develop the language needed to develop co-operation and social skills? |
| Communication and language | A setting that has cosy, contained, quieter areas where children can share books, sit and chat peacefully with their friends as well as adults.    Areas where children can express joy and excitement.    A place where adults support children to communicate, allowing them time to start conversations, building on their vocabulary and commenting on their experiences. | What ‘communication friendly spaces’ do we have where children can listen, understand and speak? E.g. tents How do we use displays and resources to stimulate conversation?  How do we minimise background noise? When do we play music and why?  How much time do we spend listening to children, allowing them to lead conversations? |
| Physical development | Indoor and outdoor spaces that provide safe, secure yet challenging spaces for children.    Stimulating spaces that support active play and exploration.  Spaces that offer children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant\*. | Do both indoor and outdoor spaces reflect all areas of the curriculum? How free is the access to outdoor play?  How much space is taken up by tables and chairs? How much play happens on the floor?  How do we provide spaces that are for active play and also define and protect spaces that are for more contained and quieter play or rest? |

[tuning-in-to-two-year-olds-booklet (harrow.gov.uk)](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/23719/tuning-in-to-two-year-olds-booklet#:~:text=8%20%7C%20Tuning%20in%20to%20Two%20Year%20Olds&text=The%20relationship%20which%20develops%20between,safe%20haven%20to%20return%20to.)

**\***How to keep your baby or toddler active - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

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[UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d839543ed915d52428dc134/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf)

**The importance of play:**

**Play** provides an environment which is rich in motivation and stimulates the development of **language and cognitive skills.**

**Language** provides a framework for reasoning, learning and storing information which then supports further **cognitive development.**

**Cognitive development** allows a child to become involved in increasingly complicated activities that can be observed in the developmental stages of **play.**

<https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/educators-and-professionals/>

**The characteristics of effective learning:**

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| **Area to reflect upon** |  | **What would this look like?** | **Pause for thought** |
| **Playing and exploring** Finding out and exploring    Willing to have a go      Playing with known  items | •  •  •  • | Two-year-olds will have particular interests and fascinations – these may change from day to day. Children explore and discover the world by the use of their senses.  Two-year-olds are beginning to make choices and create new activities.  They enjoy finding out ways to use objects and have clear ideas of what they want to do, even if it involves a lot of trial and error. | -How do we plan to build on children’s interests and fascinations to develop their learning?  -How do we ensure there is a multi-sensory approach to introducing and teaching new ideas and concepts? -Do we provide opportunities for children to make simple choices? |
| **Active Learning**  Keep on trying    Achieving    Being involved and concentrating | •  •  • | Two-year-olds are very eager to achieve their goals and will try again and again to do so.  Two-year-olds are very proud of their achievements and are eager to share them with their important people.  Two-year-olds can remain engaged and pay attention to details such as how a worm wriggles or how water feels. | -Do we allow children the opportunity to consolidate previous experiences?  -Do we offer children the opportunity to meet and conquer a challenge (i.e. climbing a slide or painting a picture)?  -Are we attentive to children when they want to express their joy at completing a task or mastering a new skill?  -How do we ensure children have enough time to experience their fascinations for as long as they need to? |
| **Creating and Thinking**  **Critically**  Having their own ideas    Choosing ways to do  things    Making links | •  • | Two-year-olds can use materials in a variety of ways, often coming up with original ideas and ways to solve a problem they set themselves.  Once set on a plan of action they may find this doesn’t work (e.g. I got this cork in the bottle, now I can’t get it out) and will come up with solutions to the problems. Resilient children will keep trying until they have achieved their goal. | -Do we use open ended questions to support children’s ideas about how to solve problems (i.e. I wonder what would happen if…)  -Do we provide enough time and space for children to try a variety of ways to solve their problems or do we finish it for them?  -Do we provide a range of cause-and-effect resources? |

[tuning-in-to-two-year-olds-booklet (harrow.gov.uk)](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/23719/tuning-in-to-two-year-olds-booklet#:~:text=8%20%7C%20Tuning%20in%20to%20Two%20Year%20Olds&text=The%20relationship%20which%20develops%20between,safe%20haven%20to%20return%20to.)

**The areas of learning and development:**

1.3/*1.4* There are seven areas of learning and development that set out what childminders / *providers* **must** teach the children in their settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

1.4/*1.5* Three prime areas are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas. These are the prime areas: • Communication and language • Physical development • Personal, social and emotional development

1.5/*1.6* Childminders / *providers* **must** also support children in four specific areas, which help strengthen and develop the three prime areas, and ignite children’s curiosity and enthusiasm. The specific areas are: • Literacy • Mathematics • Understanding the world • Expressive arts and design Educational Programmes

1.6/*1.7* The educational programmes are high level curriculum summaries which set out what should be taught in settings for each area of learning. They **must** involve activities and experiences that enable children to learn and develop, as set out under each of the seven areas of learning.

1.7/*1.8* Childminders / *providers* should be ambitious for all children. To do this, they **must** consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care. They **must** use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Childminders / *providers* working with the youngest children are expected to ensure a strong foundation for children’s development in the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf)

[*Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)*](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf)

**Prime area: personal, social and emotional development:**

**EYFS statutory educational programme:**

Children’s personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children **should** be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life. Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

**Helping children with their personal, social and emotional development:**

Research suggests that these are effective approaches:

* responding to children in a steady and reliable way, with emotional warmth and sympathy
* encouraging children to communicate how they are feeling, which can be supported by modelling the correct language and labelling the emotion – for example, “I can see that you’re sad because you’re crying”
* using stories to explore how others might be feeling
* helping children to understand and co-operate with routines and rules
* encouraging children to manage ‘effortful control’ or patience, such as waiting for something they want or taking turns – if adults are too controlling, this may slow down the child’s development

Note: Some non-compliance is typical as two-year-olds develop their independence and autonomy. Tantrums, hitting and biting are also common:

physical aggression in humans reaches its peak between the ages of two and three-years old. Young children want to express themselves, but they find it difficult. When they feel frustrated, they may express this as a tantrum. As we help children to talk more about how they are feeling, tantrums become less common. It is important for parents and practitioners to respond calmly and be clear and consistent. Children who are treated harshly are more likely to become aggressive.

[Progress check at age two – Non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6284c0a2e90e071f61322177/Progress_check_at_age_two_non-statutory_guidance_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage_.pdf)

**Prime area: personal, social and emotional development:**

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| **Young children will be learning to:** | **Examples of how to support this:** |
| Find ways to calm themselves, through being calmed and comforted by their key person.          Establish their sense of self.        Express preferences and decisions. They also try new things and start establishing their autonomy.    Engage with others through gestures, gaze and talk.    Use that engagement to achieve a goal. For example, gesture towards their cup to say they want a drink.    Find ways of managing transitions, for example from their parent to their key person.    Thrive as they develop self-assurance.  Play with increasing confidence on their own and with other children, because they know their key person is nearby and available. Enjoy exploring new places with their key person. | When settling a young child into nursery, the top priority is for the key person to develop a strong and loving relationship with the young child. Learn from the family about what they do to soothe their child and what to look out for – for example, a baby who scratches at their head when they are getting tired.    Young children develop a sense of self by interacting with others, and by exploring their bodies and objects around them, inside and outdoors.      Be positive and interested in what babies do as they develop their confidence in trying new things.    Help toddlers and young children to make informed choices from a limited range of options. Suggestion: enable children to choose which song to sing from a set of four song cards, by pointing. Enable children to choose whether they want milk or water at snack time.  Support children as they find their own different ways to manage feelings of sadness when their parents leave them.  Young children need to feel secure as they manage difficult emotions.  Provide consistent and predictable routines, with flexibility when needed.  Provide consistent, warm, and responsive care.  Arrange resources inside and outdoors to encourage children’s independence and growing self-confidence.  Store resources so that children can access them freely, without needing help. |

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180056/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)

**Prime area: personal, social and emotional development (cont.):**

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| **Young children will be learning to:** | **Examples of how to support this:** |
| Feel strong enough to express a range of emotions. Grow in independence, rejecting help (“me do it”). Sometimes this leads to feelings of frustration and tantrums.                                  Begin to show ‘effortful control’. For example, waiting for a turn and resisting the strong impulse to grab what they want or push their way to the front.  Be increasingly able to talk about and manage their emotions.    Notice and ask questions about differences, such as skin colour, types of hair, gender, special needs and disabilities, religion and so on. | Help children to feel emotionally safe with a key person and, gradually, with other members of staff.    Show warmth and affection, combined with clear and appropriate boundaries and routines. Develop a spirit of friendly co-operation amongst children and adults.    Encourage children to express their feelings through words like ‘sad’, ‘upset’ or ‘angry’. Toddlers and young children may have periods of time when their favourite word is ‘no’ and when they want to carry out their wishes straight away. Maintain sensible routines and boundaries for children during these testing times. Negative or harsh responses can cause children to feel unduly anxious and emotionally vulnerable.    Offer supervision or work discussion sessions to staff. Staff will need to talk about the strong feelings that children may express. How are practitioners feeling about these and developing their understanding of the children’s feelings?    When appropriate, notice and talk about children’s feelings. For example: “I can see it’s hard to wait, just a minute and then it’s your turn to go down the slide.”  Model useful phrases like “Can I have a turn?” or “My turn next.”  Be open to what children say about differences and answer their questions straightforwardly. Help children develop positive attitudes towards diversity and inclusion.  Help all children to feel that they are valued, and they belong. |

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180056/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)

**Prime area: personal, social and emotional development (cont.):**

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| **Young children will be learning to:** | **Examples of how to support this:** |
| Develop friendships with other children.        Safely explore emotions beyond their normal range through play and stories.    Talk about their feelings in more elaborated ways: “I’m sad because…” or “I love it when …”.      Learn to use the toilet with help, and then independently. | Support children to find ways into the play and friendship groups of others.  For example, encourage them to stand and watch from the side with you. Talk about what you see, and suggest ways for the child to join in.    Story times with props can engage children in a range of emotions.  They can feel the family’s fear as the bear chases them at the end of ‘We’re Going on a Bear Hunt’. They can feel relief when the Gruffalo is scared away by the mouse.    Recognise, talk about and expand on children’s emotions. For example, you might say: “Sara is smiling. She really wanted a turn with the truck.”    You cannot force a child to use the potty or toilet. You need to establish friendly co-operation with the child. That will help them take this important step. Children can generally control their bowels before their bladder. Notice when young children are ready to begin toilet training and discuss this with their parents:   * they know when they have got a wet or dirty nappy * they get to know when they are peeing and may tell you they are doing it * the gap between wetting is at least an hour * they show they need to pee by fidgeting or going somewhere quiet or hidden * they know when they need to pee and may say so in advance.     Potty training is fastest if you start it when the child is at the last stage. By the age of 3, 9 out of 10 children are dry most days. All children will have the occasional ‘accident’, though, especially when excited, busy or upset. |

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180056/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)

**Prime area: communication and language:**

**EYFS statutory educational programme:**

The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

[Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2)

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| **Helping children with their communication:**  Research suggests that these are effective approaches:   * listening to children and having conversations with them (‘talking with’ and not just ‘talking to’ children) * sharing books, especially with wordless picture books – use the book as a way of having a conversation: “What do you think is happening in the picture there?” or “Why do you think the boy is sad?” * talking together while you play or do jobs around the house (getting food out of the fridge, sorting out washing, gardening or washing up) • singing and saying rhymes together * modelling a range of different types of words and phrases, rather than asking and ‘testing’ the child – for example, rather than asking “What are you doing?” or “What colour is that?”, try to model a useful phrase such as “You’re eating your dinner. It’s delicious” or “I love that blue hat.”     **English as an additional language:**  More than a quarter of children in early years settings are learning English as an additional language. It is important to note the following points.   * Bilingual and multilingual children may have a quiet phase at first, as they settle in and develop their confidence. Encouraging them to take part and become more confident is key. * Children learn a language by speaking it. If a child is going through a long ‘silent phase’, find out from the parent if their home language is developing well. Check in case the child has a speech, language and communication delay. * Practitioners and professionals should encourage families to use their home language. This is for linguistic as well as cultural reasons. Talk to parents about what language they speak at home, learn a few key words and celebrate multilingualism in your setting.[Progress check at age two – Non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6284c0a2e90e071f61322177/Progress_check_at_age_two_non-statutory_guidance_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage_.pdf) |

**Prime area: communication and language (cont.):**

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| **Young children will be learning to:** | **Examples of how to support this:** |
| Generally, focus on an activity of their own choice and find it difficult to be directed by an adult.    Listen to other people’s talk with interest but can easily be distracted by other things.    Make themselves understood and can become frustrated when they cannot.    Start to say how they are feeling, using words as well as actions.      Start to develop conversation, often jumping from topic to topic.      Develop pretend play: ‘putting the baby to sleep’ or ‘driving the car to the shops’.      Listen to simple stories and understand what is happening, with the help of the pictures. | Help young children to focus their attention by using their name: “Fatima, put your coat on”.    You can help toddlers and young children listen and pay attention by using gestures like pointing and facial expressions.    You can help young children who are having tantrums by being calm and reassuring.    Help young children to express what’s angering them by suggesting words to describe their emotions, like ‘sad’ or ‘angry’.    Make time to connect with young children. Tune in and listen to them and join in with their play, indoors and outside.    Allow plenty of time to have conversations together, rather than busily rushing from one activity to the next. When you know a young child well, it is easier to understand them and talk about their family life. For example: “OK, I see. You went to the shops with Aunty Maya”.    Share picture books every day with children. Encourage them to talk about the pictures and the story. Comment on the pictures – for example: “It looks like the boy is a bit worried…” and wait for their response. You might also ask them about the pictures: “I wonder what the caterpillar is doing now?” Books with just pictures and no words can especially encourage conversations. Tell children the names of things they do not know and choose books that introduce interesting new vocabulary to them. |

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180056/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)

**Prime area: communication and language (cont.):**

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| **Young children will be learning to:** | **Examples of how to support this:** |
| Identify familiar objects and properties for practitioners when they are described: for example: ‘Katie’s coat’, ‘blue car’, ‘shiny apple’.    Understand and act on longer sentences like ‘make teddy jump’ or ‘find your coat’.    Understand simple questions about ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘where’ (but generally not ‘why’). | When appropriate, you can check children’s understanding by asking them to point to particular pictures. Or ask them to point to particular objects in a picture. For example: “Can you show me the big boat?”      When talking with young children, give them plenty of processing time (at least 10 seconds). This gives them time to understand what you have said and think of their reply. |

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180056/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)

# Early communication screening tool (Stoke-Speaks-Out):

The Early Communication Screen is a quick, easy to administer screening tool designed to be delivered by practitioners with children from 2-5 years of age. This screening tool can be used to identify difficulties in understanding and spoken language skills and the results enable practitioners to plan appropriate interventions and measure progress. The training will give participants the skills and knowledge to administer the Early Communication Screen accurately and interrupt the results effectively. Each school or setting will be sent one handbook and record form booklet, before the training session.

To book onto the next training session please visit: [CPD Early Years and Schools | Shropshire Learning Gateway (shropshirelg.net)](https://www.shropshirelg.net/early-years/cpd-early-years-and-schools/)

Further information on screening tools can be found at: [Screening tools (shropscommunityhealth.nhs.uk)](https://www.shropscommunityhealth.nhs.uk/chslt-screening-tools)

**Prime area: physical development:**

**EYFS statutory educational programme:**

Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives7. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

[Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2)

**Helping children with their physical development:**

Active children are healthy, happy, school ready and sleep better. Physical activity in the early years:

* builds relationships and social skills
* maintains health and weight
* contributes to brain development and learning
* improves sleep • develops muscles and bones
* encourages movement and co-ordination Research suggests that children aged two should spend at least 180 minutes (three hours) per day in a variety of physical activities at any intensity, including active and outdoor play, spread throughout the day – more is better For more information, refer to the UK

Chief Medical Officers’ physical activity guidelines for early years [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d839543ed915d52428dc134/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf)

[Progress check at age two – Non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6284c0a2e90e071f61322177/Progress_check_at_age_two_non-statutory_guidance_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage_.pdf) (2021: p.17)

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| **Young children will be learning to:** | **Examples of how to support this:** |
| Gradually gain control of their whole body through continual practice of large movements, such as waving, kicking, rolling, crawling and walking.      Clap and stamp to music.      Fit themselves into spaces, like tunnels, dens and large boxes, and move around in them.    Enjoy starting to kick, throw and catch balls.    Build independently with a range of appropriate resources.            Walk, run, jump and climb – and start to use the stairs independently.    Spin, roll and independently use ropes and swings (for example, tyre swings). Sit on a push-along wheeled toy, use a scooter or ride a tricycle. | Provide a wide range of opportunities for children to move throughout the day: indoors and outside, alone or with others, with and without apparatus. Include risky and rough and tumble play, as appropriate. Join in with children’s movement play when invited and if it is appropriate. Then you can show different ways of moving and engaging with the resources.    Help young children learn what physical risks they are confident and able to take.    Encourage children to climb unaided and to stop if they do not feel safe. If you lift them onto the apparatus and hold them so they balance, they will not develop a sense of what they can do safely.  Offer outdoor play every day for at least 45 minutes. Include lots of opportunities for children to move freely and explore their surroundings like a slope, a large hole, puddles or a sandpit. Consider wider opportunities for movement. Suggestions: using large moveable resources like hollow blocks, swinging on monkey bars, soft play, climbing walls, crawling into tunnels and dens. Consider going to suitable local facilities.    As soon as children are able, encourage ‘active travel’ to and from the setting – for example, walking, scooter or bike.  Provide materials and equipment that support physical development – both large and small motor skills. Encourage children to use materials flexibly and combine them in different ways. Check that children’s clothing and footwear are not too tight or too large. |

**Prime area: physical development (cont.):**

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180056/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)

**Prime area: physical development (cont.):**

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| **Young children will be learning to:** | **Examples of how to support this:** |
| Use large and small motor skills to do things independently, for example manage buttons and zips, and pour drinks.    Show an increasing desire to be independent, such as wanting to feed themselves and dress or undress.    Start eating independently and learning how to use a knife and fork.                  Develop manipulation and control.      Explore different materials and tools. | Provide young children with lots of opportunities to feed themselves. Encourage them to dress and undress independently. Be patient, do not rush and take time to talk about what they are doing and why: “It’s a bit cold and wet today – what do we need to wear to keep warm and dry?”    At meal and snack times, encourage children to try a range of foods as they become more independent eaters. Encourage children to help with carrying, pouring drinks, cleaning and sorting.    Encourage young children’s personal decision-making by offering real choices – water or milk, for example. They can comment on how to eat healthily, listen to children’s responses and develop conversations about this. Encourage good eating habits and behaviours, such as not snatching, sharing and waiting for a second helping.    Provide different types of paper for children to tear, make marks on and print on.    Provide lots of different things for young children to grasp, hold and explore, like clay, finger paint, spoons, brushes, shells.    Note: Look out for children who find it difficult to sit comfortably on chairs. They may need help to develop their core muscles. You can help them by encouraging them to scoot on sit-down trikes without pedals and jump on soft-play equipment. |

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180056/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)

**Assessment:**

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|  | **Observational checkpoints for 18 months** |
| **CL** | Is the toddler listening and responding to a simple instruction like: “Adam, put on your shoes”?  Can the toddler use a range of adult like speech patterns (Jargon) and at least 20 clear words?  Does the toddler understand lots of single words and some two-word phrases, such as “give me” or “shoes on”? |
| **PSED** | Is the toddler increasingly curious about their world and wanting to explore it and be noticed by you? |

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|  | **Observational checkpoints for two-year-olds** |
| **CL** | Is the child showing an interest in what other children are playing and sometimes joins in? |
| Can the child use up to 50 words? |
| Is the child beginning to put two or three words together: “more milk”? |
| Can the child understand many more words than they can say – between 200-500 words? |
| Can the child understand simple questions and instructions like: “where’s your hat” or “what’s the boy in the picture doing”? |
| **PSED** | Does the child start to see themselves as a separate person? For example, do they decide what to play with, what to eat, what to wear? |
| Does the child start to enjoy the company of other children and want to play with them? |
| **PD** | Can the toddler run well, kick a ball, and jump with both feet off the ground at the same time? |

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180056/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf)

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[seld-with-logos.pdf (shropshirelg.net)](https://www.shropshirelg.net/media/ma3f01yc/seld-with-logos.pdf)



[Progress check at age two – Non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6284c0a2e90e071f61322177/Progress_check_at_age_two_non-statutory_guidance_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage_.pdf)

**Specific welfare requirements for two-year-olds:**

**Baby and toddler safety:** how to protect toddlers from some of the commonest accidents that affect young children[Baby and toddler safety - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/safety/baby-and-toddler-safety/)

**Key person:**

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| [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf) | [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf) |
| 3.38 Each child **must** be assigned a key person. In childminding settings, the key person is the childminder, or can be an assistant where appropriate. Their role is to help ensure that every child’s care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. They **should** also help families and engage with more specialist support if appropriate. | 3.34 Each child **must** be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child’s care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. They **should** also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate. |

**N.B. Sharing information about care needs:**

Communication is key to helping to settle a two-year-old who is new to your setting, as well as building a partnership with the child’s parents / carers. Some settings complete a daily diary to share information on how they have addressed the child’s care needs during the day; for example, the food and drink consumed by the child, when the child took a nap and for how long, and what their nappies were like.

This information **does not** need to be handwritten in a diary; it can be recorded on a chart and the information shared with the parent / carer at the end of the day.

**Staff:child ratios:**

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| [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf) | [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf) |
| 3.39 Staffing arrangements **must** meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Childminders **must** ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to use any assistants to ensure children’s needs are met. Childminders **must** inform parents and/or carers about how any assistants are organised, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.  3.40 Children **must** usually be within sight and hearing of the childminder and or/assistants and always within sight or hearing. Whilst eating, children **must** be within sight and hearing of the childminder and/or assistants.  3.42 At any one time, childminders (whether providing the childminding on domestic or non-domestic premises) may care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight. This includes the childminder’s own children and any other children for whom they are responsible, such as those being fostered.  3.43 Of these six children: • A maximum of three may be young children (i.e. a child is a young child until 1st September following his or her fifth birthday). • There **should** only be one child under the age of one. | 3.35 Staffing arrangements **must** meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Providers **must** ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to use staff to ensure children’s needs are met. Providers **must** inform parents and/or carers about how staff are organised, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.  3.36 Children **must** usually be within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing. Whilst eating, children **must** be within sight and hearing of a member of staff.  3.41 For children aged two: • There **must** be at least one member of staff for every five children. • At least one member of staff **must** hold an approved level 3 qualification. • At least half of all other staff **must** hold an approved level 2 qualification. |

**Paediatric first aid:**

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| [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf) | [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf) |
| 3.34 Childminders are required to have a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate to register and **must** continue to hold this at all times that they are registered. At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate **must** be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and **must** accompany children on outings. The certificate **must** be for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A. PFA training **must** be renewed every three years and be relevant for people caring for young children and babies. | 3.29 At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate **must** be on the premises and available at all times when children are present and **must** accompany children on outings. The certificate **must** be for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A. PFA training **must** be renewed every three years and be relevant for people caring for young children and babies. |

**Food and drink:**

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| [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf) | [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf) |
| 3.54 Where children are provided with meals, snacks, and drinks, these **must** be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before a child is admitted to the setting the childminder **must** obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements. Fresh drinking water **must** always be available and accessible to children. Childminders **must** record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs. | 3.55 Where children are provided with meals, snacks, and drinks, these **must** be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Before a child is admitted to the setting the provider **must** obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements. Fresh drinking water **must** always be available and accessible to children. Providers **must** record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs. |

**Food and drink facilities:**

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| [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf) | [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf) |
| 3.55 There **must** be an area adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There **must** be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary, including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies’ food. Childminders **must** be confident that they, or any assistants responsible for preparing and handling food, are competent to do so. Section 4 of ‘Example menus for early years settings in England’ includes guidance on menu planning, food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels, which childminders and assistants preparing food will find helpful in ensuring that children are kept safe. | 3.56 There **must** be an area adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There **must** be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary, including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies’ food. Providers **must** be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. All staff involved in preparing and handling food **must** receive training in food hygiene. Section 4 of ‘Example menus for early years settings in England’ includes guidance on menu planning, food safety, managing food allergies and reading food labels, which staff preparing food will find helpful in ensuring that children are kept safe. |

**Sleeping arrangements:**

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| [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf) | [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf) |
| 3.69 Sleeping children **must** be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. Being safe includes ensuring that cots and bedding are in good condition and suited to the age of the child and that babies are placed down to sleep safely in line with the latest government safety guidance [Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids/) Childminders may also find it helpful to read NHS advice on safety of sleeping babies: [Reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/caring-for-a-newborn/reduce-the-risk-of-sudden-infant-death-syndrome/) | 3.69 Sleeping children **must** be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. Being safe includes ensuring that cots and bedding are in good condition and suited to the age of the child … |

**Toilets and intimate hygiene:**

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| [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for childminders(publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf) | [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf) |
| 3.70 Childminders **must** ensure: • There is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available. • There are suitable hygienic changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies. • There is an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels, spare clothes, and any other necessary items. | 3.71 Providers **must** ensure: • There is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available - there **should** usually be separate toilet facilities for adults. • There are suitable hygienic changing facilities for changing any children who are in nappies. • There is an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels, spare clothes, and any other necessary items. |

Further information on the disposal of soiled nappies can be found at:[Preventing and controlling infections - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/preventing-and-controlling-infections)

A guide to potty training: [ERIC's Guide to Potty Training.pdf (windows.net)](https://dmbcwebstolive01.blob.core.windows.net/media/Default/ChildrenYoungPeopleFamilies/ERIC's%20Guide%20to%20Potty%20Training.pdf)

**Links to further articles and research:**

[A good place to be Two | Training resources | Community Playthings](https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/training-resources/a-good-place-to-be-two) (2013) This booklet covers all aspects of the environment indoors and out for two-year-olds.

[Best Books for 2-year-olds | BookTrust](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/b/best-books-for-2-year-olds/) Suggested books for children aged 2-years of age.

[Babies and toddlers | Shropshire Learning Gateway (shropshirelg.net)](https://www.shropshirelg.net/early-years/effective-practice-in-eyfs/the-unique-child/babies-and-toddlers/)Further guidance and advice for practitioners working with children from birth to two.

[Birthto5Matters-download.pdf](https://birthto5matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Birthto5Matters-download.pdf) Non-statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

[Children's language development and parenting advice - BBC Tiny Happy People](https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people)  (2023) Activities to help support their children’s communication and language development.

[Early years child development training: Home page (education.gov.uk)](https://child-development-training.education.gov.uk/?utm_source=hfeyp&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=link) (2023) This free, online training provides an overview of child development and gives practical advice for supporting the development of children in your early years setting.

[Early Years & KS1 Free Audits & Guides | Early Excellence](https://earlyexcellence.com/get-equipped/our-free-audits-and-guides/) (2023) An audit check on the quality of provision for 2–3-year-olds

[Froebel-Trust-PDF-Research-Highlight-Book-One.pdf](https://www.froebel.org.uk/uploads/documents/Froebel-Trust-PDF-Research-Highlight-Book-One.pdf)Nursery attachments and the role of the key person.

**Links to further articles and research (cont.):**

[Help for early years providers - Department for Education](https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/) (2023) Guidance for people who work in early years, from the Department for Education.

Nutbrown, C. (2011) *Threads of Thinking: Schemas and Young Children’s Learning.* 4th edn. SAGE Publications Ltd

Page, J., Clare, C. and Nutbrown, C. (2013) *Working with babies and children: From birth to three.* 2nd edn. SAGE Publications Ltd.

[Parental engagement | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/early-years-toolkit/parental-engagement) Parental engagement approaches have, on average, a positive impact of five months’ additional progress. It is crucial to consider how to engage with all parents to avoid widening attainment gaps. There is extensive evidence on the positive impact of parental engagement approaches.

[Pen-Green-Key-Concepts-Schemas.pdf (pengreen.org)](https://www.pengreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Pen-Green-Key-Concepts-Schemas.pdf) (2018) Further information on understanding young children’s repeated pattern of actions.

[Physical development in early childhood - Early Education (early-education.org.uk)](https://early-education.org.uk/physical-development-early-childhood/) Exploring the importance of physicality at this crucial point in a child’s development.

Tassoni, P. (2014*) Getting it right for Two Year Olds.* Hodder Education

[the-cfs-approach-and-targeted-use-of-colour.pdf (elizabethjarman.com)](https://elizabethjarman.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/the-cfs-approach-and-targeted-use-of-colour.pdf) (2018) Further information on the Communication Friendly Spaces approach.

[Two Year Olds in a Mixed Age Group by Kathy Brodie (abcdoes.com)](https://abcdoes.com/abc-does-a-blog/2012/05/02/two-year-olds-in-a-mixed-age-group-by-kathy-brodie/) (2012) In this blog, Kathy Brodie reflects on two-year-olds in a mixed aged group.

[What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf (foundationyears.org.uk)](https://foundationyears.org.uk/files/2021/09/What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf)

**A collage of children with different expressions

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