



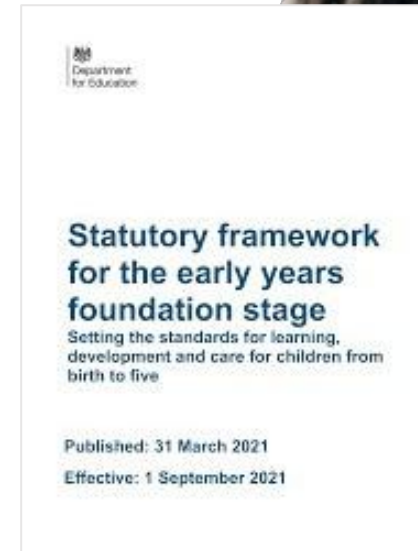
What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: *a guide for parents*

What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage

(EYFS)

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outlines what adults must do to help children learn and develop and to be healthy and safe.
- This guide is for parents* of children from birth to five years old. It will help you find out more about your child's learning and development in the EYFS.
- The EYFS includes seven areas of learning and development. In this guide the seven areas are split into three age bands**:
 - *Birth to three*
 - *3-4*
 - *4-5 (the reception year in school)*
- In each band, there are suggestions about what your child may be doing, and how you can help them. It's important to remember that children develop in different ways and at different rates.
- After each age band you will find top tips for fun, playful experiences that you and your child can do together at home.

*'Parent' is used to mean parents, carers and guardians. **The age bands follow [Development Matters](#), which is the Government's non-statutory guide for all early years practitioners, childminders, staff in nurseries, nursery schools, and nursery and reception classes in school.



Seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS

*The **three prime areas** are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.*



Communication
and Language



Personal, Social and
Emotional Development



Physical Development

*The three prime areas are strengthened and applied through the **four specific areas**.*



Literacy



Mathematics
Understanding the World



Expressive Arts and Design



Understanding your child's development

- Children develop and learn at different rates and in different ways. Their development is not neat and orderly!
- That's why the Department for Education's guidance document, *Development Matters*, sets out children's learning in broad ages. It shows how lots of different experiences in the first three years of life will help your child to learn.
- In this guide, '*When I'm a baby*' broadly tells you about your child's development in the first year of life. '*When I am a bit older*' tells you about their development as a toddler and two-year old.



Understanding your child's development

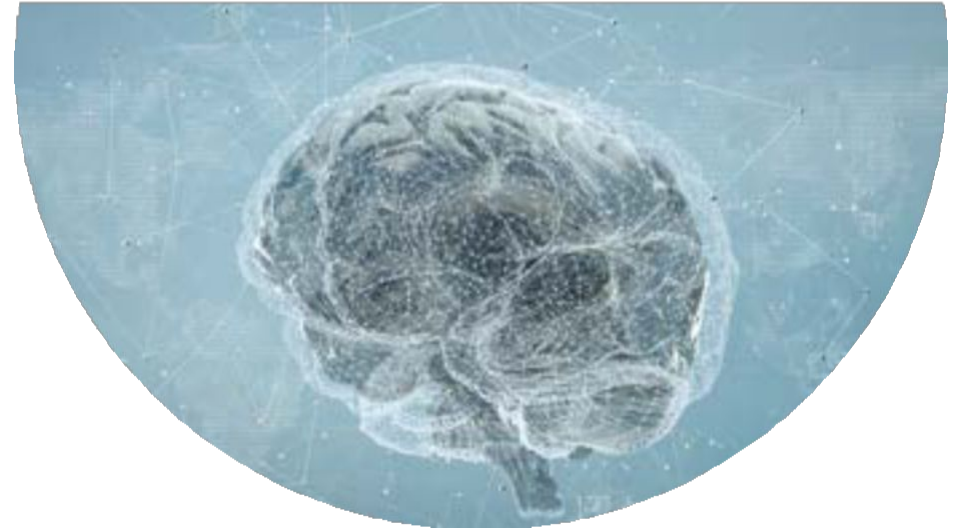
- *Development Matters* includes some **checkpoints**. They can help you and your childminder or early years setting have a conversation, if you're worried about anything. Then you can decide together what to do next.
- The 'checkpoints' are not a 'ticklist' to use for every child.
- Sometimes children have some early difficulties in their development. With the right help, they can quickly grow out of these difficulties.
- For example, 70% of children with delayed communication in the early years won't have problems later in school. Those 'late talkers' need lots of opportunities to [chat, play and read](#).
- Some children will have long-term difficulties, so it's important to identify what their needs are and make sure they get the support they need.
- Every child can make good progress, with the right support.



What happens early, matters for a lifetime

Did you know?

- The first three years are the most sensitive time for brain development. Your baby's early interactions are incredibly important for building a healthy brain.
- Your baby is born ready to learn. When you interact with your baby, their brain forms [more than a million new brain connections every single second!](#)
- These early moments [\(known as 'serve and return'\)](#) shape your child's brain in ways that help their learning, health, and behaviour both now and in the future.
 - *Over 80% of your baby's brain is formed by age three.*
 - *Up to 75% of each meal goes to building your baby's brain.*
 - *Playing and talking with your baby sparks millions of new brain connections.*



What happens early, matters for a lifetime

Loving, responsive care

- [Research](#) shows that the most important thing you can give your child is love and responsive care.
- Noticing what your baby needs and the signals they give helps you to build feelings of trust and safety.
- The comfort and care you offer your baby makes them feel safe to explore the world around them.

When your baby cries
and you respond
sensitively, your baby
learns that they matter
and that they can rely
on you.



Physical development – every movement counts

- It is important for your child to be physically active and to eat well. Children learn through their bodies. Every time they move, their brains build connections.
- Young children need lots of physical activity to develop their balance, posture and coordination. These are the foundations that will help your child to be physically ready to sit still and concentrate.
- Physical activity encourages the development of hand eye coordination for reading and writing.
- When your child is active, they are learning about their bodies and what they can do. They are also learning about social rules and managing their feelings.

[Physical activity for the early years](#)

Physical activity for early years (birth – 5 years)

Active children are healthy, happy,
school ready and sleep better



BUILDS
RELATIONSHIPS
& SOCIAL SKILLS



MAINTAINS
HEALTH &
WEIGHT



CONTRIBUTES TO
BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
& LEARNING



IMPROVES
SLEEP



DEVELOPS
MUSCLES
& BONES



ENCOURAGES
MOVEMENT
& CO-ORDINATION

Every movement counts



Move more. Sit less. Play together 9

What happens early, matters for a lifetime

- [Research](#) tells us that what happens at home makes the biggest difference to your child's early learning and development.
- Playing together, singing, enjoying books, visiting the library, painting, drawing and finding out through play about letters, numbers and shapes are important activities to do at home. These activities are learning opportunities.
- These learning activities will make a difference to your child's learning right up to secondary school.

***What parents do is
more important than
who parents are.***



What happens early, matters for a lifetime.

Play, Read

Giving your child the best start in life.

- Children love to talk about all sorts of things. Make time to have back and forth conversations.
- Don't feel embarrassed talking to your baby – it's never too soon to start communicating with them!
- Go with what your child is interested in. This will help them learn lot of new words.



Chat

The benefits to your child learning more than one language are huge.

- Talk and play with your child in the language that you feel most comfortable and confident using.
- Sing, read and tell stories in your home language – rhyme and repetition help your child to remember words.
- Home languages give your child a connection to their culture and heritage. Encourage your child to use all their languages – they will feel closer to people and part of their community.



Play

- Play helps children learn about the world and themselves. Children need time and space to play freely. Sometimes it is helpful if you sensitively join in with your child's play, too.
- Children need outdoor play.
- Play is essential for your child's wellbeing and development. It is part of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
- There are many everyday moments like bath time and dinner that you can make playful. Help your child to learn in a fun and relaxed way.



Read

- Sharing books and telling stories is a lovely way to build closeness and encourage conversations.
- Sharing books with your child at a young age will help them to develop a love of reading.
- Read and share stories with your baby.
- Talk to your child about what is happening in the pictures.
- Young children love to hear and read their favourite books and stories again and again.



Have fun together!
Use silly voices and
act things out that
happen in the book.

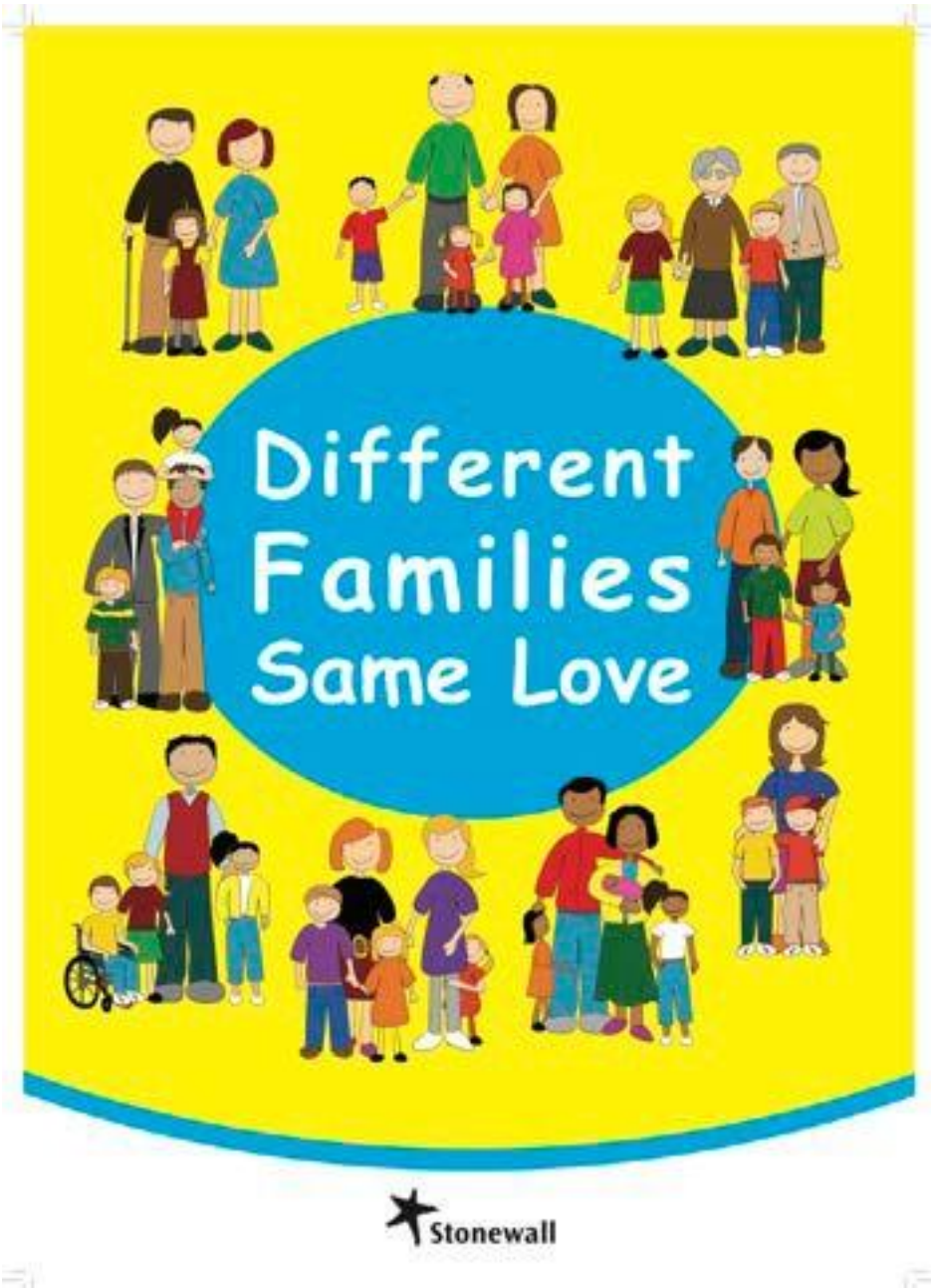
Even a few
minutes can make
a difference.

What happens early, matters for a lifetime

Building a brighter, fairer future for all

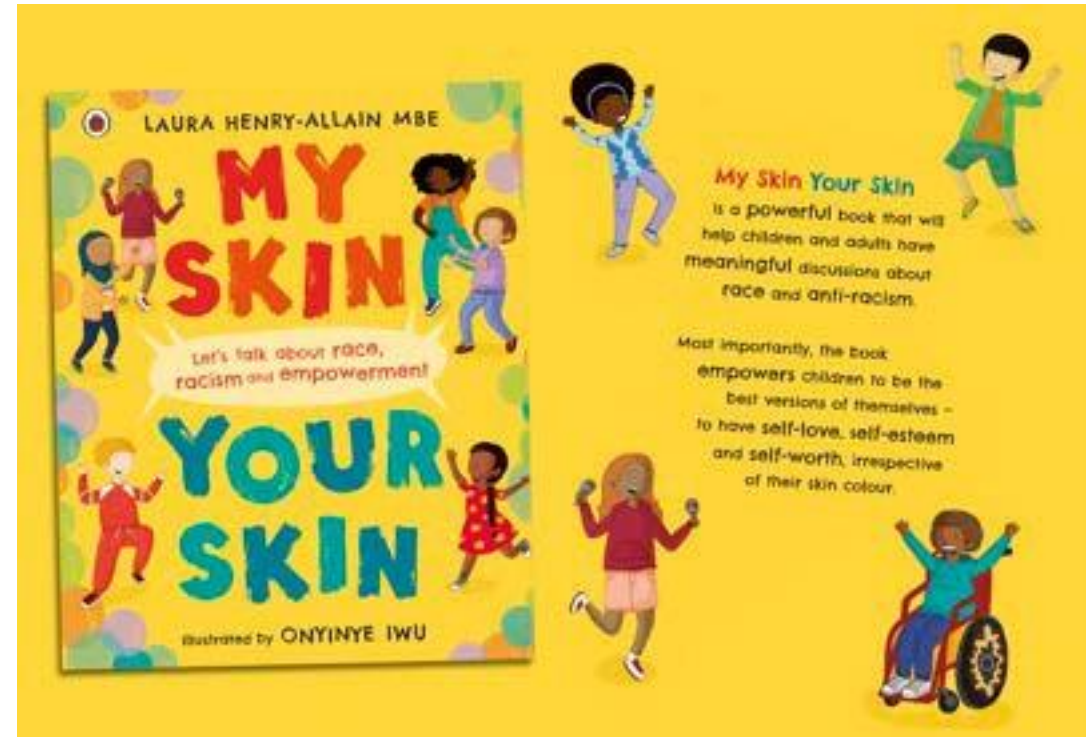
- The early years are vital for shaping children's views and attitudes. You can make a difference to how your child sees the world.
- It is important for you to think about your own views and be open to exploring your thinking.
- Boys and girls can do everything! But they are often treated differently, from an early age. Limitations can start early and hold children back.





What happens early, matters for a lifetime

- Parents of all races, ethnicities and cultures need to work together to understand how harmful racism is to everyone. Talking about race is the first step in challenging racism.
- Helping your child to develop anti-racist attitudes is so important: every child and family should have a sense of belonging irrespective of their race, ethnicity or culture.
- From three months, babies are aware of other races. Children are inquisitive. Your child might notice differences in skin colour or ask questions that make you feel uncomfortable. It is important that your response is calm, positive and well-informed.



What happens early, matters for a lifetime

How you can help your child to talk about race:

- Between the ages of birth to three, children are naturally curious about the world around them. Giving your child books and toys that show people from a range of ethnicities positively is so important.
- [From the age of three](#), children start to notice if things aren't shared fairly. They start to show us they don't like this.
- From around the age of five children can talk about unfairness. You can start to have conversations about how unfair things can happen because of the colour of somebody's skin.
- Children of this age love to engage in role play and pretend play. This will help your child to learn about other peoples' ideas, feelings and actions.



Partnership with parents

The adults who work with your child know a lot about children – but not as much about *your child*. It's important to tell them what they need to know. Then they can understand your child and help them.

- It's important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership.
- A strong, trusting partnership will support two-way communication between you and your child's key person or childminder.
- Throughout the EYFS, settings must share information about your child's progress.



Sharing information

Two-year-old progress check

- All children who attend a setting or go to a childminder will have a developmental check between their second and third birthday. It will happen jointly with you and sometimes your health visitor.
- The check helps your key person to focus on your child's progress. It will also help you with ideas to keep chatting, playing and reading with your child at home.
- You will receive a written summary about how your child is learning and developing.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

- In the final term of the Reception year, teachers complete an assessment known as the EYFS Profile for each child.
- The Profile is a quick check of your child's learning, which will be shared with you.



What to do if you are

- concerned
- As a parent, you know your child best.
- Health visitors and early years practitioners have expert knowledge of child development.
- By working together, you can identify any difficulties your child has with their health, learning or development.
- If your child is struggling with learning, their setting can offer extra support to meet their needs.



The three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

[When we see a baby in their cot](#), we're looking at 'the greatest mind that has ever existed, the most powerful learning machine in the universe.'

We can help children become even more powerful learners through three **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**:

- ***playing and exploring*** - I investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- ***active learning*** – I concentrate and keep on trying even when I encounter difficulties. I enjoy achieving.
- ***creating and thinking critically*** – I am learning to develop my own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.



Birth to three: how you can help me with my learning

Communication & Language

- Use a sing-song voice, this helps me tune in to language.
- Respond to my babble.
- Talk about what you are doing *"I'm pouring out your milk into the cup."*
- Have back and forth 'conversations' – play 'peekaboo' and copy-cat games.
- Talk to me in our home language.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- [I need loving, responsive, playful interactions with you.](#)
- Find out what makes me feel calm - rocking, cuddling or singing.
- Offer me manageable choices between two things.



Physical Development

- Put me on my tummy or back, on a soft mat or blanket so I can kick my legs and roll.
- Let me sit on you, climb over you, and rock, bounce or sway with you.
- Give me lots of opportunities to be active outdoors in all weathers!

Birth to three: how you can help me with my learning

Communication & Language

- Sing songs and rhymes during everyday activities like nappy changes.
- Tell me the names of things as I pick them up to explore. I need to hear a variety of words.
- Listen and wait for me to speak or communicate with a sound or a look first. Repeat and build on what I say by adding one or two words.
- When you talk to me, give me time – 10 seconds helps me understand and think of a reply.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- Let me help get snack or lunch ready and learn to pour my own drink.
- Help me understand my feelings by using words to label my feelings like 'sad', 'upset,' 'angry'
- Model turn taking – "Can I have a turn?" "My turn next."



Physical Development

- Give me lots of different things to grasp, hold, squeeze and explore, like finger paint, playdough, spoons, brushes, shells.
- Let me try to put my shoes on.
- Play ball games with me.

Birth to three: how you can help me with my

learning

Mathematics

- Give me stacking cups and blocks (or cardboard boxes!) Use words like 'in', 'on', 'more', 'lots'.
- Count with me as you put my clothes on, e.g. "One sock, two socks."
- [Sing finger rhymes with numbers e.g. Two Little Dicky Birds](#)
- Let me explore 'full' and 'empty' with containers in the bath.

Literacy

- Snuggle up and share board & cloth books with me. Point to and name things to help build my vocabulary.
- Share books that let me see people of different races, cultures and gender.
- Give me chunky pencils/crayons/chalks to explore.



Understanding the World

- Introduce me to new grown-ups so I can start to make relationships.
- Make me a [treasure basket](#) with objects like vegetables, wooden pegs, spoons, pans, corks, cones, balls.
- Let me explore the natural world. Stand in the rain with wellies and an umbrella, splash in puddles, look for worms and minibeasts.

Expressive Arts & Design

- Give me a big piece of paper on the floor to see what marks I can make with my hands, feet, a paintbrush. Let me make a mess!
- Sing to me. Let me hear different types of singing, sounds and music from other cultures and languages.

3 & 4-year-olds: how you can help me with my learning?

Communication & Language

- Have conversations with me about things that I am interested in. Encourage me to keep talking by nodding, smiling and making comments.
- Introduce new words when we are playing, eating or when we are out and about. Explain what new words mean to me.
- Talk to me about things that have already happened and what might happen soon.
- Play listening games with me such as 'Simon Says'.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- Give me tasks to carry out, e.g. washing my plate after snack.
- Model how you manage your own feelings, e.g. *"I'm feeling a bit angry so I am going to take a deep breath."* Help me to understand why I am feeling sad or frustrated.
- Make a ['calm down jar.'](#)



Physical Development

- Help me with dressing but let me do the last steps, e.g. pulling up my zip after you have started it off.
- Give me lots of opportunities to be active and practise running, jumping, balancing, climbing and swinging.
- Encourage me to walk, scoot or bike to my nursery or childminder.

3 & 4-year-olds: how you can help me with my learning?

Mathematics

- [Point out the number of things rather than just the names](#), e.g. “We have **two** apples!”
- Give me lots of opportunities to count for a real reason and always emphasise the last number – “*There are **3** cookies.*”
- Cut out a large shape from a cereal box (circle, triangle), then cut that shape into 2-4 smaller pieces to make a simple puzzle.
- When we’re at the park, use words like ‘up’, ‘under’, and ‘between’ to talk about what we see.
- [Make playdough with me.](#)

Literacy

- Talk about stories with me, what is happening in the pictures? Give me time to think and share my ideas.
- Play around with words. Make up fun rhyming sentences with me.
- Let me help you write birthday cards and shopping lists.

Understanding the World

- Help me make collections of interesting natural materials, e.g. pebbles, shells.
- Let me explore ice, once it has melted a bit (so I don’t get frostbite)
- Plant seeds and bulbs with me.
- Take me to different places such as the library.

Expressive Arts & Design

- Make [home-made paintbrushes](#) using clothes pegs and items from the home and outdoors.
- Join in pretend play with me.
- Give me a cardboard box and some fabric to build a den with.



4 & 5-year-olds: how you can help me with my learning

Communication & Language

- Play games with me where I have to listen to your instructions such as a treasure hunt.
- Share a wide range of books and stories with me, including non-fiction and poetry.
- Talk out aloud, commenting on your actions and mine. This helps me hear clear, well-formed sentences.
- Encourage me to have lots of back and forth conversations with other children and adults.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- Listen carefully to me. Encourage me to express my feelings using words.
- Help me solve problems by talking them through with me. This will help me keep going even when I find it really hard.



Physical Development

- Give me time and space to be highly active and get out of breath every day.
- Encourage me to crawl on all fours, climb, pull myself up on a rope and hang on monkey bars. These activities will help me develop the strength I need for writing.
- Let me use one-handed tools like peelers and knives.

4 & 5-year-olds: how you can help me with my learning

Mathematics

- [Name small groups of things, this helps me to 'subitise'](#) (instantly seeing how many without counting) e.g. "There are 3 slices of pizza left."
- Ask me to count out a number of things from a group, e.g. "Could you get me 6 eggs?"
- Make number snap or bingo with numerals and pictures. Match the numerals with the right amount.
- Make patterns with objects, e.g. buttons or shells. Such as 'big, small, big...' Make a mistake and talk with me about how to fix it.

Literacy

- Keep reading with me everyday. Share books that let me see people of different races, cultures, gender and religion.
- Play games where you give me an instruction like "Can you h-o-p?" I have to put the sounds of the word together.
- Let me make up stories – you could write them down for me and we could act them out.
- Make a photo book of our family or when we went to the park and let me write my own words in it.



Understanding the World

- Share photos and tell stories about my family, both past and present.
- Take me to places of worship and places of local importance in my community.
- Let me help you cook. Talk about changes such as 'melting' or 'boiling'

Expressive Arts & Design

- Sing and dance with me when we hear our favourite songs. Encourage me to make up my own routine.
- Give me string, scissors, glue, sticky tape and boxes to make a model.

Where to go to learn more

Source	Link	Support offered
Action for Children	https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk	Range of resources to support with your child's development.
Book Trust	https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/bookfinder/ https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/tips-and-advice/reading-tips/	Find children's books for every age. Tips, advice, reading guides.
Bilingualism Matters	http://www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk/parents-questions/	Frequently asked questions from parents about raising bilingual children. (In eight languages).
Boromi	https://www.boromi.co.uk/dailyplay-2	Daily emails during school holidays share simple, accessible and play-based activities.
Cbeebies Grown-ups	https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups	Tips and ideas for parents.

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Where to go to learn more

Source	Link	Support offered
DREME Family Maths	https://familymath.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Math-Snacks.pdf	Finding the maths in everyday activities.
Early Movers	https://www.earlymovers.org.uk/activities	Information and activities for children 0-5.
Easy Peasy	https://www.easypeasyapp.com	App: ideas, advice and inspiration.
Family Lives	https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/early-years-development/	Advice and information on early years development.
Foundation Years	https://foundationyears.org.uk/2019/09/resources-for-parents/	Resources for parents about the EYFS.
Formy Books	https://www.formybooks.com	Diverse range of inclusive children's books.

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Where to go to learn more

Source	Link	Support offered
Harvard Centre	https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-to-5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/	Video explaining how interactions build babies brains.
Hungry Little Minds	https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk	Simple, fun activities for kids, from newborn to five.
ICAN: Talking Point	https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/parents/	For parents who are concerned about their child's development.
Literacy Trust	https://wordsforlife.org.uk/activities/	Activities and videos.
Love My Books	http://www.lovemybooks.co.uk	Newsletter, activities and videos.
Mantralingua	https://uk.mantralingua.com	Bilingual books in 65 languages.

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Where to go to learn more

Source	Link	Support offered
Mattel (Laura Henry-Allain MBE & Emma Worrollo)	https://www.mattel.com/sites/mattel_mattelcom/files/2020-07/Supporting_you_to_raise_antiracist_children2.pdf	Parents' guide: supporting you to raise anti-racist children.
National Childbirth Trust	https://www.nct.org.uk	Parenting support.
NHS – Children's Teeth	https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/	Dental health advice.
NHS Change 4 Life	https://www.nhs.uk/change4life	Easy ways to eat well and move more.
Tiny Happy People	https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people	Child development advice, activities and videos.
Unicef Parenting	https://www.unicef.org/parenting/	Child development advice, activities and videos
50 Things to do before you're five	https://www.50thingstodo.org/about/the-app	App: low/no-cost experiences.

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