



# Early Years

Supporting Smooth Transitions | Learning at Home

## Learning at Home Parents/Carers Guidance

**Everything you do with your child can help them to be strong confident, independent learners who are ready to start school.**

These cards and activity ideas will help you as parents and carers to prepare your child for their next step into school. Time spent doing things together at home and seizing learning opportunities will really help your child find out new things and develop skills that will help learning at school.

One side of each card will provide you with ideas of activities you could try in different places at home or out and about. The other side offers **Top Tips** to encourage further play and learning.



These cards have been developed as part of the Supporting Smooth Transitions project commissioned by Herts County Council, delivered by HFL Education. HFL Education is the largest school company in the UK dedicated to improving education for young people. Every child in Hertfordshire deserves the very best start possible.

For further information please contact [eytransition@hfleducation.org](mailto:eytransition@hfleducation.org)

# A quick guide to the top tip icons



## Talking point

All of the suggested activities can be enhanced by parents/carers talking to their child. Each card will have a suggested talking point as a top tip.



## Keep safe!

Ensure that children are accompanied when using any potentially dangerous equipment such as scissors or knives, when in engaging in risky play such as climbing, when near water or when playing with objects that pose a choking or suffocation risk.



## Thinking time

Children share their ideas



## Promoting independence

Children do things for themselves



## Following instructions

Children listen and do



## Recognising me

Children know what makes them unique



## Taking turns

Children work together



## Getting moving

Children use their bodies



## Investigating

Children find out



## Relaxing

Children learn to rest



## Being creative

Children use their imagination



## Reading time

Children share stories and information



## Writing time

Children record ideas



## Starting maths

Children problem solve



## Using technology

Children use technology for a purpose



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## Supporting physical development

**Supporting me to develop my physical development has many benefits on my learning and wellbeing such as promoting a healthy lifestyle, developing co-ordination skills that I will need when I start writing and helping me to feel more confident to try new things.**

- Taking me to local parks, playgrounds and outdoor spaces offers opportunities to practise lots of skills such as climbing, swinging and sliding which helps build strength in my muscles.
- Helping around the house with tasks such as cooking, laundry, gardening and tidying up helps me develop co-ordination in my arms and hands that I will need when I start learning how to write letters and words.
- Creative activities where I need to use tools such as pencils, paintbrushes and scissors help make my hands and fingers to become stronger and develop my imagination.
- Building with small and large blocks, bricks, cardboard boxes or logs is a great activity to do together, indoors or outdoors. This helps me to use different parts of my body and try out new ideas.



# TOP TIPS: Supporting physical development



## Talking point

When children are playing at home or out about, talk about what parts of their bodies that they are using and how they feel when carrying out vigorous activity.



## Promoting independence

Encourage your child to have a go by themselves first. Give them instructions to guide them, such as where to put their hands/feet to climb up and down. Be ready to help if needed.



## Being creative

Collect a selection of empty packaging, old cards and leaflets for your child to explore and be creative with. Consider making your own playdough to use with tools/utensils around the house.

*(Recipe card included)*



## Investigating

Help your child to try out new ideas and find the best way to complete a task, such as build a den big enough to fit in, ride their scooter around an obstacle course or putting things back where they belong..



## Getting moving

Talk to your child about the position, size and shape of things they see and use outside.



## Taking turns

Where experiences require your child to share equipment and space with other children, encourage your child to wait their turn and be aware of other people/children using it.



## Keeping safe!

Ensure children are supervised at all times when using tools and equipment at home and out and about. Talk about the risks involved helping them to manage these safely.



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## Developing independence skills

**One of the most useful things you can do to get me ready for school is to make sure I am comfortable doing simple, developmentally appropriate tasks by myself.**

- Give me time to try new tasks by myself, even if I find these difficult and encourage me to ask for help rather than doing things for me too soon.
- I will need to feel confident in using the toilet at school as they look different to what I use at home. When we go out and about, we can practise using other toilets. It is ok if I have accidents, pack me some spare clothes so that I can change.
- Encourage me to put on and take off my own clothes, including shoes, and practise with different fastenings (buttons and zips). This is important for when I use the toilet at school, change for P.E. or to put my coat on to go outside.
- Show me how to use cutlery, open cartons, take lids off containers and pour my own drink so that I can have my lunch with ease.
- Help me recognise my name by putting it on the belongings and items of clothing that I will take into school. This will also help me with my early reading skills.
- Help me to interact with different people working at the local shops, cafe or library. I could ask how much something is, or where to find what we are looking for.



# TOP TIPS: Developing independence skills



## Talking point

Talk to your child about things they find tricky and give them ideas for how they can work through challenges.



## Following instructions

Give clear, simple instructions to help your child complete tasks by themselves.



## Recognising me

Help your child to find ways to communicate both verbally and non-verbally such as shaking or nodding their head or using visuals.



## Reading time

Borrow books from the library about different families, people and communities. Help your child to understand and similarities and difference that prepare your child for meeting new people.



## Writing time

When helping your child to recognise and write their name, remember to use a capital letter at the start only. It can be confusing for children if their whole name is written in capital letters when they learn to read in lower case.

*(Activity card included)*



## Using technology

Encourage your child to call/video call a family member or friend to talk about their day.



## Keeping Safe!

Talk to your child about when it is safe to talk to people they don't know. Remind them about what to do if they get lost and can't find you.



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## Recognising feelings and emotions

**As I am learning so many new things all at once, it can be a bit overwhelming. My feelings and emotions are important but sometimes it can be hard for you to understand my behaviour because of them. I am only just learning that other people also have feelings and emotions. I will continue to need support to recognise this for myself and in others as I continue to grow.**

- If I begin to become frustrated when trying to do something, try not to ask too many questions or become annoyed with me. Celebrate and talk to me about what I have managed so far and help me complete the task successfully.
- If I am sad, help me to talk to you about why I am feeling like this and sometimes I might just need a cuddle or gentle touch and to know that you are there for me.
- If I am starting to become overexcited, make sure you talk to me at my level. We can practise some breathing exercises to help me calm down.
- If I am worried, reassure me by talking me through the issue. Share examples of what I can do if I feel worried, especially when being away from you.
- Connecting with nature and being outside in all weathers helps my well-being and gives me space that I might need.
- Perhaps we could write some invitations to our family, friends or teddies to invite them to our picnic.



# TOP TIPS: Recognising feelings and emotions



## Talking point

Name different feelings and emotions that your child expresses and that you experience. This will help them to make links between how actions and words make people feel. *(Activity card included)*



## Taking turns

Playing games together helps your child process the feelings and emotions of winning and losing as well as developing an understanding of fairness.



## Following instructions

There may be times when children are resistant to do what they have been asked to do. Try to explain why they need to follow instructions, such as to keep safe, to keep to time or to know how to do something.



## Recognising me

Teach your child to set their own boundaries and that it is appropriate to say "No" if they feel uncomfortable.



## Reading time

Share books together and talk about how characters might be feeling and why.



## Thinking time

Talk through tricky situations and support your child to think of solutions or what they could do next time.



## Relaxing

Take walks around your local area and look for changes within the environment, such as the weather, seasons and time of day. Encourage your child to focus on how they feel when outside.





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## Creating healthy routines

I find consistent routines reassuring and when I start school there will be changes that I need to be prepared for. We can do this at home by creating our own routines that help me get ready for learning.

*(Activity card included)*

- Setting a regular bedtime routine will help me to rest and feel ready for the next day. This is important for when I have to get up early every day I go to school.
- Eating together is a great way to talk about our day and spend time with each other. You can encourage me to use cutlery and pour drinks as well as try different food.
- I will still need help to brush my teeth twice a day, until I am at least 7 years old. We could put on a 2-minute timer or play song as we do it.
- I like using devices such as tablets and phones to watch shows and play games on. I should only do this for a very short amount of time, up to 2-hours a day at the most. It is best to avoid screen time (devices and T.V.) in the hour up to bedtime as it can make my brain too active and make rest time tricky.
- I will need help to manage my hygiene and having a regular washing routine, such as bathtime or morning shower. This not only keeps me clean but prepares me for the next part of my day/evening.



# TOP TIPS: Creating healthy routines



## Talking point

Use open-ended questions, such as “What made you laugh today?” or “What did you like eating at dinner?” to encourage your child to talk more about their day.



## Promoting independence

Encourage your child to play by themselves for up to 10 minutes and to put their toys away when they have finished using them



## Recognising me

Show your child how they can manage their self-care skills such as, washing, eating, dressing and resting so that children can feel confident to do these by themselves when away from you.



## Starting maths

Use a stopwatch/timer in a playful way, to see how long it takes your child to complete self-help tasks, such as dressing/undressing, clearing away meals or changing tasks.



## Reading time

Sharing a story together every night will help to create a calm bedtime routine.



## Relaxing

Use calming music or sing to your child before going to bed. Encourage them to breathe slowly in through their nose and out through the mouths to help relax.



## Keeping Safe!

Ensure children are supervised at all times when eating, using large equipment and when around water.