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# A-Z of language

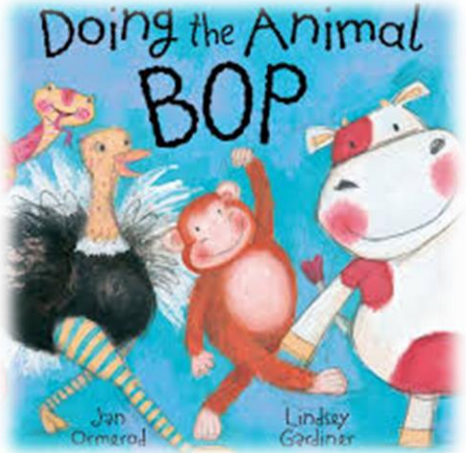
Here are lots of practical ideas to help your child's language development during everyday activities and play.

Different activities will help with attention and listening skills, *receptive* skills (understanding spoken language) and *expressive* skills (putting words together in a sentence) as well as speech sounds, social skills and communication.

These activities help develop attention & listening, play, language, social skills, imagination & motor skills.



# .....animals



- Name the animals.
- Make animal sounds.
- Sort animals - farm, pets, jungle, zoo.
- Sing songs
  - Old McDonald
  - Little Bo Peep
  - 5 little ducks
  - Sleeping Bunnies ....& more
- Move like animals.
- Pretend play - feed the hens, drive the tractor, milk the cows.



*These activities help develop language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills and social skills.*



# ....balls & bubbles



*Roll, roll, roll the ball  
Gently to my friend  
Roll it, roll it roll it roll it,  
Roll it back again*

*(to tune of Row your boat)*



- Take turns blowing bubbles
- Catch the bubbles, follow them, pop them
- Roll, throw, catch, bounce
  - to each other
  - through chair legs
  - at a target, knock down skittles
- Talk about size - big, small
- Ready, steady, go.....develop waiting skills

*These activities help develop language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills and social skills.*

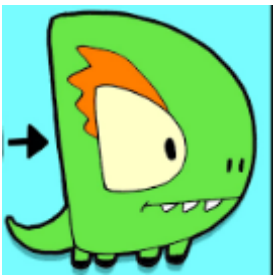


# ....cardboard boxes



- Talk about **where** your child is - in, on, under, behind...
- Let's crawl through...
- Let's get into -
  - a boat, a bus, a car, an aeroplane....visit, see ....
  - a castle, a den, a fort...let's pretend...
- Let's make -
  - a washing machine, a cooker
  - a TV, a puppet theatre
  - a little house, petrol station, train station

*These activities help develop language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills and social skills.*



# ....dolls, dinosaurs & dressing up

- Let's pretend.....join in .....

- Talk about what you are doing and what is happening - feed or wash the baby
- Follow your child's lead
- Model new vocabulary
- Extend or add new words
- Remember to
  - Keep
  - It
  - Short &
  - Simple
- And don't ask too many questions!



*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills and social skills.*



# ....environmental walk



- What do you hear?
- Listen to the birds
- Feel the heat, cold, rain
- Notice the smells
- **Talk** about what you see
- Look for things
- Play 'I Spy...'
- Feel the pine cones/leaves
- Splash through puddles
- Notice the colours

*These activities help develop language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills and social skills, and safety awareness.*



# .....fun & laughter



- Have fun!
- Be silly! Enjoy!
- Communication isn't all about words - gestures and expressions are important too.
- Children learn expression through exaggeration.
- Make a funny face, a silly voice, a silly gesture.
- Children learn better when it's fun!

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills and social skills.*



## ....games



- Peekaboo!
- Let's pretend
- Indoor games
  - Moving statues, musical chairs or bumps, hide & seek
- Outdoor games
  - Ring-a-ring-a-rosies, Hokey Cokey
- Games you buy
- Turn-taking games

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills and social skills.*

# Hh ...house play



- Let's pretend.....
  - join in ....playing house with mummies/daddies/carers and babies
- Tea set
  - Don't forget your manners - please & thank you
  - Match the colours
  - It's too hot (problem solving - add milk)
  - Pour liquids
  - Sing along!
- Real play in house
  - Help with cooking, baking
  - Help with cleaning
  - Sort household objects, clothing
  - Play with real items, empty containers

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills, self help and social skills.*

# I spy.....

## I spy with my little eye



I SPY with my little eye something that .....

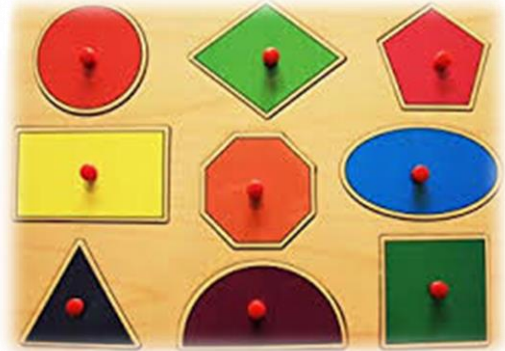
- Use colours ...is red
- Use shapes....is round
- Starts with a sound....m
- belongs to....baby
- you wear ....on your feet
- You.... eat with

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills, self help and social skills.*



# .....jigsaws & puzzles

- Talk about shapes & colours
- Match colours together
- Talk about the pictures you make
- Name the things your child doesn't know
  
- Don't forget to praise your child's efforts and encourage your child to finish the activity.



Trying is as important as finishing!



Jigsaws and puzzles develop pre-number and pre-reading skills. They help with spatial awareness, hand-to-eye coordination, fine motor skills and problem solving.

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills and social skills.*



.....keys

I wonder...

Hurrah!  
It fits!



This is  
the key  
to....



- Talk!
- Match keys and locks
- Talk about shapes
- Let's pretend.....
- Our magic key will open .....
- Imagine....
- Links to real world

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, fine motor skills, self help and social skills.*



# .....library



Once upon a time...

And they all lived happily ever after.



- Join the library, Enjoy visiting & choosing books
  - Cuddle up with a book
    - Look & point
    - Tell the story or just talk about the pictures
  - Enjoy all types
    - Lift the flap books,
    - Feely books
    - Board books
    - Picture books
  - Take part in Rhythm & Rhyme sessions
  - Children are very welcome in every public library and you don't have to worry about trying to keep your child quiet
- Remember*
- *Members can enjoy online access to **Libraries NI***
    - *Access e-books and magazines*
    - *Listen to audiobooks*



# .....making & modelling.....



## playdough



1 cup of plain flour  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of salt  
1 cup of water  
2 desert spoons of cooking oil  
2 desert spoons of cream of tartar  
A few drops of food colouring

Put the above ingredients in a saucepan and mix to a smooth consistency. Cook over a medium heat, stirring all the time to prevent sticking.

Remove from heat when mixture comes away from the sides of the saucepan; knead and store in an airtight container

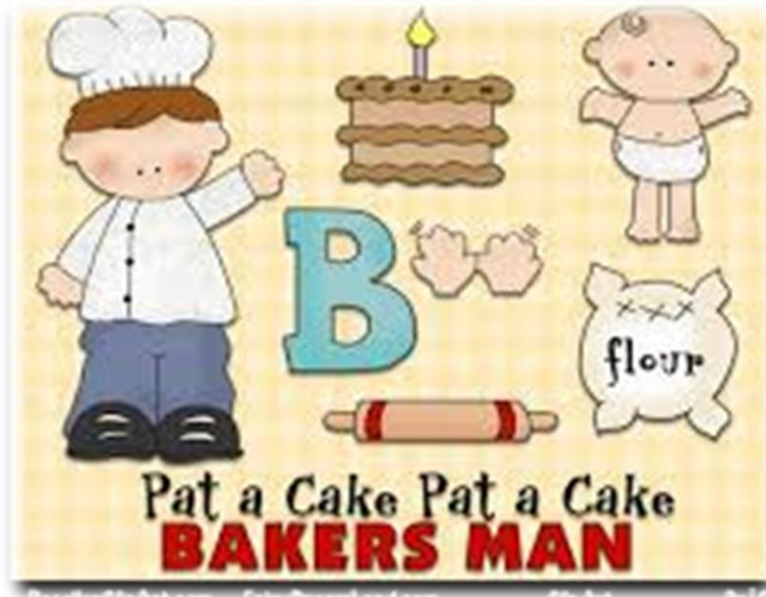


- Talk as you play & encourage your child to talk to you
- You can make anything!
- Make props for story telling
- Let your imagination tell stories

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, fine & gross motor skills, self help and social skills.*



# .....nursery rhymes & number rhymes...



- Encourage children to join in with **words & actions**
- Use props if you can
- Children love to learn with
  - Rhyme
  - Rhythm
  - Repetition

*These activities help develop imagination, speech sounds, language, play skills, early numeracy, motor skills, self help and social skills.*



# ...out & about...

- Look at wildlife in the garden
- Go for a walk & discover
- Visit new places
- Listen
- Take photos and later encourage your child to tell someone else what they did & what they saw, using the photos as a reminder.





# .....physical play.....



- Encourage movement indoors and outdoors.
- Run, skip, hop.
- Splash in puddles
- Dig in sand, soil, mud.
- Play with a ball.
- Make an obstacle course.
- Jump on the trampoline.



.....quiet time.....

- Have quiet & calm times
- Use calming music
- Reduce distractions
- Turn off gadgets
- Relax

## Calming Choices



*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills, self help and social skills.*



.....rhythm.....

- Sing
- Chant
- March
- Clap
- Make noise with musical instruments
- Choose a story book with rhythm & rhyme



*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills, self help and social skills.*

# S .....straws.....



- Blow bubbles in a cup
- Blow painting
- Blow football (balls of paper)
- Talk about the colours
- Make pictures/models
- Suck a thick milkshake to strengthen muscles in the mouth

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, motor skills, self help and social skills.*

T is for...



# .....talking....

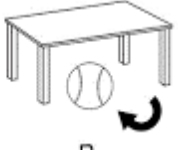


- Get down to your child's level
- Keep it Short & Simple
- Give your child time
- Model new words
- Don't ask too many questions



*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills, self help and social skills.*

U



.....up, under.....

in the box



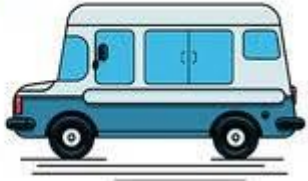
behind  
the sofa



- Talk to your child about where things are.
- Take turns to tell each other where to put toys
- Hide toys and give your child clues
- Play hide & seek

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, gross motor skills, self help and social skills.*

# V



## .....vehicles.....



boat



bus



car



bike



coach



van



- Colours (Thomas, Tractors)
- Matching, sorting
- Pretend play - get fuel, wash the car, tow the trailer
- Storybooks & songs
- Look at magazines

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, fine & gross motor skills, self help and social skills.*

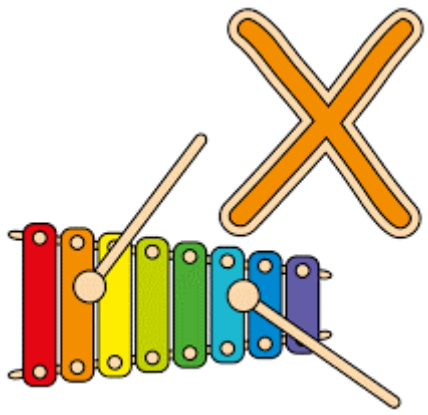


.....washing.....

- Sort
- Peg
- Match socks
- Say words -
  - pour, splash, scrub
  - fork, spoon
  - clean, dirty
  - wet, dry
  - float, sink



*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, motor skills, self help and social skills.*



# ....xylophone...& musical instruments...

I am the music man,  
I come from down your way,  
And I can play,  
What can you play?  
I play



- Use everyday objects to make sounds and music.
- Play 'Stop, Go' games
- Sing!
- Enjoy!

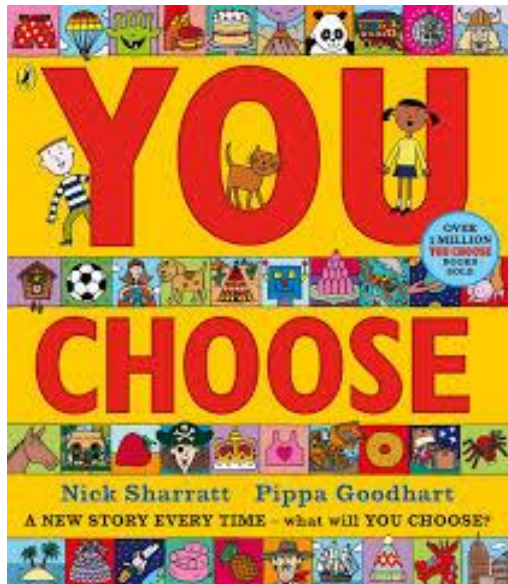


- Join Rhythm & Rhyme at your local library

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, motor skills, self help and social skills.*



...You.....



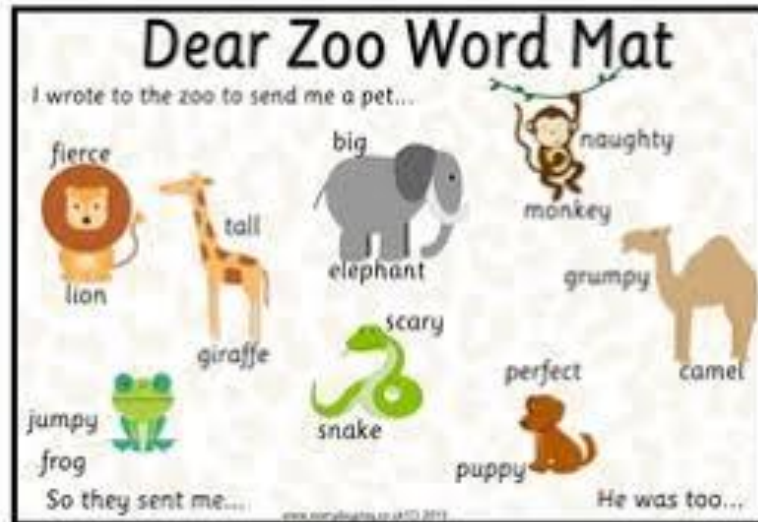
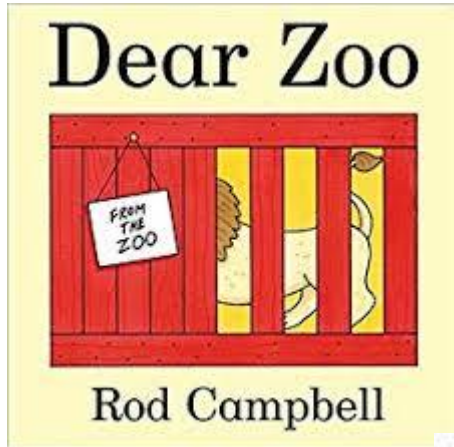
**You**

are the most important  
resource.

*Every interaction and  
activity with you helps  
your child's development.*



# .....Dear Zoo.....interactions using books



- Tell the story
- Talk about the pictures
- Lift the flap books
- Texture books
- Noisy books
- Use props
- Match pictures & objects

*These activities help develop imagination, language, play skills, early numeracy, motor skills, self help and social skills.*

# Where can you find other ideas?

- Have a look at the *Attention and Listening Activity Guide* [here](#).
- You will get ideas on how to make musical instruments [here](#).
- The SEN EYIS Nursery Rhyme booklet is [here](#).