

Dear families

We are pleased to be sending out this fifth issue of our Growing and Learning Together ideas with useful links. As restrictions on the lockdown are being eased, you will be aware that you and your family are able to go outside for more opportunities to exercise. Below are some ideas that can be done indoors as well as outdoors, providing fun ways to develop everyone's physical skills as well as learning about different music and basic scientific wonders of the sun and water.

**STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES**

## Musical Statues

Carrying on from last week's ideas with music, have fun playing musical statues which we are sure is a game you will all be familiar with:

- If anyone in the household can play a musical instrument, this is not only a great way for children to see and hear a real-life instrument being played which can be a jaw-dropping experience for young children but also inspires children to want to make music themselves
- If no musician available then identify a different opportunity to listen to music e.g. CDs, your mobile
- Play the music for a few seconds whilst everyone dances to it and then stop the music suddenly and everyone has to stand as still as statues – great opportunity to develop listening skills, balance and spatial awareness whilst dancing amongst others
- Stand like statues for a few seconds, but you may wish to gradually lengthen the time especially with older children
- Whilst these games can be great fun, it can be disheartening for some little ones to be unable to stand still so you may need to modify the game to accommodate a range of ages
- You may want to include the instruments you made last week or other musical instruments if available as that could make the task even more challenging, trying to keep rattles, maracas and bells etc still as well



## The Great Dance Off

Good fun for all ages...identify a range of different musical sounds including music from other cultures e.g. Brass band, flute, pan-pipes, jazz, classical, opera, Middle Eastern, African, chill out and pop. This is a lovely opportunity to introduce a variety of different music to children – maybe for the first time. Music is good for the soul!

- Play a piece of music and everyone to spend a minute or so listening to the sounds and then choosing how to move to the music
- Encourage use of arms as well as legs

# The Great Dance Off

- Suggest a wiggle of their hips
- Do some big expressive movements yourself, describing what you are doing, to show your children the extent their bodies can move – these large (gross) body movements will support the development of hand and arm muscles essential for developing writing skills
- Chat about the music – discuss what instruments could possibly be playing? Which country they think the music originates from? What the music makes everyone feel?
- Capture the wonderful and creative dancing on your phone video and look back at this regularly together especially when children are feeling fractious, upset or need help in settling down for bedtime



# Nifty Ideas with Old Newspapers and Magazines

Before chucking old newspapers and magazines into the recycling bin have fun together with these very simple but effective time-occupying games that can be played indoors or outside:

## It's a goal!

Involve everybody screwing up sheets of newspaper or magazine pages into balls and one at a time try to throw them into a bucket or washing up bowl placed about 1 metre away. If you have very young children, you may need to start off with the container closer for them to achieve the task. Lovely opportunity to reinforce numbers and quantities in and out of the container. It will also help with their spatial awareness, hand-eye coordination and concentration. This simple activity also promotes turn-taking which young children can find difficult to understand. You can make it competitive if you wish, by the first person to get all their paper balls into the container is the winner or you can just enjoy trying to get them in! Make the game a little harder by moving the container gradually further away – older children will enjoy this challenge.



## Stepping Stones

Cut circles of newspaper/magazines, two per person. Each person has to walk around the room, corridor or down the garden path only standing on their paper circles. This means that when standing with a foot on each piece of paper, you raise the rear foot, balance on the front foot, whilst moving the free paper circle forward. Younger children may need to move both feet onto each circle and turn and pick up their other circle and move it forward. This is an excellent game for developing spatial awareness and good balancing skills. To make it more challenging for older children use whole newspaper sheets which will require them to really stretch and balance. Give your children a good giggle by taking part – it's not as easy as you may think!

# Outdoor Art

Now we are able to go outside more to undertake exercise, have some creative fun and exercise with large paint brushes (decorating brushes are ideal) and pots of water.

- Paint the water on fences, walls and pathways
- Encourage the use of small movements and large movements. Again, this will support the development of muscles that support developing the skill of using crayons, pens and writing
- The beauty of using water is that you can all make as much 'mess' and be as expressive as you want
- Of course, clothing may well get wet so a change of clothing to hand will be useful
- On sunny days, watch the water evaporate and the steam produced in the heat of the sun and discuss this simple science process with your children – it's like magic!



# Creating Special Moments

Storytelling is an ancient and important art having been carried through generations. 'Storytelling stretches children's vocabularies, expands their horizons and extends their ability to learn' (Nick Gibb 2016) so we want to instil a love of books and reading from a very early age. The art of telling a story, however, can be quite a challenge for some. Finding props (teddy, car, train etc) that link to a story are really useful to bring that story to life and capture children's attention. Using items that children can interact with can also draw children into experiencing the story. The link below demonstrates this beautifully with Neil Griffiths, a former headteacher who has become an international storyteller, author and creator of Storysacks, demonstrating his story telling skills to a group of children and the simple effect of using a blanket to represent a kangaroo's pouch.

Listen to how he uses his voice to emphasise characters and actions within the story and asks the children questions throughout so they can participate. What is key is that he knows the story well before reading it to the children...

For those of you who have difficulty with reading, audio stories like the ones we have included in these flyers are available online and local libraries have a range of Storysacks which you can borrow when libraries reopen.

Reading to Children – Tips and Techniques –  
"No Room for Baby Roo" by Neil Griffiths

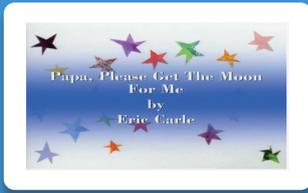


WORLD  
BOOK  
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Reading To Children - Tips & Techniques  
"No Room For Baby Roo" with Neil Griffiths

# Creating Special Moments

See if you can find props amongst your children's toys or make simple props for the following stories



Papa, Please Get The Moon For Me by Eric Carle

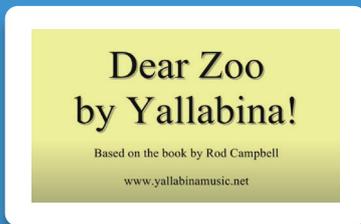


The Tiger Who Came To Tea by Judith Kerr

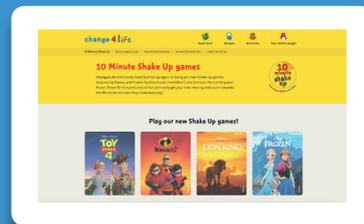


The Tiger Who Came To Tea by Judith Kerr (Makaton version)

More ideas on... singing and action opportunities



Dear Zoo by Yallabina based on the book by Rod Campbell



NHS Change4life - 10 minute Shake Up Games

Children learn through play and they learn most from you so make your time together as playful as possible. They will love playing with you and many special memories can be created during this challenging time. Try to create a daily routine for you and your children - include making regular contact with other family members via social media so that children still feel connected to them.

## COVID-19: A Letter to Critical Workers on Childcare During the Summer Half Term

## Useful information to help explain Coronavirus to your children

Coronavirus explained through a cartoon by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

UNICEF guides to coronavirus for parents and children

If your child is worried or anxious about coronavirus, find professional advice from Parents Helpline experts at Young Minds

This information has been provided by The Education People, Kent County Council's Education Services Company

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Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning

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