Play is the main way babies and toddlers learn about the world. Older children also benefit from play as it provides an opportunity to socialise with other children.

Make use of ‘stay and play’ type sessions: do you know what your local children’s centre offers?

Top tip... arrange for children to have friends round to play.

Have you tried... taking a trip to the park to play group games like ‘tig’ or ‘duck duck goose’? Invite parents to meet you at the park and join in – this will help them to network.

Using EYPP money... host a coffee morning to support parents to network. Put on ‘stay and play’ sessions. Arrange for the key person to visit the child at home and take the opportunity to model play.

Sharing books is a wonderful way to help your child learn to talk and read, and it is the ideal opportunity to share a cuddle at the same time.

Use a variety of books and repeat favourite stories. Provide daily opportunities for storytelling and use props to make stories come alive.

Top tip... include all family members, make story time part of your family routine.

Have you tried... bedtime stories with Dad? Using props with stories, e.g real fruit with ‘The Very Hungry Caterpillar’? Making up stories about your own child!

Using EYPP money... creating story sacks to loan to parents. Invite guests into the setting to read stories – include the reception teacher from school, the postman, a fire fighter... utilise parents jobs. Invite a local author into the setting. Celebrate World Book day. Story Café. Story telling area – story telling chair, cape, hat, bag. Story telling jigsaws / dice. Training staff on dialogic book talk and increase confidence in using story telling resources. Have fun with stories – ask children to place random objects in a bag and make up a story using them as you pull them out of the sack.
Going on visits is crucial to broaden children’s awareness of the world around them... Getting out to the supermarket or even the local park gives you and your child new and interesting things to talk about.

Outdoor learning is an essential part of every child’s healthy growth and development – promote the UK physical activity guidelines to ensure all children get enough time moving.

**Top tip...** get to know what’s in your local community - the train bridge, the post office, the park, local shops, schools...

**Have you tried...** joining in with local community activities, e.g. school fair, carnivals, village fete, open days.

**Using EYPP money...** supporting children’s transition to school – key person to accompany children on a school visit - measuring impact by listening to the voice of the child. Invite members of the community into the setting as a springboard to discuss the local area. Organising a trip to the farm and funding an EYPP eligible child to take part. Purchasing resources to support learning outdoors – e.g. weather appropriate clothing to enable children to take part. Use a travelling ted. Set up a treasure hunt.

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When your child paints and draws they are practicing the skills which will help them when they start learning to write.

*Encourage children’s own ideas, provide choice and encourage independence.*

**Top tip...** praise children’s early attempts at mark making and writing. Draw with your child outdoors using chalks.

**Have you tried...** painting and drawing outdoors using a variety of media, e.g. paintbrushes and water on the path, or sticks in mud? In the snow use squeezy bottles filled with warm water—it will warm cold hands and create patterns in the melting snow! In the summer try filling spray bottles with water and a drop of food colouring.

**Using EYPP money...** invite an artist into the setting to inspire the children. Have real artists prints in the setting e.g. Jason Pollack, Joan Miro, Henri Matisse, Kandinsky to inspire children. Create mark making kits to loan to parents. Use clipboards outdoors.
Playing with letters and numbers gives your child the opportunity to become familiar with them in a natural way. This will help your child to remember and be comfortable with letters and numbers as they grow.

*Make numbers and letters part of daily life. Look out for print in the environment, for example looking at house numbers or car registration plates on the way to the park, spot letters on packaging whilst shopping.*

**Top tip**... play with underwater crayons at bath time, or add foam numbers to the bubbles.

**Have you tried**... including your child when you write a shopping list? Look at envelopes as the post arrives.

**Using EYPP money**... create a travelling bag focused on number / letter activities. Send home a disposable camera with a number line for children to find and record numerals. Training staff in Letters and Sounds to ensure children are confident in essential pre phonics skills. Invest in Letters and Sounds resources. Create counting boxes.

Letting children have a go for themselves is crucial in order to develop their independence, confidence and self help skills. By doing real things together, you will support your child to gain understanding of the world around them.

**Top tip**... encourage children to demonstrate readiness for school by putting their own socks / shoes / coats on, and learning to fasten them!

**Have you tried**... give children a mirror to support them washing their own face / cleaning their teeth. Involve children in preparing their own snacks – buttering their crackers / cutting banana / pouring their own drink... Get children involved in everyday household tasks – dusting / washing the car / laying the table / sorting the washing / pairing the socks...

**Using EYP money**... invest in wood working equipment and fund an additional adult to facilitate children to use these regularly. Parent workshop – giving parents ideas of real things they can make together e.g. fruit salad – focus on practitioners modelling skills to parents. Creating a leaflet about school readiness to support transition. Share information around the characteristics of effective learning with parents – open morning / leaflet / display... Invest in equipment - appropriate safety knives so that children can get involved in food prep safely; child sized jugs so they can pour drinks; real garden tools which enable children to dig in mud successfully.
Imagining and Pretending helps children to make sense of their world. Role play is a crucial part of child development.

**Top tip**... Let your child lead the play. Watch them carefully to find out what they are interested in and join in with what they are doing.  

**Have you tried**... providing den making equipment as part of the continuous provision? Increasing the variety of role play scenarios – such as space ship / garden centre – ensure these are in line with children’s interests. Introducing an unusual scenario in the home corner e.g. flood / power cut.  

**Using EYPP money**... Take a trip to the theatre, fund EYPP eligible children to take part. Create some play bags to loan to parents...  

- **prince / princess bag** – net curtains / crown / jewels / magazine  
- **superhero bag** – curtain cape / comic book / oversize pants / belt / gloves / mask  
- **den bag** – pegs / fabric / string / cushion / torch  
- **pirate bag** – coins / treasure island map / telescope / pirate hat / stripy tee shirt / story book  
- **investigate & explore bag** – binoculars / torch / clipboard / pens / squared paper / old mobile phone / tape measure / magnifying glass / bug identification book

Spending time really listening to your child gives a window into what they are thinking and feeling. Talking together nurtures their developing communication skills. Thinking things through out loud will help children with their emerging problem solving skills.

**Take time to really listen to what your child is trying to tell you. Tune into their non-verbal gestures as well as their language. Talk to them and use language with a high information content to develop their vocabulary.**

**Top tip**... Stop everything else you are doing and give your child your full attention. Create ‘phone free time’: put mobiles away and concentrate on interacting with your child. Reduce any distractions – turn off the television, radio or background music to help them concentrate.  

**Have you tried**... a treasure hunt: playing the hot / cold game to support children’s language development and problem solving skills?  

**Using EYPP money**... create chatterboxes and loan these to families. Why not make a cooking chatterbox and include the ingredients? Create resources (I spy checklists) to support listening walks. Create talk tickets (look on the ECAT website). Invest in Persona dolls and staff training, this will also support children emotionally and develop their PSED skills.
Songs and rhymes help your child develop their speaking and listening skills in a fun and interactive way.

Find songs and rhymes to match experiences as they happen, e.g. ‘Dr Foster went to Gloucester’ when you are splashing in puddles.

Top tip... get the whole body moving by using action songs and finger rhymes.

Have you tried... making up your own silly rhymes and songs?

Using EYPP money... Create rhyme sacks and share these with parents. Share words to children’s favourite rhymes with parents. Make personal invites for children’s parents to join an informal sing song session. Record songs onto a CD and share these with parents. Invite a musician into the setting. Purchase good quality musical instruments.

The library offers a world of different books, stories and activities. It is free to join and a great place to spend time with your child.

Give your child time to choose books about things they are interested in, and involve them in the process of taking them out. Borrow a mix of fiction and non-fiction books.

Top tip... make sure you encourage parents to pick up their child’s ‘Book Start’ pack.

Have you tried... taking part in a ‘Wriggly Readers’ session?

Using EYPP money... arrange for the key person to accompany the family to the library and support them to join. Invest in good quality books (include non-fiction) and set up a loan scheme. Create a display about your local library, including information about when Wriggly Readers is on www.leics.gov.uk/libraries. Invite the librarian to read a story in the setting. Promote the summer reading challenge for children in their final year as part of your transition process.