

MOVING ON TO NURSERY

Greater Glasgow and Clyde



These MOVING ON TO Questionnaires are designed to enable you to check your child's progress at particular stages of development.

This questionnaire is designed to be used with 2½ to 3½ year old children to develop the skills they need to join in at nursery. Do not worry if your child cannot do all the tasks, simply focus on the ones that they have not yet mastered and practice these.

The questionnaire looks at different areas of your child's development including sensory, fine motor, activities of daily living (e.g. dressing and eating), listening, understanding, talking and interacting skills.

- Try each activity with your child before selecting a response.
- Make completing this questionnaire a game that is fun for you and your child.
- Make sure your child is well rested and fed.
- If your child shows signs of distress do not continue.

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Question 1 - Sensory

Question 1

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Can your child participate in messy play without becoming distressed?

Your child explores the world through touch. Not all children like textures and this is perfectly normal, however it is important to give your child plenty of opportunities to experience different touch sensations.



Never force your child to touch something that they find distressing. Do only what your child will tolerate. Tolerance builds up gradually. Overstimulation can result in aggressive behaviour, crying and an increased activity level.

It is essential to approach activities sensitively, starting with less challenging textures (i.e. a texture that is firm and dry) and building towards more challenging textures (i.e. wet and sloppy). Allow your child to control their level of contact and stop when they need to.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

If your child starts to show signs of distress allow them to remove themselves from the activity and wash themselves if they are messy. Here are some activities you might want to try with your child:

- **Feely Bag**
Place different objects in a bag such as plastic animals, building bricks, marbles, textured balls, cotton wool balls, sponge etc. Encourage your child to choose an object from the bag and identify the object starting with allowing your child to look in the bag first then asking them to do this with their eyes closed
- **Playdough**
Encourage your child to play with playdough. Use shop bought playdoh or why not make your own playdough (see below for homemade playdough recipe). Use tools such as rolling pins, cutters, spoons, blunt knives, scissors etc.
- **Water Play**
Fill a basin in the kitchen sink with soapy water and a variety of unbreakable bottles, cups, beakers, turkey basters, sponges, egg beaters and toy water pumps. Alternatively, fill a large plastic bowl with water and toys and set it outside on the grass. Pouring and measuring are excellent for developing the tactile system.
- **Sand Play**
In a sandbox or on a sand table, add small toys (cars, trucks, people and dinosaurs), which your





Question 1 - Sensory

child can arrange and rearrange, bury and rediscover. Alternatives to sand are an empty shoe box or ice-cream tub filled with dried beans, rice, pasta, and popcorn.

- **Rub-a-Dub-Dub**

Encourage your child to rub a variety of textures against their skin (hands and arms, legs and feet). Offer differently textured items (loofahs, sponges, thick washcloths, foam dish scrubbers, plastic nail brushes etc.). Once your child can tolerate the different textured items add different kinds of soap (bar of cream soap, oatmeal soap, shaving cream, liquid soap).

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

- **Touch Different Textures**

Let your child feel the different textures of items when you are in the supermarket (i.e. packets of food, fruit, vegetables, tins and items in homeware etc).

- **Bake Together**

Don't worry if you're not a great baker, you can bake using a packet mix. Scone dough is a good way for your child to experience something that needs a bit of force to knead and will stick to their fingers. Also scraping out the batter or spreading icing on fairy cakes is another good way for hands to get sticky in a fun and non-threatening way.



- **Make a Jelly**

Make a jelly and before it sets why not place some small toys inside and get your child to remove toys using their fingers. Always ensure you are supervising your child so that they don't eat the jelly before the toys have been removed.

- **Messy Play**

Play on a plastic sheet with shaving foam, jelly or homemade slime (see below for homemade slime recipe). Your child can squeeze, pull, poke or draw with their fingers. This can get very messy so think about where you are playing and wear old clothes.



- **Garden Play**

Play in the garden making mud pies, planting bulbs or collecting leaves and twigs.



- **Playing with Food**

Let your child play in a bowl with lentils, split peas, dry/cooked pasta or rice.

- **Arts and Crafts**

Get your child involved in arts and crafts activities using paint, glitter, glue, paper, card, tinfoil, felt, ribbon, foam etc.



Question 1 - Sensory

Homemade Playdough and Slime Recipes

2 cups of plain flour
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
½ cup of salt
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
Up to 1 ½ cups of boiling water
Food colouring (optional)

Mix the dry ingredients and oil in a large mixing bowl, add the colouring to the boiling water (if using). Gradually add the water until it comes together. Once the mixture is cool get your child to knead the dough until the stickiness has gone.

The playdough should last for up to 6 months if stored in an air tight container.



Playdough Recipe

Ingredients

2 cups of cornflour
Water
Food Colouring (optional)

Method

Add enough water (and food colouring if desired) to the cornflour to create a firm consistency.

Storage

The slime should only be kept for one day.



Slime Recipe



Question 2 - Fine Motor

Question 2

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Can your child point with their index finger?

To be able to point your child has to be able to isolate their pointer finger. Finger isolation is an important stage in the development of grasp. It is the ability to move certain fingers apart from the rest of the hand/fingers.

When children begin using their hands, all fingers move together at the same time.

As they grow and develop, they gain the ability to move individual fingers.



It helps with being able to fasten and unfasten buttons, hold and control and pencil for drawing and writing, use scissors, type on a keyboard, play a musical instrument, tie shoelaces, and many other daily living skills.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

- **Pressing Switches**
Have fun pressing doorbells or light switches.
- **Place objects on fingers**
Small hollow cylinders are great to put on index fingers, encouraging the child to take them off and put them back on again, e.g. Smarties tubes. You can also put Hula Hoops on individual fingers.
- **Playdough**
Get your child to poke their index fingers into playdough (see below for homemade playdough recipe).
- **Read a Book**
Read a book with your child and get them to point to different items in the book with their index finger.
- **Use an Old Glove**
Cut the index finger off an old glove to help your child to use their index finger for drawing in shaving foam, sand and on steamy windows.
- **Finger Puppets**
Make a finger puppet out of paper or fingers cut off old gloves.





Question 2 - Fine Motor

Homemade Playdough Recipe

2 cups of plain flour
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
½ cup of salt
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
Up to 1 ½ cups of boiling water
Food colouring (optional)

Mix the dry ingredients and oil in a large mixing bowl, add the colouring to the boiling water (if using). Gradually add the water until it comes together. Once the mixture is cool get your child to knead the dough until the stickiness has gone.

The playdough should last for up to 6 months if stored in an air tight container.



**Playdough
Recipe**



Question 2 - Fine Motor

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

- **Drawing with your Index Finger**

Get your child to use their index finger for drawing in shaving foam, sand and on steamy windows.



- **Finger Songs**

Playing finger songs with your child, e.g. 'Tommy Thumb' song, 'Two Little Dickie Birds', 'Round and round the garden' and 'Incy Wincy Spider'.

- **Finger painting**

Get your child to draw a picture with paint using their index fingers instead of a paintbrush.

- **Blow Bubbles**

Try blowing bubbles and getting your child to pop them with their index fingers only.

- **Finger Football**

Play 'finger football' with scrunched up pieces of small paper or cotton wool balls by flicking them across a table to score a goal.

- **Water Play**

Have fun with your child using spray bottles and water squirters using their index finger on the trigger.





Question 3 - Fine Motor

Question 3

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Can your child use their thumb and index finger only when picking up a small object e.g. raisin?

The development of grasp is influenced by a child's growing interest in objects and desire to hold them. The pincer grasp is an essential grasp to develop as it is the basis for many functional tasks e.g. fastenings and tool use e.g. pencil grasp.



Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet doing the activity**

- **Use an Old Glove**
Cut out the thumb and index finger of an old glove and get your child to do things with these fingers only e.g. unwrap a sweetie or pop the bubbles in a piece of bubble wrap.



- **Finger Food**
Fill a bowl with a mix of dried pasta, raisins, dried beans, etc and then ask your child to sort them into jars and cups. Make sure you supervise your child at all times. Also give your child small food items for snack or cut food up small when they are finger feeding. Try cut up grapes, raisins, apple, carrot etc. They could help you to dish the snack out into a bowl or onto a plate.
- **Scribbling**
Get your child to scribble on paper with short chunky crayons or the pavement with short chunky chinks.
- **Playdough**
Hide small toys in the playdough (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe) and have your child find them and pull them out, you could use marbles or 5p pieces. Making small balls with the playdough and flick them to a goal.
- **Tongs and Tweezers**
Get your child to pick up items using salad/kitchen tongs and tweezers. Start with tongs and larger items e.g. balls of cotton wool or balled up tin foil or paper and move onto smaller items using the tweezers.





Question 3 - Fine Motor

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

- **Threading**

Carry out a number of threading activities by using:

- Cotton reels and laces.
- Dried pasta tubes and wool.
- Large beads and thick laces.
- Drinking/crafting straws cut into small pieces and laces.
- Buttons and thin laces.
- Lacing cards (or a piece of card with holes punched into it). Always encourage your child to hold the lace and the item being threaded between 'Tommy Thumb' (thumb) and 'Peter Pointer' (index finger).



- **Coin Races**

Ask your child to place coins in a piggy bank (or a box with a slot cut in the lid). Encourage your child to pick up the coins with their "Tommy Thumb (thumb) and "Peter Pointer" (index finger) and use their helping hand to hold the piggy bank.



- **Pegs Races**

Ask your child to place clothes pegs on the side of an ice-cream tub as fast as they can. Encourage them to use their 'Tommy Thumb' (thumb) and "Peter Pointer" (index finger) to squeeze the pegs open. They should use their dominant hand to hold the pegs and their helping hand to hold the tub.

- **Tongs and Tweezers**

Get your child to pick up items using salad/kitchen tongs and tweezers. Start with tongs and larger items e.g. balls of cotton wool or balled up tin foil or paper and move onto smaller items with tweezers.



- **Craft Activities**

Gluing and sticking are great fun. You and your child could make collages with pieces of a magazine, dried pasta, rice, wool, string, tissue paper etc. Ripping and tearing and scrunching tissue paper is a great way to develop pincer grasp.



Question 4 - Fine Motor

Question 4

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Does your child create new things from everyday objects?

Construction play involves manipulating one or more pieces of play materials to create something new. This may involve a variety of methods – stacking, sticking, putting together, taking things apart, sorting or moulding, to name a few.



Construction play develops all types of skills and behaviours;

- *The motor skills necessary to create and manipulate the items.*
- *Imagination skills.*
- *Planning and ideation skills; the ability to try out and test ideas.*
- *Perseverance when things don't work.*
- *When working with others turn taking and collaboration skills.*

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

- **Create Opportunities from Everyday Objects**

Give your child plenty of opportunity to play with construction toys; not just Duplo or building blocks but playdough (see below for homemade playdough recipe) and making things from everyday objects e.g. toilet roll tubes and shoe boxes.



- **Building**

Build things with your child, talking to them all the time. Introduce them to new worlds through your imagination.

- **Construction**

Construct an obstacle course together using pillows, cushions, furniture and duvets.

- **Play at Home Books**

Have a look at your 'Play at Home' books, which your Health Visitor provided you with, for other ideas.





Question 4 - Fine Motor

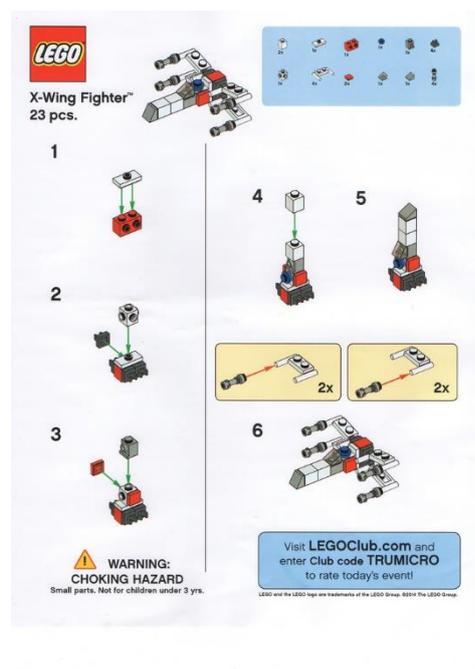
Further Suggestions

- Putting together a train track.
- Making cars, rockets or houses out of cardboard boxes.
- Building sand castles.
- Building models with recycled materials.



Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

- **Building**
Add new materials to your child's building block set- empty plastic tubs, pieces of fabric, balls of wool, shells, bottle tops, lengths of ribbon, stones etc.
- **Construction**
Make models from a cereal box or toilet roll tube adding lollipop sticks, buttons, googly eyes, string, sequins, felt tipped pens, tape, cotton wool and paint.
- **Playdough**
Add new materials to playdough (see below for homemade playdough recipe) e.g. matchsticks, lollipop sticks, googly eyes, buttons, sequins etc.
- **Create a Den**
Build a den from sheets, chairs, large boxes, etc.
- **Lego**
Create a Lego model by following the instructions.





Question 4 - Fine Motor

Homemade Playdough Recipe

2 cups of plain flour
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
½ cup of salt
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
Up to 1 ½ cups of boiling water
Food colouring (optional)

Mix the dry ingredients and oil in a large mixing bowl, add the colouring to the boiling water (if using). Gradually add the water until it comes together. Once the mixture is cool get your child to knead the dough until the stickiness has gone.

The playdough should last for up to 6 months if stored in an air tight container.



**Playdough
Recipe**



Question 5 - Fine Motor

Question 5

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Can your child thread large beads onto a string?

To thread large beads your child needs to be able to use both hands together (another name for this is bilateral integration). Bilateral activities involve using both hands at the same time but require different movements. We use these movements all day in everyday situations for example holding a jar still whilst twisting a lid open, using a knife and fork, and tying up shoelaces.



Before your child can master using both hands for different movements at the same time they must first learn to use both hands doing the same thing at the same time.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

- **Playdough**
Roll out a ball of playdough to make sausages using both hands together (see below for homemade playdough recipe).
- **Bubbles**
Burst bubbles using both hands together.
- **Play with a ball**
Throw and catch a large ball with both hands - if your child struggles with this then try using a balloon instead.
- **Draw Patterns**
Get your child to use both hands at the same time to draw patterns on a large piece of paper, chalkboard or pavement.
- **Posting**
Get your child to carry out some posting activities, e.g. coins into a piggy bank, picking up raisins or rice crispies and dropping them into a small necked bottle. Make a small hole in the top of a crisp tub and get your child to post rolled up pieces of small paper through.
- **Baking**
Roll out pastry using a large rolling pin and then press out different shapes with cookie cutters using both hands together.





Question 5 - Fine Motor

Homemade Playdough Recipe

2 cups of plain flour
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
½ cup of salt
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
Up to 1 ½ cups of boiling water
Food colouring (optional)

Mix the dry ingredients and oil in a large mixing bowl, add the colouring to the boiling water (if using). Gradually add the water until it comes together. Once the mixture is cool get your child to knead the dough until the stickiness has gone.

The playdough should last for up to 6 months if stored in an air tight container.



**Playdough
Recipe**



Question 5 - Fine Motor

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

- **Helping with Housework**

Get your child to help with housework (e.g. using a dustpan and brush, duster to polish, etc.) and also help in the kitchen (e.g. opening containers, chopping and mixing, etc.).

- **Threading**

Try using something rigid such as a pipecleaner or a piece of dry spaghetti and get your child to thread large beads or uncooked penne pasta onto it. Once your child is able to thread easily with a rigid cord substitute this with a shoe lace.

- **Sing Songs**

Sing along to songs where both hands are making different movements at the same time (i.e. Incy Wincy Spider).



Additional Activities

- Sharpen a pencil with a pencil sharpener.
- Pour water from one receptacle (jug or cup etc.) to another using both hands.
- Bounce a ball using alternate hands.
- Putting toothpaste on a toothbrush.
- Place one hand on paper and use the other hand to draw around it.
- Playing a card game (e.g. Snap).





Question 6 - Activities of Daily Living

Question 6

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Can your child drink from an open cup?

Mealtimes are an important aspect of family life. Children begin to develop self-feeding skills from birth. Drinking from a cup is a complex task and takes a number of years to master. Between 2 and 5 months a baby will move its hands to the breast/bottle while feeding. Between 6 and 9 months a baby can hold a bottle in both hands. They can often drink from a cup with both hands and take a few sips without help. By 18 months they can use a straw and by 3 years a child can drink from a cup (without a lid) without spilling.



Hints and Tips

It is important that your child is well positioned when they are learning any new skill. Initially ensure your child is well supported in a high chair or on your lap. You can use cushions or rolled up towels to help your child to stay sitting up straight in their high chair.

As they grow it is important that their feet and back are supported so that they can use their hands freely. Whenever possible ensure that your child is sitting at a table. You could use a sturdy box under their feet and cushions on the chair to make sure they are well supported.



Think about the cups you are using. Try a variety of cups with lids at the early stages and move towards using an open cup or beaker. Try a beaker/cup with a rim. Sometimes using a cup which is heavier is easier, a beaker/cup with a weighted bottom can help. Use cups with handles (one or two). Avoid light plastic cups which are easily knocked over.



Also think about how much liquid you put in the cup. Too little and your child will have to tip the cup and their head back. Too full and your child may be unable to control the flow of the liquid and any spill will be messy.

Take your time and be consistent. Learning a new skill takes time so persevere with giving support until you feel that your child is making progress.



Question 6 - Activities of Daily Living

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!! Give your child opportunities for practice every day.

A good way to teach your child a new skill is to break down each task into small steps and teach them the last step first (this technique is called backward chaining, for more information visit www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/self-care/dressing-myself/backward-chaining/). Once they can do the last step of the task, teach them the second last step, the third last step and so on. For drinking from a cup the following steps may be appropriate:

- Put the cup to your child's lips and tip. Your child has to take a sip from the cup.
- Put the cup to your child's lips and your child then tips the cup and takes a sip.
- Your child lifts the cup to their lips and then tips the cup to take a sip.

Children learn in different ways so you might need to vary your approach. There are a number of ways in which you can help:

- Physically assist your child - Use the hand-over-hand technique by letting your child grasp the cup while you put your hand over the top of their hand to guide them.
- Show your child - Do the task alongside your child.
- Tell your child - Talk your child through each step of the process.

You can use each of these ways individually or any combination depending on what suits your child. Please be aware that some children cannot look and listen at the same time so limit the amount of information you give.

Ways to physically assist your child using a cup:

- Your child can hold onto your hand as the cup is brought to their mouth.
- Hand-over-hand - your child grasps the cup while you put their hand over the top of your child's hand.
- Your child grasps the cup whilst you hold the bottom to guide the movement.
- Your child grasps the cup while you help by supporting and guiding from the elbow.



You can also practice using a cup during other activities e.g. during pretend play, during craft activities, water or sand play etc. Give your child the opportunity to practice pouring and making drinks. Use smaller bottles and smaller jugs.



Question 7 - Activities of Daily Living

Question 7

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Can your child use a spoon independently?

Mealtimes are important aspect of family life. Children begin to develop self-feeding skills from birth. Self-feeding is a very complex task and it is common for children to have difficulty using cutlery to feed themselves. It usually takes until a child is 7 years old before they can successfully use cutlery to feed themselves without being too messy.



Babies are usually keen to get involved with feeding between 6 and 9 months. They will hold and mouth food from this age and will often be keen to help with feeding and play with a spoon by banging it and mouthing both ends. Between 9 and 13 months they can finger feed with soft foods or those that melt quickly in the mouth. By 14 months children can usually dip a spoon into food and can also move the spoon to their mouths (this is very messy and involves lots of spills). Children then learn to scoop with a spoon to feed themselves. By 24 months children are usually keen to feed themselves and be independent. Between 2 and 3 years children further develop their spoon feeding skills.

Hints and Tips

It is important that your child is well supported when they are learning any new skill. Initially ensure your child is well supported in a high chair or on your lap. You can use cushions or rolled up towels to help your child to stay sitting up straight in their high chair.

As they grow it is important that their feet and back are supported so that they can use their hands freely. Whenever possible ensure that your child is sitting at a table. You could use a sturdy box under their feet and cushions on the chair to make sure they are well supported.

Always set the dishes and utensils out in the same way to develop a routine and help your child locate items at each meal.

Think about the utensils you are using. Spoons with thick and/or textured handles are easier to hold. A spoon with a short handle is easier to control. Consider the weight of the cutlery. Sometimes something heavier can be easier to control. Use a bowl or plate with a raised edge so the child has something to scoop against. Place a non-slip mat underneath the bowl to prevent it sliding when your child is learning to scoop.



Question 7 - Activities of Daily Living

When encouraging your child to use a spoon use foods that stick to the spoon (e.g. yoghurt, porridge, mashed potato). These are less likely to spill, so the child has more chance of succeeding.



Take your time and be consistent. Learning a new skill takes time so persevere with giving support until you feel that the child is making progress.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!! Give your child opportunities for practice every day.

A good way to teach your child a new skill is to break down each task into small steps and teach them the last step first (this technique is called backward chaining, for more information visit www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/self-care/dressing-myself/backward-chaining/). Once they can do the last step of the task, teach them the second-last step, then the third-last step and so on. Here is one way to break the task down into steps:

- Start by supporting the action completely. Gradually reduce the amount of physical support you provide as the child becomes more independent.
- Start by encouraging your child to hold a spoon or cup whilst feeding so they get used to handling feeding tools.
- Help your child scoop the food, bring the spoon up to their mouth and put the spoon into their mouth. Your child is responsible for removing the food.
- Help your child scoop the food and bring the spoon up to their mouth. Your child is responsible for putting the spoon into their mouth and removing the food.
- Help your child scoop the food. Your child is responsible for bringing the spoon up to their mouth, putting the spoon into their mouth and removing the food from the spoon.
- Your child can now try using the spoon independently – expect some mess!



Question 7 - Activities of Daily Living

Children learn in different ways so you might need to vary your approach. There are a number of ways in which you can help:

- Physically assist your child.
- Show your child - do the task alongside your child.
- Tell your child - talk your child through each step of the process.

You can use each of these ways individually or any combination depending on what suits your child. Please be aware that some children cannot look and listen at the same time so limit the amount of information you giving.





Question 8 - Activities of Daily Living

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Can your child take their socks and slip on shoes off independently?

Babies love to take their socks off they can usually manage this by themselves by the time they are 15 months old. Putting on socks is a skill that children can often find challenging particularly for those children who experience difficulties in using both of their hands together to complete a task.

Children learn to take their shoes off first and can usually pull on wellies, slippers and slip on shoes by the time they are 2 years old.



Hints and Tips

A good way to teach your child how to get dressed is to break down each task into small steps and teach them the last step first (this technique is called backward chaining, for more information visit www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/self-care/dressing-myself/backward-chaining/). Once they can do the last step of the task, teach them the second last step, then the third last step and so on. Push your child's sock down until it is just covering their toes and encourage your child to pull the sock off and offer lots of praise when they succeed. Once they have mastered this push the sock down to their heel and encourage them to pull it off again giving praise when they succeed. Finally teach them to remove their sock independently by teaching the first step by putting your hands over theirs and showing them what to do.



Sit down, practice with shoes without fastenings (or you undo) encourage your child to use 2 hands, one on the heel and one on the toe. They then push down on heel.

If your child is struggling it can be tempting to take over - don't! Give your child time to work it out for themselves and give loads of encouragement. If necessary, talk them through what to do and only intervene if they get really stuck. It is often better to practice these things when you are not in a rush so weekends are better than when you are rushing about during the week.

Try to build taking off shoes and socks into your daily routine. Encourage them to do this for themselves every time. Practice Practice Practice!

Here are some activities you might want to try with your child:

- Play dress up with your child; use a variety of oversized clothes.
- Practice taking socks off a doll or teddy bear.





Question 9 - Understanding

Question 9

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Does your child always follow simple instructions like 'get your socks' without you gesturing or pointing?

Your child will start to understand words that are important in their life like 'Mummy', 'Daddy', 'cup' and 'No!' and of course, their own name. They will then start to understand short phrases and simple instructions and then as they understand more words they will understand more complex instructions. There are a number of reasons why your child might not follow instructions.



Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

There are lots of reasons why your child might not understand instructions.

Your talking style can make a big difference!

- Make sure you have your child's attention and switch off the TV and hide the tablet/ phone! (See the Screen Time leaflet www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/slt-activityinformation-sheets/screen-time-leaflet/ for more information).
- Say your child's name and get eye contact before talking.
- For small children, get right down to their level.
- Use play to help develop your child's understanding. Play with the things they are interested in and describe rather than ask questions.
- Reduce and simplify your language when talking to them.
- Wait and give your child more time to process your words before asking again.
- Your child will need to hear language from you lots of times before they will understand it.
- Find opportunities to play and talk together.
- Use gestures and signs to gain their attention and help them to understand.



If you are still worried after trying these tips for a few weeks, you could contact your Health Visitor or call your local Speech and Language Therapy department www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/healthcare-professionals/paediatric-speech-and-language-therapy/ to discuss any worries.



Question 9 - Understanding

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

There are lots of reasons why your child might not understand instructions.

Your talking style can make a big difference!

- Make sure you have your child's attention and switch off the TV and hide the tablet/ phone! (See the Screen Time leaflet www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/slt-activityinformation-sheets/screen-time-leaflet/ for more information)
- Try not to shout instructions from another room. Give your child as much help to understand as possible. Say their name and get eye contact before talking.
- For small children, get right down to their level.
- Slow down your rate of speech and use pauses.
- Use simple sentences or break long sentences down into easy to remember 'chunks'.
- Keep your talk exciting by using your tone of voice and facial expression – this might feel a bit silly but helps to keep your child interested!
- Remember to use lots of praise and positive words – it helps your child know that they are achieving success!





Question 10 – Using Words

Question 10

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Does your child try to put words together in short phrases such as 'More juice Mummy!' or 'Me jumped on bed!'?

Between 2 and a half and 3 and a half there can be a big variation in the amount of words that children will use (see the [Child Development Timeline](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/child-development/interactive-child-development-timeline/) for more information www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/child-development/interactive-child-development-timeline/). Lots of young toddlers will use familiar phrases like 'all gone' before true sentences start. When your child is using about 50 words, they will start to link words together in short phrases that join ideas together like 'more juice' 'Mummy shoe'.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

This might be ok depending on where your child is on their language development journey. If your child has only recently started putting words together at age 2 and a half, they will need more time to practise before using longer phrases.

- Talk about the here and now. Adults who respond quickly to a child's interests and attempts to talk can make a big difference.
- Accept all of your child's attempts to communicate and don't worry about getting them to copy and repeat your words – focus on interacting and sharing activities.
- Extend and add words to your child's vocabulary by letting them hear you say it. If your child says 'milk' you can say 'more milk, yes have more milk!'
- Instead of testing what words your child knows, let them hear what they could say e.g. instead of: "What's that?" or "Say 'apple'?" You could say: "Look, at the apple, it's a crunchy apple."
- Help your child to make choices even if they don't have words. If you say 'What do you want for breakfast?' your child may struggle to find the word for the thing that they really like. You can help by giving them a choice: "Do you want crispies or toast?" If your child points, accept their choice and say the words they would if they could: 'You want toast today!' Encouraging your child to make choices even if they don't use words helps them become more independent and more motivated to communicate with you!





Question 10 – Using Words

- Remember, at this stage the best language learning comes from interaction with an interested adult. Everyday routines like bath time, meal time, bed time and play time give lots of chances to copy and add language!

If you are still worried after trying these tips for a few weeks, you could contact your Health Visitor or call your local Speech and Language Therapy department www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/healthcare-professionals/paediatric-speech-and-language-therapy/ to discuss any worries.

If your child is older than 2 and a half and is only using a few words and not making any attempt to join words together, please contact your local Speech and Language Therapy department www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/healthcare-professionals/paediatric-speech-and-language-therapy/ to discuss any worries that you have.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

Between 2 and a half and 3 and a half there can be a big variation in the amount of words that children will use (see the Child Development Timeline for more information www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/child-development/interactive-child-development-timeline/). If your child has only recently started joining words together, they will need more practise before they will use longer phrases.

- When we think about adding new words it is important to think about what is useful for toddlers and small children. Children need to hear words that help them to interact in their everyday world when they get started with talking. Focus on everyday doing words like 'washing, sleeping, mixing, and brushing' as well as the names of things. Saying colours, shapes, letters and numbers comes later when your child has a good grasp of everyday, helping words.
- Don't ask them to repeat if they sound babyish, instead help them by saying the phrase or sentence back to them using the right words e.g. If they say 'Look at the tat!' You can say 'Yes it's a cat!'
- Let your child hear lots of different kinds of words e.g. if they say 'ball', you say 'yes it's a big ball, it's a big bouncy ball. Can you kick it?' This way you are adding words to their vocabulary.
- For older children you can start to encourage your child by adding in some more complicated, descriptive words that will really help your child at school. If your child says 'Look at that dog!' you can encourage them to think about language ideas e.g. 'It's a tiny dog – is it smaller than Gran's dog?' or 'It's sitting on the grass – do you think it could fit under the bench?'





Question 11 – Speech Sounds

Question 11

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Do you understand your child's speech most of the time?

Some children won't use the full range of speech sounds until they are over 6 years of age. Speech sounds tend to develop in a pattern that means easier sounds will be used instead of more difficult ones for example 'jam' becomes 'dam'. This is perfectly normal. You might find that your child can copy the sounds but isn't always using them in their chat. Again, this is typical of developing speech for this age range.



Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

- Find other ways to help them get their point across such as gesture/ pointing or signing or simply ask them to show you or point to it. Use real objects to help you tune to what your child is saying by offering choices e.g. 'crisps or juice?' By doing this you are also letting your child hear the right word.
- Respond to what your child has said not how clearly they have said it. Make sure you listen to their message to keep your child interested in communicating. Speech development needs practise and your child needs to hear your clear speech and to have lots of chances to talk.
- Don't make them repeat words. Children need to feel relaxed and confident in order to experiment with sounds and get lots of practise talking. Drawing too much attention to mistakes and making children repeat words is not helpful – they may not know what it is that needs to change in their speech and might not be able to change it yet.
- When talking to your child, slow down your speech. If you use a slow, steady pace this will show your child how to slow down. Don't talk too slowly though – try to sound natural.
- Try to build their confidence with talking. Spend time doing fun things together e.g. playing a game. Any attempts to talk will be linked to the game and it will be easier for you to tune in and understand what they are saying. Repeat back what your child has said showing them that they have been understood. You are also giving your child a good example of talking.





Question 11 – Speech Sounds

- With younger children, take the pressure and focus off your child when you don't understand. Help them to repeat and find other ways to tell you e.g. "Oh I have silly ears today- can you tell me again?" "My goodness. I didn't hear all of that – can you show me?"

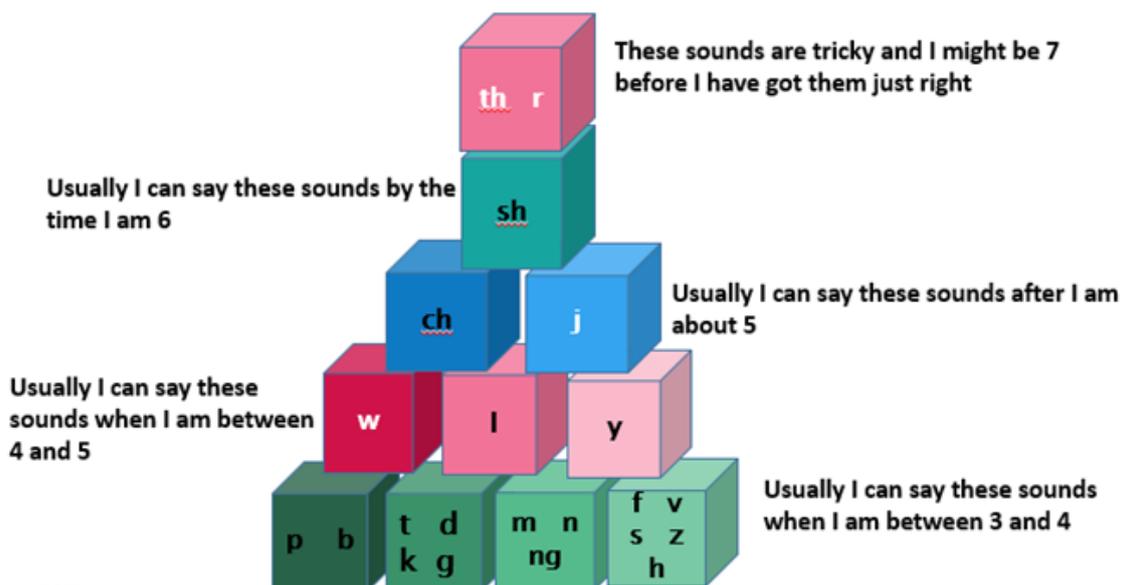
Remember if your child has a dummy, avoid using this during talking times or get rid of it all together! (See the Dummies and Speech Development leaflet www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/slt-activityinformation-sheets/dummies-and-speech-development/ for more information).



If you are very worried, remember that speech sounds may not be fully mature until around 6 years of age (see the Building Blocks of Language www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/healthcare-professionals/paediatric-speech-and-language-therapy/building-blocks-of-language/ for more information). Contact your local Speech and Language Therapy department www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/healthcare-professionals/paediatric-speech-and-language-therapy/ for a discussion if you continue to have concerns after trying this advice for a few months.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

Some children won't use the full range of speech sounds until they are over 6 years of age. Speech sounds tend to develop in a pattern that means easier sounds will be used instead of more difficult ones for example 'jam' becomes 'dam'. This is perfectly normal. You might find that your child can copy the sounds but isn't always using them in their chat. Again, this is typical of developing speech for this age range. Have a look at the Speech Sound Development section www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/listening-understanding-talking-and-interacting/ to see which sounds you can expect next.





Question 11 – Speech Sounds

Remember if your child was delayed to start using words and sentences, their speech may need extra time to mature.

Remember if your child has a dummy, avoid using this during talking times or get rid of it all together! (See the Dummies and Speech Development leaflet www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/slt-activityinformation-sheets/dummies-and-speech-development/ for more information).





Question 12 – Listening and Attention

Question 12

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Does your child listen and stay focused on a short story or an activity with you?

Listening and attention are essential skills for language development. Attention and listening are skills that develop as your child matures. If your child struggles to attend and focus, they may miss language learning opportunities.



Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

If you have concerns about your child's hearing, contact your Health Visitor to discuss this.

Listening and attention are essential skills for language development. If your child struggles to attend and focus, they may miss language learning opportunities.

- Get rid of distractions at talking and playing times particularly the TV or phone/ tablet (see the Screen Time leaflet www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/slt-activityinformation-sheets/screen-time-leaflet/ for more information).
- You may need to help your child to focus and listen. The best way to start this is to follow their lead in play. Play with what interests them. Keep activities short and stop when they lose interest. You can then try to get your child to stick with an activity for longer next time even it is only for a few seconds. For younger children turn taking activities like bubbles or skittles are a good way to try this.
- For older children playing games with a definite end point encourages them to complete the final step, even if you do the rest of it, for example, you do most of a jigsaw and let them put the last piece in.





Question 12 – Listening and Attention

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

Attention and listening are skills that develop as your child matures. If you try this advice you will help your child to continue developing these important skills. (See Attention and Listening Skills www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/slt-activityinformation-sheets/attention-and-listening/ for more information).

- Any shared play activity can help your child develop their listening and attention e.g. playing with building/ construction toys, sharing books together, talking about the different sounds you hear when you are out and about, even bath time! The important thing is that you are helping your child to develop their skills by sharing the activity and talking about it.
- Nursery rhymes and songs are a great way to get your child thinking about words and copying and taking turns.
- Taking turns with musical instruments is another way to focus your child on sounds and copying.





Question 13 – Play

Question 13

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Does your child act out every day routines with dolls, teddies and other toys e.g. feeding or cuddling?

"Pretend play" involves using toys to act out every day routines and tends to appear at around a year. As children get older it becomes more sophisticated and imaginative. Pretend play and language development are closely linked. Pretend play allows young children to express and develop their understanding of their world and the people in it. Play supports their social, emotional, physical and learning development.



Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

"Pretend play" involves using toys to act out every day routines and tends to appear at around a year. As children get older it becomes more sophisticated and imaginative. Pretend play and language development are closely linked. Pretend play allows young children to express and develop their understanding of their world and the people in it. Play supports their social, emotional, physical and learning development.

- Playing with toys that allow them to express their daily experiences like dolls/ teddies, cups, spoons, brushes as well as cars, blocks and puzzles. Most children will come up with their own ideas on how to play with them. If your child needs help, play alongside and let them copy your play. Start with simple routines like teddy sleeping/ dolly jumping. You don't need to tell your child what to do but you can comment on what you are doing! Wait and see if they copy! Young children will only manage this for short periods of time but as their attention and interest develops this can be extended.
- Technology is often a preferred activity for many children. Phones and tablets don't give an opportunity for interaction and talking in the same way as playing alongside an interested adult does so try to vary their use with other types of play (see the Screen Time leaflet www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/slt-activityinformation-sheets/screen-time-leaflet/ for more information).





Question 13 – Play

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

“Pretend play” involves using toys to act out every day routines and tends to appear at around a year. As children get older it becomes more sophisticated and imaginative. Pretend play and language development are closely linked. Pretend play allows young children to express and develop their understanding of their world and the people in it. Play supports their social, emotional, physical and learning development.



- Showing and encouraging your child to copy everyday activities at home such as hoovering, washing cups, cooking, washing clothes.
- Showing and encouraging pretend play with everyday objects: teddy, dolly, bed, table, food, and blanket. Extend the play into short sequences of play, for example, brush doll’s hair then wash doll’s face or give teddy a cup of tea then making it play football.
- Pretend play gives you chances to let your child hear lots of language so take time to join in and add new words and ideas as you describe their play.
- Technology is often a preferred activity for many children. Phones and tablets don’t give an opportunity for interaction and talking in the same way as playing alongside an interested adult does so try to vary their use with other types of play. (See the Screen Time leaflet www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/slt-activityinformation-sheets/screen-time-leaflet/ for more information).





Question 14 – Interaction

Question 14

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Does your child join in with play and games that need other people e.g. hide and seek / playing shops?

Most children enjoy interacting and joining in even if they don't have lots of words or are just starting to put words together.



Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

Most children enjoy interacting and joining in even if they don't have lots of words or are just starting to put words together.

You should seek advice from your Health Visitor if:

- Your child has delayed language and has difficulties using and understanding gestures, eye contact, body language and facial expressions with other people
- Has limited interest in interacting with other people, including children of a similar age
- Has unusual or repetitive behaviour



Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

You can help your child to become interested in sharing activities by focusing on play and turn-taking. These skills are best supported as part of everyday activities. Try becoming a play and turn taking partner with your child.

- For younger children people games like playing “airplane”, ‘round and round the garden like a teddy bear’, tickling, peek-a-boo, making faces, hide and seek, are great ways to share attention together.



Question 14 – Interaction

- Bubbles are a great activity to share and help with turn taking whilst being lots of fun.
- When in doubt, imitate or copy their play! And then wait. Many children need more time to respond than you think.
- Follow their lead. Take time to notice what your child is interested in for example: if your child looks out the window, stand beside them, look out the window yourself, point to something in the garden and name it.
- For older children, play turn taking games with toys (blocks, dolls, trucks, books, ball, toy house, colouring, etc.). Play alongside and copy and resist the urge to tell them how to play.
- The daily routine (getting dressed, riding in the car, getting ready for bed, taking a bath, looking in the mirror) is a great way to take turns and share an activity.





Question 15 – Fluency

Question 15

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Can your child talk smoothly without stumbling or stammering / stuttering over words?

Between the ages of two and five years, your child is learning many new words, beginning to use more sentences, expressing new ideas and asking lots of questions. Due to this rapid stage of development, some children when learning to talk can begin to stumble over words; have too many pauses in their speech or frequently stop and start their sentences. Some children go through phases, (e.g. days/weeks/months) when they find it easy to talk and then phases when they find talking more difficult. These non-fluent phases can coincide with bursts of language development and as your child is more able to plan and coordinate more complex sentences and ideas, these non-fluent phases will happen less frequently and the fluent phases will become longer.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **not yet** doing the activity

If stumbling or stuttering has been happening for longer than 6 months, and/or you or your child is showing signs of upset and concern about their talking then it is best to contact your local Speech and Language Therapy department www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/healthcare-professionals/paediatric-speech-and-language-therapy/ for advice.

- Avoid finishing your child's words. Although some children may not mind someone finishing off their words, it is best to let them say the words themselves.
- Give your child plenty of time to speak and never hurry them. It doesn't help asking a child to "slow down" or "take your time". Young children find it difficult to slow down their speaking and this may make them worried about talking.
- Slow down your rate of speech. If you speak in a calm, slow, unhurried way, this can be the most useful thing to do to help your child speak smoothly.
- Keep your own language simple. When children are learning to use long, complicated sentences they may be more likely to stumble over words.
- Ask one question at a time and give your child time to answer.





Question 15 – Fluency

Activity Ideas for your child if they are **nearly** doing the activity

If your child is stumbling or stuttering and it is infrequent and/or has only just started, try the following ideas to help

- Avoid finishing your child's words. Although some children may not mind someone finishing off their words, it is best to let them say the words themselves.
- Give your child plenty of time to speak and never hurry them. It doesn't help asking a child to "slow down" or "take your time". Young children find it difficult to slow down their speaking and this may make them worried about talking.
- Slow down your rate of speech. If you speak in a calm, slow, unhurried way, this can be the most useful thing to do to help your child speak smoothly.
- Keep your own language simple. A child who is trying to use long, complicated sentences and words may be more likely to stumble over words. You want to encourage your child's language to develop but avoid using long complicated sentences yourself.
- Ask one question at a time and give your child time to answer.

