

# Play with me!

A guide to support play  
in the home environment



**SEND Advisory Team**

SEND Early Years Support



**Walsall Council**



## **Growing through play**

Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that Children from an early age, engage and interact in the world around them.

Play allows a child to develop their physical, social and emotional development. It allows children to be creative and develop their imagination.

## **Play and Special Educational Needs/Disabilities**

For children with additional needs, play provides an opportunity to discover their capabilities, strengthen their social relationships, practice and develop their communication skills and promote emotional understanding.

Sensory play is important as it helps children with additional needs to lead a fuller and happier life and support their engagement with the world around them.

# What are the types of Play?

- **Physical Play** – to develop their muscles, bones and physical skills
- **Social play** – develop turn taking, cooperation and sharing skills and to develop their language skills
- **Constructive Play** – allows children to experiment with building, music and drawing things. Provides opportunities to problem solve and develop resilience
- **Fantasy/Imaginative Play** – lets children develop their own play and use their communication skills
- **Games with rules**

## As children develop and grow, the way they interact and play with others changes

- **Birth-2 years** – children enjoy **Unoccupied play**, **Playing Alone** or next to another child/adult and **Onlooker play**, watching and observing other children
- **2-3 years** – **Parallel play** is when children play next to each other but don't necessarily interact
- **3-5 years** – children develop **Associate play** when they play together with the same toys but do different things
- **4-6 years** – at this age, children are usually playing together  
**Cooperative Play** – working towards a goal or outcome;  
Developing their social skills

# Rings on a stick:

Ideal for listening skills/sensory play/turn taking/choice making

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

- Turn-taking
- 'Peep po'
- 'Peek-a-boo'
- Staying on task

## Physical Development — Fine Motor:

- Reaching
- Grasping
- Replacing
- Two-handed play
- Taking off – hand-eye co-ordination
- Threading on
- Spatial awareness
- Bringing hands into midline

## Understanding of the World:

- Light and sound
- Cause and Effect



## Communication, Language and Literacy:

- 'On'
- 'Off'
- 'More'
- 'Big/Little'
- Attention and Listening
- Interaction
- Choice making
- 'Ready Steady Go'

## Mathematics:

- Size
- Order of size – grading
- Colour names
- Counting
- Shape
- Big/Little

# Picture book/objects book:

## Mathematics:

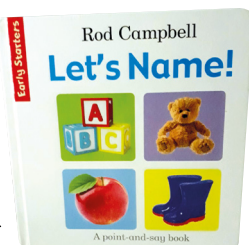
- Can transfer gaze from picture to adult
- Counting
- Colour

## Physical Development:

- Isolates index finger
- Turns pages of book

## Knowledge and Understanding of the World:

- Book Handling
- Identification of Objects
- Identification of Actions
- Imitation



## Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

- Sharing Interaction

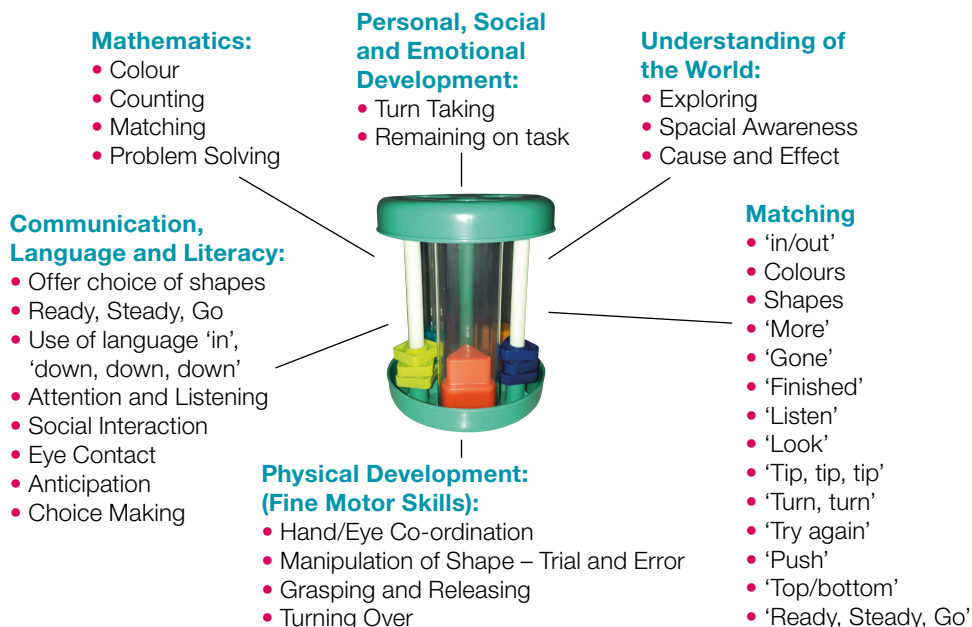
## Communication, Language and Literacy:

- Develop pre-language skills using signs e.g. Makaton signs for pictures e.g. 'Cat'
- Naming objects 'biscuits'
- Basic signs
- 'Look'
- 'Where'
- 'Which one', 'show me'

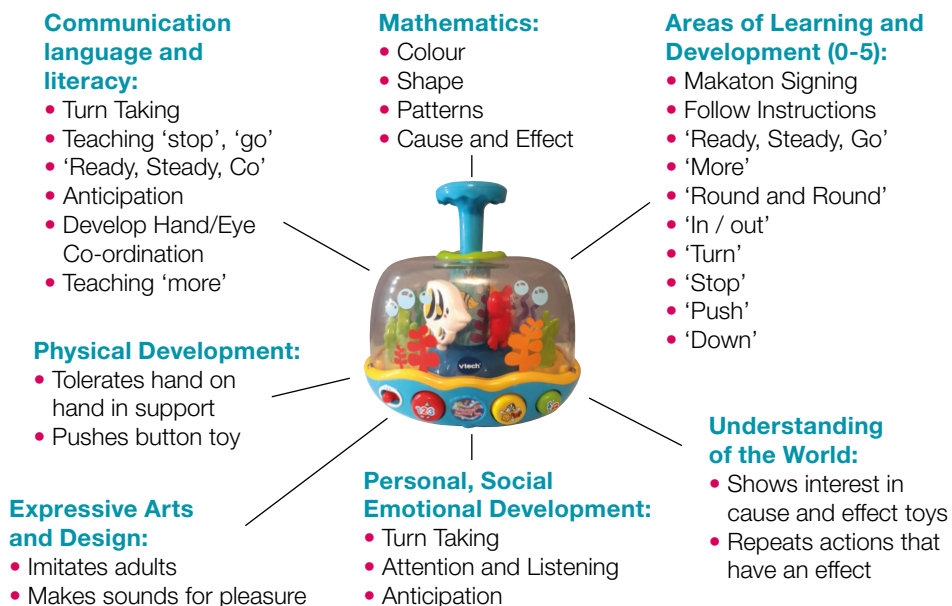
## Building relationships with special people:

- Eye contact
- Recognises and responds to familiar pictures
- Eye points or touches familiar pictures
- Turn taking

# Shape sorter:



# Carousel toys:



## Creating the best play environment for me:

- Limit the distractions e.g. turn the TV off, play in a quiet, distraction free space
- Use clear simple spoken language focusing on key words
- Provide a small chair and table or highchair for table top activities
- Support spoken language with visual clues and gestures
- Offer choices
- Give time for instructions to be processed
- Use good behaviour prompts – good waiting, good listening and good looking
- Be consistent and calm

## Helpful hints for quality play and interactions:

- Have fun
- Get on the same level as your child
- Use words, facial expressions and gestures
- Follow your child's lead
- Play is about practicing and repeating – children enjoy achieving through favoured play
- Praise and rewards

## Useful websites for further information:

- Action for Children – Guide to early learning and development  
**Actionforchildren.org.uk**
- Family Information Service  
**mywalsall.org/fis/**
- NSPCC – **www.nspcc.org.uk**  
Look, Say, Sing, Play
- Walsall Council  
**www.walsall.gov.uk**



*Learning is NOT  
a spectator sport,  
so lets **PLAY!***



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