

# EARLY YEARS – SMALL STEPS DOCUMENT

September 2021



## Introduction and Top Tips for use

This document is designed to aid Early Years providers and Early Years professionals (advisors and practitioners) to monitor and celebrate the progress children with SEND make. This is a toolkit that can be used, however there are other guidance documents available to help aid your assessments, including the Development Matters 2021, Birth to 5 Matters 2021 and a Celebratory Approach to SEND Assessment (Pen Green), amongst others.

The observation checkpoints, that are included in the Development Matters – non-statutory curriculum guidance for EYFS, are included within this Small Steps Document.

The document is designed to be used as a ‘best fit’ and although many providers find it useful to highlight progress and what a child can do, it is not a tick list.

It is important to note that this document is not a deficit model. It is not to be used to demonstrate what a child cannot do, but rather celebrate the achievements a child can do. We advise that this document is used to provide an assessment, but further documents can be used to add the narrative of the successes the child has made in a celebratory way. Targeted plans, additional text boxes and conversations with parents could be used to provide these celebratory comments.

For some children, it may not be necessary to complete all sections within this document. For example, if a child is ‘age appropriate’ in all areas apart from Self-Regulation, you may choose to assess the child on the assessment used for all in your provision for the majority of the areas and use this assessment document to assess in just the area of concern. For this reason, some of the statements do overlap and repeat, but this was done intentionally so providers can use each section as a stand-alone assessment if appropriate.

The wording within this document is also open to interpretation to provide flexibility in how it is used by providers. For example, on some of the statements it says ‘responds’; we have intentionally left this vague as what this looks like



will inevitably be different for different children, i.e. how they show their responses will be different. This means you can use this document to fit around children’s individual needs and again celebrate their successes.

To go alongside this document is the Early Years Small Steps Assessment – example summary sheet. This summary sheet document can also be used to support applications for funding, additional support or statutory assessments within Leicestershire. It can also be used to share with health professionals. We advise in these specific applications and uses, providers report on ‘secure’ levels of achievement, where a child is secure (independently and consistently achieving) within an age bracket.

Please visit our website for further support on how best to use this document and assess children with additional needs.

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*N.B. The areas of Learning and Development follow the Early Learning Goals, as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Due to the nature of the small steps document, Number and Numerical Patterns are linked within the same area. There is also an additional area (Mathematic: Spatial Reasoning Skills), as noted in the Educational Programme in the Early Years Statutory Framework. This is an optional additional area for assessment.*

## Communication and Language: Listening, Attention and Understanding

### 0 – 3 months

- Most responsive to primary carer's voice
- Makes own sounds or physical response when talked to
- Responds to significant sensory changes in environment e.g. light, sound, vibration
- Is calmed by soft speech or song
- Makes fleeting eye contact during interactions with prime carers or familiar adults
- Startles to sudden sounds
- Looks briefly at moving objects
- Responds to a familiar sound and / or voice e.g. quietens, alerts, body movement, eye flicker

### 3 - 6 months

- Imitates some facial expressions from prime carer and / or familiar adults e.g. a smile, sticking out their tongue
- Turns towards a familiar sound (e.g. footsteps) or voice, locating range of sounds with increasing accuracy
- Pays fleeting attention to music, mobile or similar
- Watches adults' faces when they talk
- Can distinguish between familiar voices
- Shows a simple reflex response to a range of sensory stimuli, objects, people and/or activities
- Shows a response that something has happened e.g. door closing or phone ringing
- May show excitement or anticipation when people approach
- Listens to familiar voices even though they can't see them

### 6 – 9 months

- Responds to familiar voices by smiling, looking or moving
- Turns to own name
- Responds to 'no' and other inhibitive sounds
- Responds to familiar rhymes, songs and finger play by eye gaze and / or body movements (e.g. flapping hands, moving legs)
- Watches with fleeting interest the actions of others
- Can focus on different sounds in their environment
- Demonstrates extended attention within familiar settings
- Shows a response to significant changes in a person's tone of voice/speech
- Shows a response to changes in the actions of others
- Show consistent awareness that something has happened or changed e.g. environment/people

### 9 – 12 months

- Begins to point to things they want
- Begins to respond to familiar gestures, single words and sounds e.g. waving 'bye bye' to familiar adults
- Responds to familiar rhymes and songs by moving their body parts and joining in with some actions during adult-led song time e.g. rocking for 'Row, Row, Row the Boat'
- Turns to an environmental sound or familiar name / object by looking e.g. doorbell, dog barking

Begins to focus on an activity of their choice for short periods  
 Responds to familiar words or phrases by looking or with gestures e.g. 'Daddy'  
 Has a greater focus on motivating tasks for a longer period of time  
 Responds to own name by stilling or turning  
 Responds to familiar greetings through gesture/sound/eye gaze etc. e.g. turning/stilling  
 Begins to respond to stimuli presented in an on/off pattern  
 Begins to recognise and respond to key objects of reference e.g. nappy at changing time/ bottle/cup at snack time  
 Begins to make a choice to select a desired object from two

**12 – 18 months**

Consistently points to items of interest and use gestures to show things to adults  
 Begins to listen and respond to one step instructions containing one key word e.g. get your cup  
 Chooses between two objects e.g. 'do you want baby or car?'  
 Begins to respond to simple commands / instructions when in a familiar context with a familiar adult e.g. point to Mummy, give the apple to Mummy  
 Understands familiar single words in new contexts e.g. 'bath' at home and elsewhere  
 Concentrates, for short periods, intently on an object or activity of own choosing / dominant stimulus  
 Enjoys a wider range of nursery rhymes, trying to join in with some simple actions e.g. clapping hands and / or vocalisations  
 Stops in response to 'no' or inhibitive sounds  
 Becomes excited and waits during anticipation games e.g. waiting for 'go' in 'ready, steady, go' or, '1, 2, 3... go' games or songs  
 Imitates a sequence of three or more actions

**18 – 24 months**

Understands a range of single words and some simple action words  
 Consistently listens and responds to simple one step instructions in context e.g. sit down  
 Consistently listens and responds to one key word instructions e.g. when given a choice of teddy or dolly, will point to dolly, rather than teddy  
 Listens to and enjoys rhythmic patterns in rhymes and stories with multiple / complex actions, trying to join in with some actions and attempting vocalisations, albeit not always clear e.g. 'Wind the Bobbin Up'  
 Pays attention to own choice of activity, may move quickly from activity to activity  
 Understands approximately 50 familiar naming words  
 Attention focused on the activity so that they may appear not to hear or respond e.g. when playing with toys  
 Listens with interest to general conversation, responding to familiar words that interest them, e.g. 'biscuit'

**24 – 30 months**

Begins to show an interest in what other children are playing and will occasionally join in  
 Understands more words than they can say – between 200-500 words  
 Begins to respond appropriately to simple two-part instructions or requests such as 'get your shoes and put on your coat' or 'pick up the ball and give it to me'

**24 – 30 months**

- Begins to respond to two key word instructions e.g. when given the choice of teddy or dolly / choice of apple / cake, will respond by giving the apple to dolly
- Indicates understanding of action words by demonstrating with self / toy e.g. 'make teddy jump'
- Points to five body parts on request independently
- Picks out a simple familiar instruction even when there is background noise, for example 'dinner time', 'no' or 'stop now'
- Listens to music and responds when it is turned off, for example stops singing or dancing or turns to look at the stereo
- Begins to shift to a different task if attention fully obtained with adult / visual prompting and support
- Responds appropriately to 'who', 'what' and 'where' questions with gesture / single words

**30 - 36 months**

- Consistently shifts to a different task if attention fully obtained with adult / visual prompting and support
- Consistently responds appropriately to simple two-part instructions or requests such as 'get your shoes and put on your coat' or 'pick up the ball and give it to me'
- Recognises and responds to many familiar environmental sounds, e.g. turning to a knock on the door, looking at or going to the door
- Consistently recognises and joins in with familiar and self-chosen rhymes, number songs and actions, such as 'The wheels on the bus'
- Shows understanding of action words by pointing to the right picture
- Briefly attends to activities of others
- Shows understanding of prepositions 'in' and 'on' such as 'put dolly in the box' by carrying out action or selecting correct picture

**36 - 42 months**

- Shifts from one activity to another independently if you gain their attention, for example will stop when asked to and help tidy up
- Joins in with an activity that an adult or a child suggests
- Understands use of objects e.g. 'Which one do we cut with?'
- Begins to respond to three key word instructions e.g. when given the choice of teddy or dolly / size / choice of apple / cake, responds by giving the apple to little dolly
- Shows understanding of prepositions e.g. 'under', 'on top', 'behind', 'next to' by carrying out an action or selecting a correct picture
- Begins to follow instructions containing concepts of size (big / little), position (in / on), number and colour
- Joins in with key words and repeated refrains and anticipates key events/phrases in rhymes and stories
- Listens to familiar stories, verbally and / or using visual prompts
- Anticipates what might happen next in familiar stories with adult support
- Listens to others in one-to-one or small groups when conversation interests them

**42 - 48 months**

Follows general directions, if not intently focused e.g. instructions given as a large group

Consistently responds to three key word instructions e.g. when given the choice of teddy or dolly / size / choice of apple / cake, responds by giving the apple to little dolly

Consistently follows instructions containing concepts of size (big / little), position (in / on / under / behind / on top), number and colour

Begins to understand and respond to 'why' and 'how' questions e.g. 'how can we clean up the juice?' 'Why do you want to wear your coat outdoors today?'

Returns to a task after interruption e.g. toilet break

Perseveres for extended periods of time at an activity of their choosing

Understands all pronouns: 'they', 'he', 'she', 'him' and 'her'

Listens to familiar stories with increasing attention and recall, verbally and / or using visual prompts e.g. sequencing pictures

Predicts what might happen next after listening to part of a familiar story e.g. 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', providing a verbal response, action and / or selecting a sequencing picture

Sings a large repertoire of songs

Knows many rhymes

Talks about familiar books

Tells a long story

**48 - 54 months**

Follows a short story without pictures or props

Carries out two unrelated directions e.g. 'put your lunchbox away and get your coat on'

Recalls what is missing from selection of items when one is removed e.g. Kim's Game

Shows variability in listening behaviour; may move around and fiddle but still be listening or sit still but not absorbed by activity e.g. whilst listening to a story, the child fiddles with their zip

Enjoys listening to stories, however, can only focus on one thing at a time

**54 - 60 months**

Understands a range of complex sentence structures including negatives, plurals and tense markers (past / present tense)

Beginning to understand humour, e.g. nonsense rhymes, jokes

Listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion

Links significant events from own experience and from stories, paying attention to sequence and how events lead one to another

Predicts what might happen next after listening to part of an unfamiliar story

Listens to longer stories with adult on a one-to-one basis

Listens attentively to stories / songs / rhymes in a class group

## Communication and Language: Speaking

**0 - 3 months**

- Communicates feelings by crying, gurgling and squealing, for example when contented, angry or in pain
- Communicates needs by crying, gurgling and squealing for example when hungry or tired
- Starts to make a range of sounds such as coos, gurgles, chuckling

**3 - 6 months**

- Makes own sounds in response to a familiar adult/to gain attention
- Lifts arms in anticipation of being picked up
- Makes sounds for pleasure e.g. tuneful vocalisation to self when lying in cot or at play
- Makes a range of different cries or sounds to show needs and feelings
- Begins to direct gaze towards desired object

**6 - 9 months**

- Begins to babble by repeating a series of the same sounds e.g. 'ba ba ba', 'ma ma ma'
- Begins to develop and use vowel sounds from the language used at home, for example 'a' as in hat or 'e' as in pet
- Begins to 'takes turns' in conversation by babbling with a familiar person
- Gestures or looks to make requests and to share an interest
- Consistently directs gaze towards desired object
- Begins to imitate vocalisations within own repertoire of sounds
- Begins to vocalise or make physical contact to initiate an interaction

**9 - 12 months**

- Uses voice or gesture to attract attention (e.g. holding up objects, waving arms, eye gazing); ask for things (e.g. reaching, opening and shutting hands); refuse (e.g. pushing objects away, shaking head)
- Produces and copies non-speech sounds e.g. coos, raspberries
- Babbles using consonants and vowels such as 'baba', 'gaga'
- Begins to develop and use some consonant sounds, for example 'p' 'b' 'd' 'm'
- Makes a sound and waits for a response
- Copies the speech sounds of others
- Uses a single word / sign / photograph / symbol appropriately e.g. 'cup'

**12 - 18 months**

- Says around ten words, although they may not be clear
- 'Takes turns' in conversation with babbling and some single words / recognisable sounds e.g. 'Dada' for 'Daddy'
- Uses single words / signing / photographs / symbols to communicate for a range of purposes e.g. 'more', 'bye-bye', 'teddy'
- Uses sounds in play e.g. 'brrrm' for toy car
- Frequently imitates words and sounds from adult production

Uses pointing with eye gaze, and then fingers or hands, to make requests and to share an interest  
Creates personal words as they begin to develop language e.g. 'baba' for 'baby'  
Vocalisations start to have the tone and rhythm of home language

**18 - 24 months**

Uses a range of adult like speech patterns (jargon) and says around 20 words  
Copies familiar expressions e.g. 'Oh dear', 'All gone'  
Uses different types of everyday words including nouns (naming words), verbs (action words) and adjectives (describing words), e.g. banana, go, sleep, hot  
Begins to put two words together e.g. 'want ball', 'more juice'  
Begins to talk about people and things that are not present e.g. 'Mummy gone'  
Uses gestures, sometimes with limited talk, e.g. reaches toward toy, saying 'want it'  
Comments using a single word or known phrase to describe a situation e.g. 'doggy' or 'fall down'  
Uses a mixture of words and vocalisation (jargon) combined with or instead of gestures when playing  
Talks to self continuously when playing, although may not be readily understood

**24 - 30 months**

Says up to 50 words  
Uses gesture and / or signing to support others to understand their wants / needs  
Puts two or three words together  
Asks a variety of simple questions e.g. 'what?', 'where?'  
Uses personal pronouns, e.g. 'me', 'my' (not always grammatically correct) e.g. 'my do it'  
Uses short phrases, 'my got one'  
Uses a range of verbs to describe actions e.g. 'boy jumping'  
Links noun and verb e.g. 'Daddy sleeping'  
Learns new words very rapidly and can use them to communicate

**30 - 36 months**

Uses around 100-200 words  
Asks questions frequently, such as people's names and objects  
Sometimes uses pronouns ('he'/'she') and prepositions ('in/on'), although not always accurately  
Uses longer simple sentences with up to 3- 4 words, (e.g. 'Mummy gone work')  
Begins to use word endings e.g. 'going', 'cats'  
Uses a variety of questions e.g. 'what?', 'where?', 'who?', 'why?'  
Holds a simple conversation with an adult jumping from topic to topic  
Uses language / non-verbal communication e.g. gesture / photo / symbols / signing to share feelings, experiences, and thoughts  
Anticipates key events and important phrases in familiar rhymes and stories  
Talks to self in play  
Tells own name and age  
Speech can be understood by familiar adults and peers, with some errors such as 'sh', 'ch', 'th' and 'r'

**3 6** Uses around 300 words

Uses some descriptive language, including time words (e.g. 'later'), space words (e.g. 'over there') and function words (e.g. explain function of items)

Frequently uses pronouns ('he', 'she') and prepositions ('under')

Retells a simple past event in order e.g. fell down, hurt finger

Answers 'yes / no' questions appropriately

Provides information about self and favourite things

Talks with peers during play about what they are doing and/or to direct them e.g. 'you be the Mummy'

Modulates volume of voice

**42 - 48 months**

Uses sentences of 4-6 words

Uses possessives, for example 'the boy's teddy'

Questions why things happen and gives explanations e.g. 'who?', 'what?', 'when?', 'how?', 'why?'

Provides appropriate answers in response to 'where?', 'who?' and 'what?' questions e.g. 'Where is the sponge?' - 'under the sink'

Uses 'and', 'because', 'so' to link simple phrases

Begins to use a range of tenses e.g. (play, played, playing) at times, making errors e.g. 'I runned outside'

Uses language they hear around them in their community and culture

Uses talk to explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next

Talks about things that are of particular importance to them

Builds vocabulary reflecting the breadth of their experiences e.g. the topic of dinosaurs

Speech is understood by unfamiliar adults, with some errors e.g. 'r', 'l', 'th', 'sh', 'j'

**48 - 54 months**

Retells a simple story recalling events and characters

Uses future tense e.g. 'will play'

Names time of day associated with activities

Begins to introduce a storyline / narrative into their role play / small world play

Watches / waits for listener confirmation before continuing (nod / smile)

**54 - 60 months**

Gives a connected account of events or experiences, using language of 'first', 'next' and 'then'

Tells longer stories, sometimes mixing fact and fiction

Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations

Uses talk to work out problems by organising, sequencing and clarifying their thinking, ideas, feelings and events

Extends vocabulary, especially by grouping and naming, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Self-Regulation

### 0 - 3 months

- Calms from being upset when held, rocked, spoken to, or sung to with soothing voice
- Begins to recognise body sensations e.g. hunger
- Shows a response to sounds and sights by eye tracking, head, or body movements
- Begins to have facial expressions / sounds or gestures to communicate their feelings – different cries for different things
- Seeks and accepts comfort – cries or vocalises when hungry / tired or has a need
- Responds by snuggling in when held or fed by a familiar adult

### 3 - 6 months

- Shows emotional responses to that of others e.g. smiling
- Anticipates feeding care routines by showing excitement
- Expresses feelings strongly through crying in order to make sure that their needs will be met
- May whimper, scream and cry if left alone for too long
- If their needs are not responded to, they may become withdrawn and passive
- Is affirmed and comforted by familiar carers through voice, physical presence and touch, e.g. singing, cuddles, smiles or rocking

### 6 - 9 months

- Seeks physical and emotional comfort by snuggling in to trusted adults
- Communicates a range of emotions (e.g. pleasure, interest, fear, surprise, anger and excitement) through making sounds, facial expressions, and moving their bodies
- Caregiver and child are closely attentive to each other and engage in sensitive, responsive exchanges
- Shows distress at being left alone and pleasure at return of familiar people
- Makes use of special people for comfort and security
- Reacts emotionally to other people's emotions; smiling when smiled at and becoming distressed if they hear another child crying
- Reacts to toys being withdrawn
- Responds to simple lap time e.g. stiffens / relaxes facial expression, eyes widening
- Reacts differently to physical interactions e.g. rough and tumble play
- Responds to different temperatures on the body e.g. getting cold after a bath
- Aware of people near them e.g. by turning head or eyes towards them, quietens or increases sounds / vocalisations

### 9 - 12 months

- Shows a wider variety of feelings, using crying, gestures and vocalisations freely to express their needs
- Uses familiar adult to share feelings and for 'emotional refuelling' when feeling tired/anxious
- Uses a comfort object, familiar others, routines or spaces to soothe themselves, particularly when separated from their close carer
- Co-operates as they become familiar with and anticipate routines e.g. nappy changing, getting dressed
- Begins to express a range of emotional responses: excited, worried, crying
- Likes to have sight or hearing range of a familiar adult and reacts when main carer leaves the room

Has a wariness of strangers

Protests or shows resistance by stiffening or vocalisations to show annoyance / refusal

**12 - 18 months**

Responds to emotions in key adult voices

Explores the boundaries of behaviours, may look at an adult to check before acting or testing boundaries

Needs constant supervision due to dangers of increased exploration

Participates in daily activities as they become familiar with and anticipate routines e.g. getting dressed or finding their beaker

Can usually be distracted when upset with a gentle prompt

**18 - 24 months**

Expresses positive feelings such as joy and affection and negative feelings such as anger, frustration and distress e.g. through actions and / or behaviours and a few words

Experiences a wide range of feelings with great intensity, such as anger and frustration

Developing impulse control, will look towards a caregiver before acting

May lose control of feelings, body and thinking when distressed

Tantrums if frustrated but can be easily distracted

Is aware of others' feelings and is beginning to show empathy by offering a comfort object to another child or sharing in another child's excitement

Asserts their own agenda strongly and may display frustration with having to comply with others' agendas and with change and boundaries

Pleased by praise

Developing an awareness when they have done something wrong

**24 - 30 months**

Can feel overwhelmed by intense emotions, resulting in an emotional collapse ('meltdown') when frightened, frustrated, angry, anxious or overstimulated (e.g. fight, flight, freeze)

Seeks comfort from familiar adults when needed, distracts themselves with a comfort object when upset

Responds to the feelings of others, showing concern and offering comfort

Joins in with familiar routines when in a small group

Expresses their own preferences for what they want to play / eat / wear

Shows a growing awareness that others have feelings

Sometimes complies with requests, sometimes may be stubborn

**30 - 36 months**

May recognise that some actions can hurt or harm others and begins to stop themselves from doing something they should not do

Expresses emotions of pride and embarrassment as well as a wide range of other feelings

Begins to modify own behaviour with support

Aware adult may approve / disapprove of their actions e.g. checks to see if adult is watching, or looks guilty if caught in the act

May display feelings of intense emotions through their actions e.g. voice or / and physical

Less easily distracted

**36 - 42 months**

Expresses a wide range of feelings in their interactions with others and through their behaviour and play  
 May exhibit increased fearfulness of things like the dark or monsters etc. and possibly have nightmares  
 Talks and responds about how others might be feeling  
 Has a developing awareness that their actions and words can hurt others' feelings  
 Modifies behaviour, with support, to fit in with what others are doing e.g. waiting a short time for a turn  
 Has strong sense of own space and own possessions  
 Complies with familiar rules e.g. not climbing as they may fall

**42 - 48 months**

Takes turns more readily with reminders  
 Does not always need an adult to remind them of a rule  
 Asks permission to use a toy a peer is playing with  
 Some understanding of sharing e.g. toys, snacks  
 A developing ability to regulate their emotions, thoughts and behaviour to enable them to achieve a goal

**48 - 54 months**

Understands their own and other people's feelings of happiness / sadness, offering empathy and / or comfort  
 Attempts to repair a relationship or situation where they have caused upset  
 Understands how their actions impact other people  
 Is more able to manage their feelings when their wishes cannot be met  
 Negotiates solutions to conflicts in their play  
 Strongly self-willed  
 Easily upset by failure  
 Understands the need to argue with words rather than actions  
 Expresses their needs, a wider range of feelings and behaviour in appropriate ways

**54 - 60 months**

Seeks support, 'emotional refuelling' and practical help in new or challenging situations  
 Is aware of behavioural expectations and sensitive to ideas of justice and fairness within a range of environments  
 Understands what is considered right and wrong and can explain why  
 Seeks ways to manage conflict, for example through holding back, sharing, negotiation and compromise  
 Has awareness of the boundaries set and behavioural expectations within a range of environments  
 Engages in socially acceptable behaviour in public, able to manage thoughts, feelings and behaviour

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Managing Self

### 0 - 3 months

- Sleeps for periods of two hours or more
- Begins to look at familiar adult for brief periods
- Makes sounds, eye contact and movements to initiate social interaction
- Learns about their physical self through exploratory play with their hands and feet and movement
- Expresses discomfort, hunger, or thirst
- Opens mouth for bottle and/or breast or shows awareness of naso-gastric (NG) tube

### 3 - 6 months

- Has predictable sleeping pattern and sleeps more at night than during the day
- Makes sounds to get attention for comfort, nourishment or company
- Laughs to express pleasure when happy or cries when upset
- Enjoys playing with own hands and fingers
- Participates in short shared interaction when sounds and expressions are mirrored back to them by close adults e.g. laughing and gurgling
- Expresses awareness of their physical self through their own movements, gestures and expressions by touching their own and others' faces, eyes, and mouth in play and care events
- Communicates discomfort or distress with a wet or soiled nappy
- Anticipates food routines with interest

### 6 - 9 months

- Has regular naps during the day
- Opens mouth for spoon and food
- Accepts a range of tastes, consistencies and textures (runny, thick, paste, puree, lumps)
- Tolerates face and hair washing
- Enjoys playing with own feet and toys
- Repeats action, e.g. dropping toy, accompanying with vocalising to attract adult's attention
- Chews on baby toothbrush
- Drinks from two handled beaker with help

### 9 - 12 months

- Starts to show own food preferences, including fruit and vegetables
- Drinks from feeder cup independently
- Has one nap during the day
- Plays with range of bath toys
- Pulls off hat, gloves, socks
- Shows an interest in their reflection in a mirror, although may not yet realise that the reflection is them
- Repeats action when responded to e.g. dropping spoon from highchair
- Initiates simple game, inviting adult to join in by pausing, looking e.g. banging objects together
- Expresses more awareness of their physical self by exploring objects around them inside and outdoors
- Develops confidence to try new things

Begins to co-operate with nappy changing  
 Grasps finger foods  
 Tries to share control of the spoon  
 Tolerates hand over hand support e.g. holding a spoon

**12 - 18 months**

Begins to participate in bathing e.g. holding out arms and legs for washing and later uses sponge, following prompting  
 Cooperates with drying hands  
 Tolerates use of toothbrush and toothpaste  
 Actively cooperates with nappy changing e.g. lies still, helps hold legs up  
 Starts to communicate urination, bowel movement  
 Attempts to put shoes on  
 Accepts new textures and tastes such as larger pieces of food and increasing range  
 Looks back to familiar adult to check if not sure about something  
 Points and vocalises to draw adult's attention to something of interest  
 Briefly demonstrates a scenario in their play related to their everyday life, e.g. wiping doll's face  
 Responds to their own name and enjoys finding own nose, eyes or tummy as part of interactive games  
 Shows separation anxiety (if left) as they become more aware of themselves as separate individuals  
 Shows an emerging autonomy through asserting choices and preferences such as different tastes and rejects things they do not want, e.g. by pushing them away  
 Understands that their own voice and actions causes an effect on others, e.g. clapping hands starts a game  
 Shows growing self-confidence through playing freely and with involvement

**18 -24 months**

Holds open cup with both hands, drinks without much spilling  
 Starts to be less messy with food  
 Develops own likes and dislikes of food and drink  
 Tolerates use of toothpaste and brush and may help brush their teeth  
 Rubs hands with soap and rinses under water  
 Shows some awareness of what a potty or toilet is used for  
 Puts on hat and slip on shoes  
 Pulls down zip on coat  
 Assists with removing loose garments e.g. pyjama bottoms, unbuttoned coat, cardigan  
 Smiles or laughs when successful  
 Seeks reassurance from familiar adult when tired, upset or hurt  
 Is aware of and interested in their own and others' physical characteristics, pointing to and naming features e.g. noses, hair and eyes  
 Experiments with what their bodies can do through setting themselves physical challenges, e.g. pulling a large truck upstairs

**24 - 30 months**

Asks, or searches for food when hungry  
 Willing to try new food textures and tastes  
 Feeds self with spoon without spilling and increasing need to be in control  
 Indicates need for toilet by behaviour e.g. dancing movements or holding self  
 Tolerates sitting on potty or toilet  
 Clearly communicates wet or soiled nappy or pants  
 Locates arms in coat or shirt when held by an adult, pulls top down over head  
 Enjoys exploring new places with a trusted adult  
 Shows persistence in expressing needs, if not met  
 Knows their own name, preferences and interests  
 Is developing an emerging understanding of similarities and differences between themselves and others  
 Makes choices and decisions based on personal preferences and own ideas  
 Growing in independence, rejecting help e.g. 'me do it'

**30 - 36 months**

Eats with a fork and a spoon, able to blow e.g. candles or when cooling food  
 Pours drink from jug with some spillage  
 Helps wash self, turns taps on and off and helps dry self after washing  
 Willing to have a go at brushing their own teeth however needs an adult to supervise / support  
 Toilet trained with infrequent accidents  
 Removes or pulls up trousers  
 Shows active sense of humour, does things to make others laugh  
 Very aware of others' reactions, likes to demonstrate ability  
 Searches out familiar adult for comfort  
 Shyness with strangers, especially adults  
 Likes to sit, cuddle and share events of the day with familiar adults  
 Is becoming aware of their unique abilities e.g. riding a scooter, dancing, singing / signing  
 Begins to use 'me', 'you' and 'I' in their talk and to show awareness of their social identity of gender, ethnicity and ability

**36 - 42 months**

Asks for toilet using voice, gesture or action, for example, leads adult to toilet and asks verbally or makes a sign  
 Usually able to control bowel with occasional accidents  
 Pulls down own pants when using the toilet, flushes toilet with support, waits to be wiped  
 Brushes own teeth and hair  
 Dresses and undresses, but needs help with fastenings  
 Helps with food preparation, beginning to use a knife for spreading  
 Beginning to have food preferences and expresses them  
 Separates from main carer with confidence  
 Is more outgoing towards strangers and more confident in new social situations

More willing to take risks and try new things  
 Able to express their needs and ask adults for help  
 Shows strong personal preference e.g. clothes  
 Is becoming more aware of the similarities and differences between themselves and others in more detailed ways and identifies themselves in relation to social groups and to their peers  
 Enjoys having a 'job' e.g. fetching the milk carton / fruit / washing up

**42 - 48 months**

Understands need for variety in food, eats a healthy range of foods  
 Knows when to wash hands and face  
 Carries scissors carefully  
 Developing sense of basic road safety  
 May argue to achieve own wishes  
 Is confident in seeking comfort, reassurance and help from special people  
 Is sensitive to others' messages of appreciation or criticism  
 Develop ideas about themselves according to the messages they hear from others  
 Recognises that they are part of a group e.g. badger class

**48 - 54 months**

Uses personal hygiene materials competently  
 Reliably dry and clean during the day  
 Understands not to touch hot surfaces  
 Developing awareness of the importance of daily exercise  
 Expresses wishes and needs clearly, can wait, modify, and defer  
 Enjoys receiving praise for achievements  
 Approaches new challenges with confidence  
 Recognises that they belong to different communities and social groups and communicates freely about own home and community  
 Has a clear idea about what they want to do in their play and how they want to go about it  
 Shows confidence in choosing resources  
 Displays perseverance in carrying out a chosen activity

**54 - 60 months**

Understands need for hygiene in food preparation, serving and eating  
 Begins to take responsibility for self-care in washing and teeth cleaning  
 Knows the routine of wiping self and hand washing and usually carries this out  
 Shows confidence in speaking to others about their own needs, wants, interests and opinions in familiar group  
 Displays resilience when faced with challenges e.g. learning a new skill  
 Able to negotiate and accept others' perspectives  
 Describes self in positive terms and talks about abilities  
 Shows confidence and ability to stand up for themselves

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Building Relationships

**0 - 3 months**

Shows their readiness to be social through using their sensory abilities, following movement and gazing at faces intently

Most responsive to prime carer's voice

Begins to look at familiar adult for brief periods

Turns eyes and or head towards voice

Stops crying when picked up

Makes own sounds or physical response when talked to

Responds to interactions with small movement of fingers, arms, legs, eye flicker, turn head, smile (flicker), sounds

**3 - 6 months**

Moves body, arms and legs and changes facial expression in response to others e.g. sticking out tongue, opening mouth and widening eyes

Holds up arms to be picked up and cuddled and is soothed by physical touch such as being held, cuddled and stroked

Laughs or squeals to express pleasure when happy or excited

Shows delight at tickling and anticipation games

Begins to respond to other children touching them or interacting with them.

Interacts with others through turning their head, eye movements, body movements, rolling towards others etc

**6 - 9 months**

Responds to what a carer is paying attention to e.g. following their gaze

Distinguishes between people, recognising the look, sound and smell of their close carer

Smiles more often to familiar rather than unfamiliar people

Likes and responds to cuddles and being held

Makes body stiff and vocalises when protesting

Shows anticipation when playing games through sounds and body movements

Makes choices by looking, turning head, eye flicker, body movements etc

**9 - 12 months**

Responds to facial expressions of happiness and sadness in others

Makes use of special people for comfort and security

Begins to display attachment behaviours such as wanting to stay near and becoming upset when left with an unfamiliar person

Becomes wary of unfamiliar people or people they have not seen for a while

Interested in watching others, especially children

Laughs with favourite people

Reacts to audience, repeats activity or action when encouraged

Shows delight at active rough and tumble play

Shows anticipation in interactive games such as peep po

**12 - 18 months**

Shows shyness around unfamiliar people and shows preference for certain people  
 May look concerned if hears crying, or displays excitement if hears familiar, happy voice  
 Initiates interaction with other children e.g. vocalising, reaching, moving towards  
 Engages another person to help achieve a goal e.g. to get an object out of reach  
 Seeks reactions e.g. to minor injury  
 Draws others into social interaction through calling, crying and babbling, smiling, laughing and moving their bodies and limbs  
 Cooperates with caregiving experiences, such as dressing

**18 - 24 months**

Enjoys playing alone and alongside others (parallel play)  
 Will often watch, follow and imitate others in their play  
 May find long periods of social engagement overwhelming and may withdraw  
 Shares interest and attention by looking to where the adult is looking, pointing and using their gaze to direct the adult's attention to something  
 Explores the environment, interacts with others and plays confidently while their parent/carer or key person is close by; using them as a secure base to return to for reassurance if anxious or in unfamiliar situations  
 Shows empathy by offering comfort that they themselves would find soothing e.g. their dummy

**24 - 30 months**

Builds relationships with special people but may show anxiety in the presence of strangers  
 Is becoming more able to separate from their close carers and explore new situations with support and encouragement from another familiar adult  
 May dislike sharing a preferred adult's attention with another child  
 Enjoys conversation with carers  
 Engages in play with other children  
 May intentionally hurt another person if angry

**30 - 36 months**

Enjoys company of other children and wants to play with them  
 Enjoys gaining attention of others and sustaining interaction  
 Defends own possessions  
 Shows some understanding that other people have perspectives, ideas and needs that are different to theirs e.g. may turn a book to face you so you can see it  
 Closely watches others' body language to begin to understand their intentions and meaning  
 Shows empathy and concern for people who are special to them by partially matching others' feelings with their own e.g. may offer a child a toy they know they like

**36 - 42 months**

Sometimes shares or takes turns with others with adult guidance to understand 'yours' and 'mine'  
 Notices and asks questions about differences, such as skin colour, types of hair  
 Seeks out companionship with adults and other children, sharing experiences and play ideas  
 Participates in some co-operative play  
 Joins in group activities  
 Shows initiative and autonomy in relating with others  
 Identifies self with children of same age and gender  
 Uses their experiences of adult behaviours to guide their social relationships and interactions

**42 - 48 months**

Understands that own actions affect other people e.g. may comfort a child they have upset  
 Shows increasing consideration of other people's needs and gradually more impulse control in favourable conditions e.g. giving up a toy to another who wants it  
 Initiates play by giving peer a role, e.g. 'you be the Mummy'  
 Begins to select friends and exclude others  
 Articulates their wants and needs  
 Looks to a supportive adult for help in resolving conflict with peers

**48 - 54 months**

Independently plays in small and large groups  
 Enjoys doing things with other children and adults  
 More confident in new social situations  
 Develops particular friendships with other children  
 Starts to recognise their friends may have different ideas  
 Returns to the secure base of a familiar adult to recharge and gain emotional support and practical help in difficult situations

**54 - 60 months**

Enjoys playing alone, alongside and with others, inviting others to play and attempting to join others' play  
 Takes turns, shares resources and equipment with peers  
 Aware that there are different ways in which to behave dependent on the situation and company they are in  
 Represents and recreates what they have learnt about social interactions from their relationships with close adults, in their play and relationships with others  
 More able to understand other people's needs, wants and behaviours  
 Takes steps to resolve conflicts with other children by negotiating and finding a compromise; sometimes by themselves, sometimes with support  
 Proactively seeks adult support

## Physical Development: Gross Motor Skills

### 0 - 3 months

- Startle reflex with whole body movement
- Grasps finger if palm touched or briefly grasps an object when it is placed in their hand
- Keeps hand closed with thumb tucked into palm
- Turns head to side when placed on tummy
- Holds head in midline when on back
- Waves arms and legs and can wiggle/squirm when lying on their back
- Rolls from side to back
- Blinks eyes spontaneously
- Closes eyes to bright lights
- Turns head or eyes towards light or sounds
- Shows a preference for high definition colours e.g. black/white
- Follows faces or objects with both eyes, when these are in close proximity to their face and are slowly moving side to side.
- Looks from one object to another
- Moves all limbs freely
- Able to hold head steady for few seconds when being moved from lying to sitting

### 3 - 6 months

- Moves arms more than legs
- When lying on their back, can bring hands together over their chest, touching their fingers
- When lying on their back, reaches randomly towards toys e.g. baby gym
- When lying on their back, lifts legs into a vertical position and grasps feet and plays with toes
- Moves head to look around when lying on their back or in supported sitting position (where appropriate)
- Able to control head e.g. not floppy when supported in an upright position
- Arm and leg movements become smoother and less jerky
- When lying on their tummy, child lifts head using forearms to support (straight arms and flat hands)
- Tracks primary caregiver/s with large body movements as they move around the room
- When they have a toy in their hand(s), they hold it whilst looking at it, wave it about and may explore it orally
- Using hands and / or feet, feels and plays with objects of different textures and tolerates new textures
- Reaches out persistently and deliberately for toys and faces that interest them, developing awareness that their hands are their own and they can control them
- May fix gaze on something of interest when looking around their environment
- Begins to weight bear when held standing on a hard surface

**6 - 9 months**

When placed in a sitting position, leans forward and then returns to original position  
 Sits with support with head and back straight and turns head from side to side to look around  
 Tries to sit up from lying on their back when hands are held  
 Rolls over from front to back and from back to front  
 Demonstrates pre-crawling movements with arms and legs when lying on tummy  
 Takes weight through legs and bounces up and down when in a standing position (where appropriate)  
 Makes stepping movements when held by an adult  
 Pulls self to standing against a support e.g. furniture, but does not yet lower self down with control  
 Puts arms up to be lifted  
 Kicks legs vigorously one leg then the other  
 When sitting, puts hands out when off balance to save self from falling

**9 - 12 months**

Pulls self to sitting position  
 Sits unsupported on the floor and can adjust body posture when leaning forward to pick up and manipulate a toy without losing balance  
 Sits up from lying down  
 Rolls from front to back/back to front with deliberate intent and can roll from left to right and right to left  
 Moves around independently e.g. commando crawling / bottom shuffling / sliding on the back / crawling  
 Moves from a sitting position to a hands and knees crawling position  
 Whilst in a crawl position, reaches out with one arm and maintains balance  
 Takes weight through legs when placed in a supported standing position  
 Kneels up against furniture  
 Pulls self to standing against furniture and lowers self down with increasing control  
 Walks around furniture lifting one foot and stepping sideways (cruising)  
 Walks with one or both hands held by an adult  
 Stands by themselves for a few seconds when placed in a standing position  
 Gets onto a low edge or step  
 Walks with a push along walker or by pushing a stable toy  
 Stretches out with one hand to grasp a toy when offered  
 Throws toy or object with random aim

**12 - 18 months**

Sits well and gets into sitting position independently  
 Pulls to standing from sitting e.g. using furniture or adult support  
 Sits down from a standing position with control  
 Crawls upstairs and comes down backwards on knees  
 Takes a few steps independently, these may be uneven  
 Picks up an object on the floor with support from an adult or furniture  
 Climbs forward onto adult's chair then turns and sits  
 Gets onto child's chair themselves backwards or sideways

Purposefully throws a small ball or other object  
Turns over containers to tip out contents

**18 - 24 months**

Sits and plays in more than one position e.g. kneeling, legs outstretched, legs crossed, side sitting  
Walks well, with shorter steps, legs closer together and no longer needs to hold arms up for balance  
Attempts to run carefully but not yet smoothly  
Changes direction whilst walking  
Walks backwards for a few steps when pulling an item or toy using rope or string  
Lifts leg whilst holding onto an adult to assist with dressing  
Gets onto a chair independently

**24 - 30 months**

Runs well although not always avoiding obstacles  
Kicks a ball e.g. stands on one foot while kicking with the other  
Jumps with both feet off the ground  
Squats down to pick up objects, occasionally falling  
Returns to standing after squatting down to pick up an object  
Carries large objects whilst walking  
Moves a tricycle or bike by pushing feet along floor  
Pushes and pulls large toys or objects, difficulty steering around obstacles  
Walks upstairs holding an adult's hand or bannister by putting two feet on each step

**30 - 36 months**

Jumps from a small step or low piece of equipment  
Rolls or throws ball or bean bag more accurately e.g. passing to another person, aiming at a target  
Catches a large ball thrown into two arms e.g. beach ball, balloon ball, light football  
Kneels without support  
Bends over to retrieve an item from the floor without needing to hold on to anything  
Runs safely on whole foot  
Negotiates obstacles and turn corners when running  
Stands independently from a kneeling position without using furniture to support  
Stands on tiptoe when holding onto something  
Walks downstairs, two feet to each step whilst carrying a toy  
Walks backwards, forwards and sideways  
Steers a wheeled toy with hands and attempts to pedal e.g. balance bike / trike

**36 - 42 months**

Moves freely with confidence in a range of ways e.g. slithering, shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, running, jumping, skipping, sliding, hopping

Climbs confidently and begins pulling themselves up on play equipment

Climbs stairs, ladders or gym equipment using alternate feet

Pedals a tricycle

Squats with steadiness to rest or play with object on the ground and rises to feet without using hands

Walks along a bench / low wall

Kicks a large ball successfully with directed aim

Kicks smaller balls forcibly

Catches a large ball

Catches a small ball at close range

Links two movements together e.g. run and jump into a puddle; walk and duck under a climbing frame

**42 - 48 months**

Stands on one foot for a few seconds independently

Rides a two-wheel bike with stabilisers or lifts both feet off the floor on a balance bike

Hops up and down with adult support

Jumps from apparatus landing appropriately

Runs skilfully, adjusting speed and direction to avoid obstacles

'Bounce passes' a large ball and receives a bounce pass

**48 - 54 months**

Avoids obstacles and changes direction when riding a bike / tricycle

Throws a small ball up and down, catching it as it falls

Travels with confidence and skill around, under, over and through gymnastic equipment

Jumps over a low hurdle e.g. up to 10cm high

Bends knees to touch toes

Climbs up a slide and comes down independently

**54 - 60 months**

Attempts to jump using a skipping rope

Bends over and touches toes with straight legs

Copies a sequence of gross motor movements after demonstration, e.g. hop, jump, skip

Masters throwing and catching a variety of different sized balls

Performs dances using simple movement patterns

Takes part in simple team games, developing simple tactics for defending and attacking

Rides a two-wheeled bike independently

## Physical Development: Fine Motor Skills

0 - 3 months

- Brings hands to mouth
- Moves arms and legs
- Hands start to open more e.g. may open in response to touch
- Looks at own hands
- Looks from one object to another i.e. shifts visual attention
- Tracks a person or object with both eyes

3 - 6 months

- Holds hands together
- Reaches for toys with both hands
- Explores hands and fingers e.g. watches them, presses hands together, clasps and unclasps hands
- Holds object for a couple of seconds, when placed in palm of hand
- Follows objects with both eyes in all directions
- Brings hand / object to their mouth
- Fixes gaze on something of interest when looking around their environment
- Uses whole hand to hold objects for longer periods (palmer grasp)
- Reaches out to faces with both hands to touch and explore

6 - 9 months

- Takes most objects to mouth
- Pats and bangs objects with open hand
- Explores by grabbing or scratching textures and surfaces within reach
- Holds a small object in their hand using a firm palmer grasp
- Reaches for small objects
- Brings fingers in towards the palm to curl fingers around an object (palmar grasp)
- Uses fingers like a rake, curling fingers over objects to bring them close (raking grasp)
- Shakes and bangs objects
- Transfers objects from one hand to the other
- Keeps hands open and relaxed most of the time
- Begins to pick up small items
- Grasps a toy using both hands at once
- Accepts and holds a second item whilst maintaining hold of original item
- Begins to pull objects out of containers
- Splashes water with a flat hand

**9 - 12 months**

Releases an object voluntarily by dropping it but not yet placing object down deliberately  
 Explores objects by banging, shaking and turning them around in their hands  
 Explores different textures with hands in a sensory way e.g. cornflour, beans, icing sugar  
 Aware that hand movements can leave a mark, e.g. plays with food on tray of highchair  
 Bangs two toys together in the midline  
 Holds an object and bangs or taps it against a surface  
 Copies clapping hands  
 Begins to put objects into a container  
 Begins to isolate index finger  
 Manipulates malleable materials  
 Begins to stack blocks on top of each other  
 Uses two hands to lift small and large objects in and out of containers  
 Picks up objects using pads of the thumb and index finger (inferior pincer grasp)  
 Stretches out with one hand to grasp a toy if offered  
 Looks at and knocks down an object placed at table height, shoulder height or floor level  
 Intentionally pass an object to an adult

**12 - 18 months**

Picks up, holds and releases small objects with precision using tips of fingers (superior or 'neat' pincer grasp)  
 Notices their hands or tools they use can make marks as they explore sensory materials  
 Claps hands together spontaneously  
 Waves goodbye  
 Begins to stack blocks on top of each other  
 Puts objects and toys into and out of containers with one hand  
 Pulls along toys and items using a rope or string  
 Uses a single finger to touch or point e.g. to indicate need, to explore an object or to activate a cause and effect device  
 Points to and pokes objects with index finger  
 Copies finger movements  
 Begins to use a spoon and cup  
 Helps turn the pages of a board book but may turn more than one at a time  
 Fits large shapes into a posting box or shape sorter  
 Removes pieces from an inset puzzle or pegs from a pegboard

**18 - 24 months**

- Begins to pick up something small with their first finger and thumb i.e. a pincer grasp
- Releases items when held with pincer grasp
- Uses hands to twist, turn and manipulate an object
- Scoops with a spoon at mealtimes or during play
- Puts rings on a ring stacker
- Builds a taller block tower
- Turns pages of a book one at a time

**24 - 30 months**

- Stabs food with a fork at mealtimes
- Uses a pouring action when playing with containers in sand or water
- Presses small switches and buttons using index finger
- Squeezes toys or instruments to produce a sound (both two handed and using one hand)
- Deliberately places small objects e.g. pegs in a pegboard, pieces into an inset puzzle
- Builds tall structures without them falling over
- More co-ordinated hand movements; using both hands at the same time
- Uses appropriate actions to explore properties of objects e.g. turning, twisting, rolling and pressing

**30 - 36 months**

- Holds cup with or without handles with two hands, drinking with minimal spilling
- Threads large beads onto rod, wire or floppy cord e.g. washing line cord or heavy shoelace
- Uses a knife to chop soft items
- Places objects down neatly and precisely
- Fits increasingly small shapes and objects into holes during posting activities
- Puts tiny objects into a small container
- Squeezes a pair of loop scissors independently to make single snips when an adult is holding the paper

**36 - 42 months**

- Threads onto a shoelace
- Removes unfastened clothing independently e.g. tops, bottoms, socks, footwear
- Creates long shapes when rolling dough
- Holds scissors in one hand, makes single cuts in paper
- Folds paper in half
- Manipulates puzzle pieces to complete an inset jigsaw

**42 - 48 months**

- Pours, sieves and digs with control
- Builds towers using several small connecting bricks
- Shows control in holding and using books, hammers and mark making tools
- Makes consecutive cuts in self held paper
- Screws and unscrews jar lids, nuts and bolts

**48 - 54 months**

- Uses wind-up toys
- Cuts simple shapes and manipulates a conventional pair of scissors
- Manipulates puzzle pieces to complete a simple jigsaw

**54 - 60 months**

- Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely with increasing control and intention
- Manages all fastenings on clothes with minimal help
- Skilfully operates appropriate electronic devices with ease and control
- Makes simple stitches using a large needle
- Effectively uses a range of tools with consistent control e.g. uses scissors to cut along a line

## Literacy: Comprehension

0 - 3  
months

Quietens to caregiver's voice

3 - 6  
months

Notices and engages with sounds and images in the environment

Reacts to familiar sounds or sights by changes in behaviour e.g. smiling, looking, reaching

6 - 9  
months

Turns when hears own name

Enjoys rhymes with actions, e.g. row the boat

Starts to understand contextual clues e.g. familiar gestures, words and sounds

9 - 12  
months

Begins to follow adult point

Responds to familiar words or phrases by looking or with gestures e.g. 'Daddy'

Immediately responds to name

Responds to several familiar words e.g. family names, cup, spoon, car

Begins to anticipate some actions in rhymes

Starts to respond by action or gesture, e.g. clapping hands in response to verbal prompt and modelling from familiar rhyme

Understands simple instructions with gesture e.g. when adult holding out their hand, 'Give it to Mummy'

12 - 18  
months

Understands names of some common objects e.g. points to a toy or item when it is named

Points to a familiar named item in a picture book

Starts to follow simple instructions / statements from familiar adult with gestures or clues e.g. 'get your cup'

Points on request to a familiar person

Understands familiar words in a new context e.g. 'bath' at home and elsewhere

Responds to comments and gestures such as 'show me', 'find the' or 'point to'

18 - 24  
months

Points to three named items

Selects a familiar object from a selection of four on request

Selects familiar objects by name or identify objects from a group

Responds to questions with familiar vocabulary and context e.g. 'Where's Mummy?'

Looks at and talks about a picture with familiar features

Points to five body parts on themselves, for instance during song or in play

**24 - 30 months**

- Names 4-5 pictures in a book
- Indicates correct picture of described action, e.g. 'show me the girl drinking'
- Points to five body parts on a doll or teddy
- Responds appropriately to simple 'who', 'what' or 'where' questions

**30 - 36 months**

- Identifies objects described by their function, e.g. 'what do we sit on?'
- Supplies missing words in familiar rhyme if adult pauses
- Understands more complex sentences
- Communicates what happens next in a repetitive story verbally or using gesture
- Shows understanding of basic prepositions 'in' and 'on' such as 'put dolly in the box' by carrying out action or selecting correct picture
- Indicates object from choice of two

**36 - 42 months**

- Enjoys familiar stories
- Listens to and joins in with rhymes and stories on a one-to-one basis
- Begins to understand basic concepts e.g. position / size / colour / number by carrying out an action or selecting a correct picture
- Understand instructions with three information carrying words e.g. 'put the jumper under the table' (objects / pictures used should be familiar to children)
- Shows understanding of prepositions e.g. 'under', 'on top', 'behind' by carrying out an action or selecting a correct picture
- Responds appropriately to more complex 'who', 'what' and 'where' questions using objects e.g. 'what do we put on our feet?'
- Recognises and offers a word when omitted from a familiar story

**42 - 48 months**

- Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall
- Suggests how a story might end
- Retells a simple past event from their lived experience in the correct order e.g. went down slide, hurt finger
- Begins to understand and use pronouns in context: 'they', 'he', 'she', 'him', 'her'

**48 - 54 months**

- Aware of roles of people who help us e.g. doctor
- Beginning to understand 'how' and 'why' questions
- Understands abstract concepts e.g. sound / texture / weight / quantity / length
- Listens attentively to a story in a medium sized group
- Repeats a simple story using pictures / objects as prompts

Demonstrates understanding of 'how' and 'why' questions by giving explanations

Links significant events from own experience and from stories, paying attention to sequence and how events lead one to another

Makes up stories

Sequences 3-5 elements of a story with help

Predicts what might happen next after listening to part of a story

Engages in extended conversations about stories

## Literacy: Word Reading

**0 - 3 months**

- Shows a preference for high definition colours
- Looks towards black, white and yellow
- Enjoys songs and rhymes, tuning in and paying attention

**3 - 6 months**

- Aware of colour, especially bright colours by turning towards or looking at objects or pictures
- Notices sounds and images in the environment
- Touches fabric or squidgy books

**6 - 9 months**

- Shows an interest in picture books
- Actively seeks out and experiences 'touchy / feely' parts on a page
- Engages with sounds and images in the environment
- Enjoys sharing books, rhymes or digital materials with familiar people
- Reacts to sounds in the environment such as vehicles, sirens and birds

**9 - 12 months**

- Engages with digital reading devices e.g. electronic books / toys
- Handles books, beginning to turn pages, may be several at a time
- Pays attention and responds to pictures or words
- Begins to anticipate some actions in rhymes
- Shows an interest in props related to rhymes, e.g. five little ducks

**12 - 18 months**

- Notices and shows an interest in familiar pictures and symbols, recognising what they stand for
- Recognises familiar adult in photo
- Lifts flaps in books
- Moves in response to simple rhythms in rhymes / songs
- Interested in and explores the sounds made by banging and tapping familiar objects / instruments

**18 - 24 months**

- Is interested in and anticipates books and rhymes and may have favourites
- Looks at and talks about pictures
- Points to 3 familiar pictures on a page
- Begins to join in with actions and sounds in familiar songs and book sharing experiences
- Shows an interest in story props
- Enjoys sharing photographs of their family

24 - 30 months

Has favourite stories, poems, rhymes, songs or jingles and seeks them out  
 Looks through picture books independently  
 Recognises familiar logos e.g. Tesco  
 Handles familiar books and touch screen technology, turning pages with increasing control  
 Points to simple objects described by use e.g. 'what do we sleep in?'  
 Names 4 – 5 pictures in a book

30 - 36 months

Begins to understand that print has meaning  
 Notices some print e.g. first letter of their name, bus or door number  
 Pretends to read text  
 Shows interest in print in books and the environment  
 Joins in with repeated actions, words or phrases in familiar stories or rhymes  
 Use props alongside familiar story to retell using key words  
 Enjoys rhythmic and musical activity with percussion instruments, actions, rhymes and songs, clapping along with the beat and joining in with the words of familiar songs and nursery rhymes

36 - 42 months

Handles books and touch screen technology carefully and the correct way up with growing competence  
 Listens to and joins in with stories and poems individually and in small groups  
 Recognises own name with a picture  
 Shows awareness of the way simple stories are structured e.g. beginning, middle and end  
 Retells simple stories within play contexts using props, e.g. puppets, role play or small world  
 Anticipates and joins in with key events and phrases in rhymes and stories

42 - 48 months

Tells own stories  
 Knows that print carries meaning, and, in English is read from left to right, top to bottom, front to back  
 Talks about story events and characters, and suggest what might happen next  
 Looks at and enjoys print and digital books independently  
 Begins to navigate apps and websites  
 Recognises own name in familiar contexts e.g. coat peg at preschool  
 Shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration  
 Recognises rhythm in spoken words, songs, poems and rhymes  
 Clap or taps the syllables in words during sound play  
 Begins to hear the initial sounds in words

48 - 54 months

Enjoys an increasing range of print and digital books, both fiction and non-fiction  
Re-enacts and reinvents stories they have heard in their play  
Recognises familiar words e.g. Tesco and sibling names  
Points to separate words on a page as adult reads  
Names the different parts of a book, e.g. front cover, page  
Hears and says the initial sounds in words  
Recognises own name in a variety of situations  
Begins to segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together

54 - 60 months

Begins to read some high frequency words  
Reads simple sentences using phonic knowledge  
Re-read familiar books to build up confidence and fluency  
Interprets text, using phonics, subject knowledge and illustrations  
Consistently recognises full name  
Talks about book language e.g. title, author, contents  
Continues a rhyming string and identifies alliteration  
Hears and says the sounds in words e.g. initial, middle and end  
Segments the sounds in simple words and blends them together, knowing which letters represent some of them  
Starts to link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet  
Begins to link sounds to some frequently used digraphs e.g. sh, th, ee

## Literacy: Writing

**0 - 3 months**

- Brings hands to mouth
- Looks at own hands
- Hands start to open more e.g. may open in response to touch
- Looks from one object to another i.e. shifts visual attention

**3 - 6 months**

- Holds hands together
- Reaches for toys with both hands
- Holds object for a couple of seconds, when placed in palm of hand
- Brings hand / object to their mouth

**6 - 9 months**

- Takes most objects to mouth
- Holds a small object in their hand using a firm palmer grasp
- Brings fingers in towards the palm to curl fingers around an object (palmer grasp)
- Uses fingers like a rake, curling fingers over objects to bring them close (raking grasp)
- Begins to pick up small items

**9 - 12 months**

- Releases an object voluntarily by dropping it but not yet placing object down deliberately
- Explores different textures with hands in a sensory way e.g. cornflour, beans, icing sugar
- Aware that hand movements can leave a mark, e.g. plays with food on tray of highchair
- Isolates index finger with other fingers closed
- Picks up objects using pads of the thumb and index finger (inferior pincer grasp)

**12 - 18 months**

- Picks up, holds and releases small objects with precision using tips of fingers (superior or 'neat' pincer grasp)
- Notices their hands or tools they use can make marks as they explore sensory materials
- Uses a single finger to touch or point e.g. to indicate need, to explore an object or to activate a cause and effect device
- Points to objects with index finger
- Copies finger movements

**18 - 24 months**

Begins to hold mark making implements, experimenting with their grasp  
 May use a fistful grasp to hold an implement in palm of hand with all fingers and thumb (palmar supinate grasp)  
 Explores mark making in a playful way  
 Scribbles spontaneously and / or makes dots  
 Makes connections between their movements and the marks they make  
 Understands that the marks they make are of value

**24 - 30 months**

Begins to hold mark making tools with fingertips and thumb (digital pronate grasp)  
 Uses either hand for tasks but begins to show a preference  
 Scribbles become progressively more controlled  
 Imitates modelled movements, exploring circular, backwards, forwards, vertical and horizontal movements  
 Sometimes gives meanings to marks as they draw and paint

**30 - 36 months**

Holds mark making tools using a secure digital pronate grasp  
 Distinguishes between the different marks they make  
 Makes continuous lines and patterns  
 May imitate designs e.g. circle or cross or create their own irregular shapes

**36 - 42 months**

Usually holds writing implement in preferred hand  
 Engages in mark making as part of role play  
 Starts to imitate adults writing by making continuous lines of shapes and symbols (early writing)  
 Ascribes meaning to symbols, signs and words that they see, including those they make themselves  
 Begins to make letter-type shapes to represent the initial sound of their name and other familiar words

**42 - 48 months**

Begins to hold mark making tools with three finger grasp where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit (static tripod grasp)  
 Attempts to write their own name, or other names and words, using combinations of lines, circles and curves, or letter-type shapes  
 Understands that writing is a form of communication  
 Shows an interest in letters on a keyboard

**48 - 54 months**

- Uses static tripod grasp with increasing control
- Uses tools including mark making implements with clear hand preference
- Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write, paint or use a keyboard
- Creates texts to communicate meaning for a range of purposes
- Begins to segment and blend
- Writes some recognisable letters
- Makes a recognisable attempt at own name
- Attempts to write familiar words

**54 - 60 months**

- Uses an effective dynamic tripod grasp to hold a pencil in a stable position
- Starts to develop phonic knowledge by linking sounds to letters; names and sounds some letters
- Forms recognisable (lower and upper case) letters, most of which are correctly formed
- Writes some familiar words
- Consistently writes own name in a range of contexts
- Uses developing phonic knowledge to write things such as labels and captions
- Uses writing as a means of recording and communication for different purposes

## Mathematics: Number and Numerical Pattern

**0 - 3 months**

- Looks at pictures and moving objects
- Responds to sensory stimuli in the environment e.g. pictures, sounds, lights, smells, textures
- Looks from one object to another and back again i.e. shifting visual attention

**3 - 6 months**

- Watches own hands intently
- Persistently and deliberately reaches out to touch things that interest them
- Reacts to changes of amount when those amounts are significant (more than double)
- Repeats actions that have an effect e.g. touching mobile

**6 - 9 months**

- Engages in finger play in familiar contexts e.g. feeding, changing
- Recognises patterns of their day and may protest them e.g. being placed in the cot to sleep
- Show anticipation and enjoyment of familiar caring routines and simple games

**9 - 12 months**

- Takes part in finger rhymes with numbers
- Explores collections of objects e.g. treasure baskets
- Begins to anticipate what happens next in predictable situations e.g. knowing a ball rolled back and forth will come to them
- Watches and copies what an adult does e.g. holds beater, bangs drum, claps hands
- Shows interest in patterned songs and rhymes, perhaps with repeated actions by watching, moving, smiling, clapping or making sounds

**12 - 18 months**

- Aware of number names through action rhymes and songs that relate to numbers and everyday routines
- Engages in counting-like behaviour e.g. making sounds and pointing
- Looks for things which have moved out of sight
- Initiates and continues repeated actions
- Gets to know and enjoys daily routines
- Joins in with repeated actions in songs and stories by copying actions and words
- Begins to sort similar items into sets

**18 - 24 months**

Says some counting words  
 Engages in counting-like behaviour e.g. saying some numbers in sequence  
 Joins in with number rhymes and songs  
 Uses number words like 1 or 2  
 Sometimes responds accurately when asked to give one or two items  
 Responds to words like 'lots' or 'more' during play interactions with an adult e.g. passes an adult another object when asked for more

**24 - 30 months**

Begins to say numbers in order, some of which are in the right order (ordinality)  
 In everyday situations, takes or gives two or three objects from a group  
 Begins to count on their fingers  
 Says number names to 3  
 Compares amounts saying 'lots', 'more' or 'same'  
 Notices simple shapes and patterns in pictures / environment  
 Recognises changes in numbers of things

**30 - 36 months**

Counts in everyday contexts, sometimes skipping numbers e.g. 1,2,3,5  
 Recites numbers to 5  
 Begins to notice numerals (number symbols)  
 Makes patterns with items e.g. arranging items into size, colour, shape  
 Is interested in what happens next using the pattern of everyday routines e.g. can tell you what happens next or is interested in what is happening next  
 Joins in and anticipates repeated sound and action patterns

**36 - 42 months**

Points to each object in a group once as they are counted, coordinating the touch and oral count so that they happen at the same time (one to one correspondence)  
 Recites numbers beyond 5  
 Compares two small groups of up to five objects, saying when there are the same number of objects in each group  
 Uses some number names and number language within play and may show fascination with large numbers  
 Begins to count up to three objects  
 Shows 'finger numbers' up to 5  
 Says one number for each item in order: 1,2,3,4,5  
 Identifies numerals of personal significance, e.g. their age, house number  
 Uses mark making materials to represent their own ideas, explore and communicate mathematical thinking  
 Begins to notice familiar numerals e.g. house number, age  
 Recognises that two quantities are different or the same

**42 - 48 months**

Keeps track of items that have been counted and those that have not been, so none are missed or double counted (one to one correspondence)

Recites counting words in order to 10

Fast recognition of up to three objects, without having to count them individually

Reliably counts up to five objects

Shows an awareness of zero in number rhymes

Begins to recognise numerals to 5

Experiments with their own symbols, marks and numerals to which they ascribe mathematical meaning

Compares quantities using language e.g. 'more than', 'fewer than'

Begins to describe a sequence of events (real or fictional) using words such as 'first' and 'then'

**48 - 54 months**

Links numerals with amounts up to 5

Solves real world mathematical problems with numbers up to five in play and meaningful activities

Beginning to recognise that each counting number is one more than the one before

Through play and exploration, beginning to learn that numbers are made up of smaller numbers

Separates a group of three or four objects in different ways, beginning to recognise that the total is still the same

Shows 'finger numbers' up to 10

Counts out up to ten objects from a larger group

Recognises numerals to 10

Shows the right number of objects to match the numerals up to 5

**54 - 60 months**

Counts things that cannot be touched e.g. actions, sounds and imaginary objects

Understands that the total number in a set of objects will be the same when objects are counted in another order

Verbally recites numbers 0 to 10 and 10 to 0 with accuracy and confidence

Increasingly confident in putting numerals in order 0 to 10

Matches numerals with a group of items to show how many there are (up to 10)

Estimates numbers of things e.g. how many cows are in the field?

Partitions and combines groups of up to ten objects in different ways

Begins to explore and work out mathematical problems

Understands the 'one more / one less' relationship between consecutive numbers

Subitises up to five objects (without counting)

Automatically recalls number bonds to 10

Counts verbally beyond 20

Knows the language 'less', 'more', 'how many', 'total' when comparing numbers and objects

Explores patterns within numbers up to 10 including evens and odds, and doubles and halves

## Mathematics: Spatial reasoning skills, as noted in the Educational Programme in the Early Years Statutory Framework

0 - 3  
months

Begins to have some awareness of body parts e.g. mouths and/or looks at hands

3 - 6 months

Begins to look around a room with interest

Explores space when they are free to move, roll and stretch

Explores differently sized and shaped objects by touching or mouthing

6 - 9 months

Developing an awareness of their own bodies using hands, mouth and feet

Responds to size, reacting to very big or very small items that they see or try to pick up

Experiences patterned objects and images

9 - 12 months

Develops object permanence by quickly finding a toy hidden whilst they watch, looking towards the floor when object is dropped and watching as they deliberately drop toy repeatedly

Puts objects in and out of containers

Puts objects of similar shapes inside others and takes them out again

Climbs and squeezes self into or through different types of spaces

Shows interest in patterned songs and rhymes e.g. with repeated actions

12 - 18 months

Begins to anticipate times of the day such as mealtimes or home time

Responds to changes of shape e.g. when playing with malleable materials

Begins to demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect by repeating actions

Attempts to match shapes into spaces on inset boards or puzzles

Interested in emptying containers

Explores space and engages with position and direction e.g. pointing to where they would like to go

Stacks objects of interest

Shows an interest in different sized objects in meaningful contexts e.g. give the big bowl to the big teddy

**18 - 24 months**

Investigates fitting themselves inside and moving through spaces  
 Attempts to fit shapes into spaces with matching pictures on inset boards  
 Pours materials (e.g. pasta, water, rice) in and out of containers  
 Begins to select a shape for a specific space e.g. a ball in a round hole  
 Uses blocks to create their own simple structures and arrangements  
 Shows an interest in the size and weight of different objects e.g. carrying or lifting big items  
 Explores capacity by selecting, filling, and emptying containers e.g. putting toys in a bag  
 Begins to understand that things might happen now or later, in familiar routines  
 Begins to arrange items in their own patterns e.g. lining up toys

**24 - 30 months**

Compares size, length and weight through everyday play using gesture and language  
 Chooses inset puzzle pieces and fits them in with more success  
 Builds with a range of resources e.g. bricks, blocks, everyday objects  
 Arranges items in their own patterns with more confidence  
 Recognises objects that are the same i.e. matching

**30 - 36 months**

Completes simple inter-locking jigsaws  
 Responds to some spatial and positional language  
 Explores how things look from different viewpoints including things that are near or far away  
 Begins to remember their way around familiar environments  
 Makes more complex constructions using a wider range of materials

**36 - 42 months**

Responds to some positional language through games or arranging toys / objects  
 Moves / rotates objects to match / create spaces  
 Talks about and identifies pattern in the environment using everyday language

**42 - 48 months**

Chooses items based on shape which are appropriate for their purpose  
 Talks about 2D and 3D shapes using every day and mathematical language  
 Compares objects by size / length / weight / capacity  
 Partitions and combines shapes to make new shapes with 2D and 3D shapes  
 Attempts to create arches and enclosures when building, using trial and improvement to select blocks  
 Creates and extends ABAB patterns e.g. stick/ leaf/ stick/ leaf  
 Recalls a sequence of events in everyday life and stories  
 Describes a familiar route

48 - 54 months

- Follows and gives directions using positional language
- Makes simple maps of familiar and imaginative environments
- Uses both informal language and common shape names
- Understands position through words alone e.g. 'the bag is under the table'
- Makes more intricate and detailed models
- Identifies patterns in the environment
- Shows awareness of shape similarities and differences between objects
- Orders and sequences events using everyday language related to time

54 - 60 months

- Selects, rotates and manipulates shapes in order to develop spatial reasoning skills
- Discusses route and locations using words like 'in front of' and 'behind'
- Copies, continues and creates repeating patterns of increasing complexity e.g. AB, ABB, ABBC etc
- Notices and corrects an error in a repeating pattern
- Compares and orders objects by length / weight / capacity
- Solves practical problems in play-based contexts involving length / weight / capacity
- Becomes familiar with measuring tools in everyday experience and play
- Begins to experience measuring time with timers and calendars

## Understanding the World: Past and Present

**0 - 3  
months**

Child is most responsive to primary carer's voice  
Gazes a long time at your face, especially when feeding or changing  
Maintains eye contact during interactions with a familiar person

**3 - 6  
months**

Shows interest in less familiar adults' faces  
Begins to repeat actions that have an effect

**6 - 9  
months**

Consistently repeats actions that have effects  
Shows attachment to familiar people e.g. sight / sound of adult

**9-12  
months**

Shows affection towards familiar people e.g. hugs / pats / kisses  
Co-operates with some familiar routines

**12 - 18  
months**

Plays happily alone but prefers to be near a familiar adult  
Actively seeks out familiar activities to play with  
Recognises familiar adult/s in photos

**18 - 24  
months**

Shows enjoyment when looking at photos and videos of their family  
Begins to understand that things might happen now or later withing familiar routines  
Greet peers / familiar adults when reminded e.g. 'say hello!'

**24 - 30  
months**

Can demand familiar adult's attention if others are present e.g. adult plays with another child  
Shows affection and interest towards other children and younger siblings

**30 - 36  
months**

Shows some awareness of their wider family  
Begins to recognise differences such as 'You say Daddy and I say Abba'

**36 - 42 months**

- Seeks out others to shares experiences and recent events e.g. within the last few days
- Makes attachments to members of the group
- Begins to make sense of their own life-story and family's history e.g. knowing Grandma is Mummy's Mum

**42 - 48 months**

- Enjoys participating in family and group celebrations e.g. birthdays / religious celebrations
- Follows rules in an adult led game
- Shows an interest in different occupations, often through role-play
- Explores how things work, for example any technological objects

**48 - 54 months**

- Actively seeks sharing and sense of fairness e.g. 'he won't give it to me!'
- Makes connections between experiences of themselves and peers and talks about this e.g. parent occupations, show and tell
- Knows some similarities and differences between things in the past and now

**54 - 60 months**

- Comments on images of familiar situations in the past, for example in books
- Compares and contrasts characters from stories, including figures from the past
- Talks about the lives of people around them and their roles in society
- Understands the past through settings, characters and events in books

## Understanding the World: People, Culture and Communities

0 - 3 months

Begins to look towards familiar adults  
Turns eyes and or head towards familiar voice  
Often stops crying when picked up  
Copies facial expressions and mouth shapes  
Makes own sounds or physical response when talked to  
Comforted by body contact / soothing noises

3 - 6 months

Cries in different ways to express needs and attract attention  
Plays with and explores objects by touching them, looking at them, smelling them, placing them in their mouth and listening to the sounds they make  
Recognises key people in their own life

6 - 9 months

Begins to be wary of strangers  
Actively explores the environment with all senses  
Shows a sense of belonging to their family and key carer

9 - 12 months

Begins to play social games e.g. peek-a-boo, and 'give and take' games  
Clings to familiar adults and may hide face from strangers  
May become distressed when main carer leaves room

12 - 18 months

Plays alongside another child  
Begins to watch other children playing  
Initiates play / interaction with an adult by taking an object to them  
Notices details about the adults they meet e.g. reaching for glasses, touching jewellery

18 - 24 months

Shows interest in stories about people, animals, nature or objects they are familiar with  
Watches another child in play and may copy them  
Shows interest in photographs of themselves and other familiar people  
Sometimes shares toys / food with adult / child  
Begins to take turns in play during adult-led activities  
Pauses to briefly wait for a turn in a simple social play with an adult e.g. rolling a ball activity

**24 - 30 months**

Has a sense of own immediate family, relations and pets  
 Imitates everyday actions and events from own family and cultural background through pretend play  
 Enjoys being with other children  
 Plays happily alongside other children  
 Joins in other children's play briefly  
 Begins to develop friendships  
 May be shy when unfamiliar adults are present  
 Recreates everyday experiences in their own play

**30 - 36 months**

Displays curiosity about the world by looking at objects, events and people  
 Is starting to make friends and be interested in having friends  
 Names familiar people  
 Knows that they have similarities and differences to others  
 Begins join in with small group-based activities  
 Begins to share toys

**36 - 42 months**

Enjoys make believe and role play e.g. dressing up as different people  
 Notices and recognises when others are hurt or upset  
 Begins to develop positive attitudes about the differences between people  
 Begins to develop an awareness of features in their community e.g. library, mosque, park

**42 - 48 months**

Remembers and talks about significant personal events e.g. Christmas / Diwali  
 Shows sensitivity to others e.g. helping a child who has fallen over  
 Recognises and describes special events for family or friends  
 Plays with other children, or alongside them, for longer periods with minimal adult interaction  
 Continues to develop positive attitudes about the differences between people  
 Knows there are different countries in the world and will talk about these differences, making reference to experiences, photos or stories

**48 - 54 months**

Knows some of the things that make them unique  
 Talks about members of their immediate family  
 Names and describes people they know  
 Forms a special friendship with another child  
 Knows that others do not always enjoy the same thing, and is sensitive to this  
 Expresses feelings about personal events  
 Understands that some places are special to members of their community  
 Recognises that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways

**54 - 60 months**

Co-operates as part of a group, sharing fairly

Understands there are different religious celebrations, some of which they take part in e.g. Christmas / Diwali / Eid / Hanukkah

Shows an awareness that some events are celebrated differently e.g. weddings or births

Recognises some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries

Shows interest in maps or a globe

## Understanding the World: The Natural World

**0 - 3 months**

Moves eyes, then head, to look towards moving objects, lights and sounds  
 Notices a visual / auditory change in their environment  
 Quietens or alerts to the sound of speech  
 Responds differently to different tones of voice or speech sounds  
 Is calmed by soft speech or song

**3 - 6 months**

Explores hands and fingers e.g. watches them, presses hands together, clasps and unclasps hand  
 Plays with and explores objects by touching them, looking at them, placing them in the mouth and listening to the sounds they make  
 Repeats actions that have an effect e.g. kicking or hitting a mobile or shaking a rattle  
 Persistently and deliberately reaches out for toys that interest them  
 Smiles / responds with pleasure at recognisable playthings

**6 - 9 months**

Looks around a room with interest, visually scanning the environment for new and interesting objects and events  
 May focus on a particular area or resource  
 Begins to be interested in small objects or the detail of a toy  
 Responds to environments outside home or familiar setting e.g. feeling the breeze on their face

**9 - 12 months**

Explores, with appropriate support, a range of objects and materials in different ways e.g. shaking, hitting, looking, feeling, tasting, mouthing, pulling, turning and poking  
 Watches people and events for an increasingly long time  
 Stares with increased interest when a new object is shown to them  
 Attempts to get objects that are out of reach e.g. tries to pull a mat towards them to make a toy or object come closer

**12 - 18 months**

Explores immediate environment  
 Closely observes what animals, people and vehicles do  
 Points to objects of interest out of doors  
 Seeks to investigate when a toy is hidden e.g. boxes, cupboards, blankets  
 Solves simple problems independently e.g. retrieving out of reach toys or carrying toys from one place to another  
 Begins, with appropriate support, to use or explore object functionally e.g. drink out of cup, pretending to eat fake fruit

**18 - 24 months**

Explores different ways of playing with toys and media, e.g. pulls dough apart, splashes in puddles, rolling a ball or pushing a toy car

Matches parts of objects that fit / belong together e.g. lid on the teapot

Remembers where objects belong

Notices prominent features of an environment e.g. outdoor play area

**24 - 30 months**

Enjoys playing with small world models such as a farm, a garage or train track

Shows curiosity in how things work

Notices detailed features of objects, events and people in their immediate or wider environment

Indicates some understanding of aspects of their familiar world by answering and asking simple questions through their preferred method of communication e.g. what / where / who questions

Is developing an understanding that living things have needs e.g. 'teddy's hungry'

**30 - 36 months**

Talks / communicates about some things that they have observed in the environment e.g. 'it's raining', 'that's a big leaf'

Understands simple explanations and reasons given about why things happen and how things work

Begins to ask questions about home and familiar places and surrounding environments e.g. shop, park

**36 - 42 months**

Continually asks questions e.g. 'where does the bath water go?'

Begins to understand about handling the environment and pets / animals with care e.g. not picking the flowers, stroking the cat gently

Plants seeds and cares for growing plants

Begins to understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things

**42 - 48 months**

Shows interest in the natural world e.g. likes to collect leaves, stones, shells

Understands the features of different environments e.g. knows trees grow in a forest, that there will be sea and sand at the seaside

Understands the key features of the life cycle of a plant and an animal

Talks about the differences between materials and changes they notice e.g. water and ice

Develops an understanding of growth, decay and change over time

Shows care and concern for living things and the environment

**48 - 54 months**

Describes what they see, hear and feel whilst outside

Notices, comments and ask questions through their preferred method of communication, about changes in their familiar world e.g. falling leaves in autumn at the park, banana turning black

Compares things that they see to their own experiences e.g. half-moon looks like a satsuma segment; circle looks like a wheel

Looks closely at similarities, differences patterns and change in nature

**54 - 60 months**

Explores the natural world around them

Describes indoor and outdoor environments

Uses appropriate term to describe features of objects in outdoor environment e.g. tall trees

Comments on apparent anomalies e.g. 'It's sunny but it's cold!'

Recognises some environments that are different to the one in which they live

Understands the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them

## Arts and Design: Creating with Materials

**0 - 3  
months**

Responds to high contrasts such as black and white pictures or objects

**3 - 6  
months**

Aware of colour and light, especially bright colours, high definition

Enjoys hand play, own and others

**6 - 9  
months**

Handles, feels, manipulates and mouths objects and materials

**9 - 12  
months**

Experiments with a range of media (tools, materials, sounds, whole-body movement) through multi-sensory exploration

Notices and becomes interested in their actions on materials and resources e.g. knocking down brick towers

**12 - 18  
months**

Explores tactile materials, e.g. pasta, flour, water, sand, fabrics

Empties and fills containers

Explores malleable materials e.g. playdough / slime by pulling, squashing, squeezing and poking

**18 - 24  
months**

Mirrors and improvises actions they have observed e.g. clapping or waving

Builds structures and knocks them down again

Uses mark making resources e.g. paint, water to make intentional marks

Scribbles spontaneously and / or makes dots

Manipulates and plays with different materials

**24 - 30  
months**

Constructs with readymade forms e.g. bricks, boxes

Notices patterns with strong contrasts and is attracted by patterns resembling the human face

Explores a range of resources, for example paint, using fingers and other parts of their bodies as well as other tools e.g. brushes / sponges

Explores 2D and 3D materials when creating structures and pictures

Uses mark making tools and body parts to make lines that go up and down, round and round

Uses mark making resources to make separate marks

Scribbles become progressively more controlled

**30 – 36 months**

Enjoys playing with colour in a variety of ways e.g. mixing colours  
 Uses their imagination as they consider what they can do with different materials  
 Makes simple models which express their ideas  
 Expresses ideas and feelings through making marks, and explores the effects of using different types of paint, glue, pens, pencils, crayons, paper etc.  
 Begins to give a meaning to the marks they make

**36 – 42 months**

Explores a variety of colours  
 Explores and uses a variety of materials e.g. clay, dough, card, feathers  
 Develops their own ideas and chooses materials to use to express them  
 Uses various construction materials e.g. joining pieces, stacking vertically / horizontally, balancing etc.  
 Draws spontaneous and unrecognisable forms  
 Creates closed shapes with continuous lines and begins to use these shapes to represent objects

**42 – 48 months**

Joins different materials and explores different textures  
 Creates pictures using a variety of media  
 Explores how colours can be changed  
 Shows different emotions in their drawings and paintings, like happiness, sadness, fear etc  
 Begins to draw simple objects using common shapes e.g. a square for a house  
 Begins to draw pictures that include several items

**48 – 54 months**

Uses fingers and tools to create forms that represent ideas  
 Mixes their own colours  
 Chooses appropriate equipment for task e.g. thin brush for thin line  
 Investigates natural materials e.g. transient art, bark rubbing  
 Draws with increasing complexity and detail, such as representing a face with a circle and including details  
 Produces complex pictures using variety of media  
 Uses drawing to represent ideas like movement or loud noises

**54 – 60 months**

Expresses and communicates ideas using a wide range of media and forms  
 Mixes own colours and knows adding white lightens colour and black darkens it  
 Explores, uses and refines a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings  
 Returns to and builds on previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them  
 Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills

## Arts and Design: Being Imaginative and Expressive

0 – 3  
months

Responds to high contrast colours e.g. black and white or objects  
Responds to familiar person's face and voice

3 – 6  
months

Repeats action that has an effect e.g. batting at mobile  
Begins to show attention to sounds and music

6 – 9  
months

Is intensely curious, actively explores objects using all senses  
Explores their voices and enjoys making sounds  
Responds to familiar songs or action rhymes

9 – 12 months

Responds to and engages with the world that surrounds them e.g. sounds, movements, people, objects, sensations, emotions  
Imitates actions using whole body  
Begins to imitate familiar action rhyme through whole-body movement e.g. leans back and forwards while hands held for 'Row, Row', closing and opening hands, wriggling body and legs

12 – 18 months

Bounces rhythmically when being sung to or when listening to music  
Moves whilst vocalising / playing with sound makers and instruments  
Responds to a simple action song with anticipation e.g. row, row  
Responds physically and emotionally to music when it changes  
Knows way to play with familiar toy e.g. car is for pushing  
Uses 'symbolic sounds' for objects and animals in play  
Engages in simple imaginary play e.g. pretending to be asleep, feeding dolly  
Shows understanding of familiar objects by actions e.g. pretends to drink from an empty cup or uses a brush on their hair  
Experiments with different objects to look for new properties e.g. bowl is a hat, drum or container

18 – 24 months

Experiments with their singing voice  
Sings / vocalises whilst playing with sound makers / listening to music  
Reacts physically whilst listening to sounds or music including instruments  
Begins to join in with actions and single words when singing familiar songs  
Makes rhythmical and repetitive sounds  
Begins to make sounds using everyday items e.g. pots, plastic bowls, pans, wooden spoons

Interprets music through movements e.g. jumping, bouncing or swinging arms when they hear music / songs they like  
 Imitates everyday tasks e.g. sweeping  
 Engages in small world play  
 Uses one (similar) object as another e.g. sweeping brush may become horse, cardboard box becomes car

**24 – 30 months**

Joins in singing songs with recognisable tunes or words  
 Creates rhythmic sounds and movements  
 Creates sounds in a variety of way e.g. rubbing, shaking, tapping, striking or blowing, including household objects and musical instruments  
 Begins to participate in pretend play, using objects that represent other objects e.g. using a remote as a mobile phone

**30 – 36 months**

Shows an interest in the way sounds are made e.g. fast, loud, quiet  
 Move and dance to music  
 Invents own music using any equipment  
 Uses actions to indicate the role they are adopting e.g. mother  
 Uses routines from everyday life in their play e.g. making dinner  
 Uses a range of voices in the imaginative play  
 Enjoys dressing up as characters of interest to the child and people who help us e.g. being a post delivery person, fire-fighter, princess, superhero  
 Joins in with simple routines of action songs e.g. 'Hokey Cokey'

**36 - 42 months**

Sings to self  
 Knows and joins in with some songs  
 Makes up simple songs  
 Moves in a range of different ways e.g. mirroring and creating their own movement patterns  
 Taps out simple repeated rhythms  
 Joins in with all actions to simple nursery rhymes  
 Responds to the tempo of a piece of music e.g. run when fast tempo, slow walking/swaying when slow tempo  
 Listens with increased attention to sounds  
 Attempts to initiate tunes  
 Makes sounds / movements / drawings to accompany stories  
 Extends scenes from everyday life with other children being assigned a role e.g. Mum, Dad, dog, baby  
 Notices what other children and adults do, copying, adding variations, then doing it spontaneously  
 Engages in imaginative play based on their own ideas and experiences

**42 - 48 months**

- Sings familiar songs
- Creates their own songs or improvises a song around one they know
- Play and share a wide variety of music and songs
- Develops voice control, sings the pitch of a tone sung by another person (pitch match)
- Explores how sounds and movements can be changed
- Experiments with different body movements in response to music
- Marches in time to music and / or claps to beat in song
- Switches from one movement to another during dance
- Plays simple instruments and responds to suggested beat
- Plays alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme
- May engage in small world play which may be set in an imagined landscape e.g. chair arm may be a cliff
- Makes imaginative and complex 'small worlds' with blocks and construction kits, such as a city with different buildings and a park
- Uses available resources to create props to support play

**48 - 54 months**

- Remembers and sings entire songs, naming familiar tunes
- Performs simple dance-like steps e.g. pretends to be a ballerina
- Makes music in a range of ways based on their experiences
- Listens attentively, moves to and talks about music, expressing their feelings and responses
- Plays instruments with increasing control
- Combines toys into own imaginative settings
- Tells stories combining fact and fiction
- Develops storyline or narrative into their play
- Uses one object to represent another, that are not necessarily similar
- Takes part in simple pretend play e.g. role play with a friend (shop and customer)
- Enjoys stories based on self and places they know well

**54 - 60 months**

- Delights in singing rhymes and jingles
- Puts own words to songs
- Sings in a group or on their own, increasingly matching the pitch and following the melody
- Begins to build a collection of songs and dances
- Uses movements to interpret music e.g. will respond to a sad song
- Watches and talks about dance and performance art, expressing their feelings and responses
- Explores and engages in music making and dance, performing solo or in groups
- Revisits imaginative play themes with increasing complexity
- Engages in imaginative and role play based on their own experiences
- Uses a range of voices in the imaginative play
- Plays co-operatively as part of a group to create, develop and act out a narrative
- Chooses particular movements / instruments / sounds / colours / materials for their own purposes

