



Bedford
Nursery Schools
Federation

@HOME with Bedford Nursery Schools Hands On Meaningful Experiences

Autumn



We have created this collection of HOME learning suggestions to offer you support in providing 'Hands On Meaningful Experiences' for your child.

Bold Nurturing Striving Fearless

Introduction

Children learn through playful experiences in a relaxed environment. They develop their social and academic skills by practising activities which interest them many, many times. By gradually increasing the level of challenge and using their senses they are creating memories which deepen their learning.

Children thrive when they are able to make decisions and make choices about how they organise their activities and solve their own problems. They may need a little support from another person to help them persevere with anything they find difficult.

These [Characteristics of Effective Learning](#) of being engaged, motivated and having the opportunity to think things through develop into the vital skills of persistence, resilience and decision-making. When children have the opportunity to talk about and make sense of their learning experiences, their self-esteem and confidence increases, and they are on a pathway to become successful learners for life.

The suggestions in this booklet are linked to the current season, and are similar to what has been planned for children in the nursery schools. Activities are listed under each area of learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage along with a brief explanation of some of the skills which will develop through this playful approach to home learning.

Contents:

- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Recommended Stories
- Recipes



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Communication and Language

Communication is fundamental to children's development; children need to be able to understand and be understood. Communication is the foundation of relationships and is essential for learning, play and social interaction. These suggestions will support ways that your child will tune in to your voice, and may begin to copy some of the words you use.

Language-building Tips for Parents Whose Children Have Just Started Talking

1. Be face to face with your child
2. If your child mispronounces a word or uses incorrect grammar, there is no need to correct them
3. Encourage pretending (make up games/stories/role-play)
4. Use familiar daily routines as opportunities for your child to communicate
5. Use gestures when you speak to your child

Activity Suggestions:

1. **Go for an Autumn walk:** Use your senses, talk about what you can see, hear, touch and smell. By using these descriptive words, you are supporting your child to expand their range of vocabulary.

How many of these Autumn treasures can you find and collect?

- A **prickly sweet chestnut shell**, opened to show the **furry lining**
- An **acorn** in its **cup**
- A **winged seed**
- A **fir cone**
- A **shiny conker** (horse chestnut), and a conker still in it's **spiky shell**
- 5 leaves each with a different **autumn colour**



2. **Treasure Hunt:** Hide objects either in the house or outdoors if the weather permits. Make up a map or give a trail of clues to your child as they go and look for the hidden items. Use positional words such as **under, beside, next to, on top of, over, through,**

3. **Singing and music** are a really important part of your child's development of speech, language, rhythm, pattern and rhyme. Traditional nursery rhymes are ideal for this. Your child will love singing songs from the accompanying booklets, and you can support their learning by pointing out the rhyming words, and giving examples of nonsense rhyming words. You can also encourage your child to help you peel and chop vegetables and chant this rhyme together

Chop, Chop, Choppity Chop



Chop, chop, choppity chop
Chop off the bottoms and chop off the tops
Chop up the carrots to put in the pot
chop, chop, choppity chop!

(repeat with the children choosing the vegetables to chop...)



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social emotional development is the foundation for all their future learning. Developing strong attachments, making friends and having the confidence to try new things are key life skills.

Activity Suggestions:

1: Put together a 'My family' book

Put together a book of photographs of important people in your child's life as a starting point for talking about relationships and feelings. How do they feel when they can't see them? Maybe include their key person and other familiar adults at school to give them a sense that they are still around and thinking about them.



2. Turn-taking games

Play some simple turn-taking games with your child – this could be as simple as taking turns to roll a ball down a ramp or to place blocks to make a tower. Use the language of turn-taking – 'my turn', 'your turn', 'her turn' etc. - to reinforce the message.

3. Create a quiet cosy area

Children love making dens, so involve your child in creating a cosy den inside, for one or two people, full of cushions, pillows, blankets, etc. Share books, stories and time to chat.



Suggested books to share:

The Worrysaurus by Rachel Bright
The Colour Monsters by Anna Llenas
The Invisible String by Patrice Karst



4. Prepare food together

Preparing a simple meal or snack together is a great way to give children a sense of shared achievement. They can take turns to stir, pour, fill, chop, etc., learning about cooperation, as well as managing risks such as using knives safely and not touching hot surfaces. It's also a good way to get children to try new foods!

Physical Development

All physical activity is beneficial for your child. Large-scale (gross motor) movements help to enhance bone health and muscular development while small scale (fine motor) movements support the development of hand-eye coordination. Regular physical activity supports brain development, and helps develop social skills and emotional wellbeing. As your child develops muscle-strength, you can help them become independent with dressing and undressing, so they can be self-sufficient at nursery and when they go to school.

Activity Suggestions:

1: **Go on an Autumn walk:** (if possible) and look for big piles of leaves. Use exaggerated movements to explore the leaves, kicking them up with each foot, throwing of leaves into their air, swinging arms around in large circular movements.



2. **Children love glow sticks,** (from a local pound shop or Amazon). Attach glow sticks to your child's clothing (with clothes pegs, safety pins, double sided tape or elastic bands). Turn off lights and dance. Encourage movements which include moving arms and legs at the same time, eg laying on your back and doing a 'snow-angel'.

3. **Do the actions with this song,** (to the tune of 'Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush) and support your child to put on and do up their own clothes.

*This is the way we put on our scarf, put on our scarf, put on our scarf,
This is the way we put on our scarf on a cold and frosty morning.
This is the way we put on our coat, put on our coat, put on our coat,
This is the way we put on our coat on a cold and frosty morning....*

4. **Dough Gym:** Using dough as a form of resistance is a way of strengthening hand and finger muscles which is essential for children to become writers. Use a very large quantity of dough (at least the size of an adult fist). (See recipe at the end of the booklet). Put on some favourite music for a work-out. Moves can include:



Squeezing and pinching



Pounding. Poking with one finger at a time



Rolling

Literacy

Mark making helps children to learn to write as well as helping to develop their imagination and creative skills. Mark making helps children to express their feelings and thoughts without having to rely on verbal communication.

Activity suggestions:

1. Mark Making

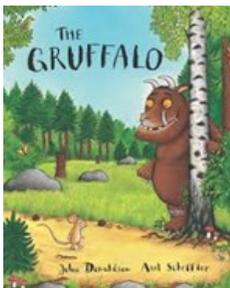
Use some large brushes or paint rollers with a bucket of water outside so your child can explore making marks on the pavement and walls. Alternatively, place a large piece of paper (left over wallpaper is perfect) on the floor for your child to experiment drawing lines and circular movements.



2. Book sharing

Find a comfortable spot to snuggle down together to enjoy a story. Reading stories to your child is a great way to develop your child's vocabulary, listening and attention skills and most importantly a love of reading.

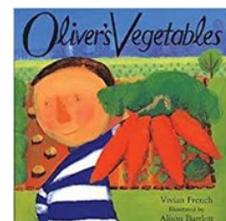
Read the story of The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson and then go for a walk in the woods or the park. Make up your own adventure along the way. What could be happening in these photos?



Read **The Little Red Hen** and talk about being kind and helpful to others. Use the recipe at the end of the booklet to make some bread.



Read the story of **Oliver's Vegetables** and write a shopping list. Look for the different vegetables from the story at the market or in the shop. Cook some different vegetables for your child to taste or use the recipe to make some vegetable soup .



Have a look at the **National Literacy Trust Website** for more ideas including Gruffalo activities:

<https://wordsforlife.org.uk/activities/picture-book-activities-you-and-your-child/>

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Mathematics

Young children become good mathematicians through developing their 'noticing' skills. These activities are designed to help them notice differences between everyday objects.

Activity suggestions:

Sorting

1. Find 10 interesting items outside such as leaves, sticks or feathers.
2. Lay out the different items on the floor and look very closely to see if any of them have similarities, for example, are there several leaves or feathers, or are any items the same colour?
3. Now encourage your child to put all similar items together in one group.
4. Look more closely at how there could be small differences between the items. For example, the leaves may be different colours or shapes. Give examples of vocabulary which will help your child to describe the items and emphasise their differences, eg, "I have a small crispy leaf, and a bigger smooth leaf with jagged edges."
5. Repeat this with the other groups of object which have something in common.



Noticing that something has changed.

Kim's Game:

Lay out a selection of objects out on the floor and have a good look. Cover the objects with a scarf, (or tell your child to close their eyes) and remove one of the objects. See if your child can tell you which object is missing.

Understanding Three

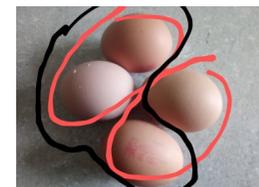
Three is an important number when you are three! This activity helps your child to understand that 3 objects are seen as a representation of that special number. Even when you change the arrangement, the quantity stays the same.

1. Take another look at the objects from your treasure hunt and choose 3 which are very similar, eg 3 leaves or 3 feathers. Have a set of 3 for yourself and a set of 3 for your child.
2. Challenge each other to make different patterns with the 3 items.
3. Play a game of 'copy cat' whereby you make a pattern, and your child has to copy it. Swap roles so that your child can lead the game and you copy their pattern.



Noticing 2s and 3s

1. Now look for groups of items in 2s or 3s and take a photo. Using the editing tool on your phone, encourage your child to draw around the different groups of objects within the whole amount.
2. Talk about the different groups: eg, 'There are 1 and 1 sunflowers. Altogether, there are 2'. 'There are 2 and 1 leaves, altogether there are 3'. 'There are 4 eggs, and I can see 2 and 2, also 3 and 1'.



Understanding the World

Understanding the World focuses on children exploring their immediate environment and their wider community. You can support your child to observe the way these function and change, and also to find out about people, places and technology.

Activity suggestions:

Make a 'Family Box'

Recycle an empty box and decorate it. This will be your child's 'Family Box'. Place a collection of special objects or photos into the box and encourage your child to talk about each item. This will provide an opportunity for your child to talk about the people who are important in their lives. It will also help your child to develop a sense of belonging and identity.

What you will need:

An old box (a cereal or shoe box is perfect).

Pen, felt tips, crayons, pencils, craft materials and glue.

Family photos and special items.

Make a bird feeder

A great idea to help care for the birds in the colder months. Observe and identify the birds that use your bird feeder. Using the [RSPB website](#) begin to identify the birds that visit your feeder.

What you will need:

A pine cone/old yogurt pot/orange peel/cardboard tube.

Bird seeds and solid vegetable fat at room temperature.

- Mix the bird seed and vegetable fat together.
- Fill your container with the mixture.
- Hang the container in the garden.



Planting bulbs

Autumn is the time of year to plant your bulbs. This is a great way for children to learn about growing and for your child to find out what a plant needs to grow. There are lots of child friendly Autumn bulbs available, such as onions and garlic.



Bark Art



Look at the different trees in your neighbourhood. Look closely at the patterns. Take a piece of paper and put it against the tree, use your wax crayon to rub against your paper and see the pattern and marks it makes. Find another tree and repeat the activity. Have you made a different pattern/mark? Which do you prefer?

What you will need: Wax crayons and paper

Visit the [Woodland Trust website](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/things-to-do/360-tours/) and see all the different autumnal colours of the woods. What else you can spot in the pictures? Which animals can you see? Can you see different types of leaves and plants?
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/things-to-do/360-tours/>



Expressive Arts and Design

Expressive Arts and Design focuses on your child's imagination, creativity and their ability to use media and materials. Children do this in range of ways including singing songs, making music, and dancing.

Activity suggestions:

Junk Modelling

Reuse cardboard boxes and tubes, yoghurt pots and bottle tops to create 3D models. Use glue and tape to stick the materials together. Talk about your child's creations.



Role Play

Pretend to be different characters from your child's favourite story or act out real life experiences such as going to the shops or visiting the vets. Role play is a fantastic way to develop your child's language and imagination.

Singing

Enjoy singing some of the songs and rhymes from the 'Autumn Term Songbook'. Use some wooden spoons and pans as instruments to play along to the rhythm of the songs.



Autumn Sun and Wind Catcher

This Autumn activity involves playing with colours, textures and design..

What you will need:

A collection of different coloured leaves that you have found, string, paper plate, sticky back plastic (experiment with sellotape or cling film if this isn't available), hole punch and stapler



1. Cut the middle out of the paper plate to leave a ring.
2. Turn the plate over so that the back of the plate is facing you.
3. Unpeel the sticky back plastic and cover the hole with sticky side down. Turn the plate over exposing the sticky side of the sticky back plastic.
4. Cut four lengths of string. Using the hole punch make three holes at the bottom of the plate, thread through and tie the string.
5. Using sticky tape or stapler attach a leaf or feather to each piece of string
6. Arrange your collection of leaves pressing them gently on the sticky surface.
7. Make an additional hole at the top of the plate and make a loop with the string to hang your Autumn sun catcher at a window



Home-made Playdough

Cooked playdough

Ingredients

2 cups water
2 cups plain flour
1 cup salt
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 tablespoons oil
Food colouring

Method

1. Put all the ingredients in a pan
2. Stir over a medium heat until thick
3. Turn out onto a cool surface
4. Wash pan immediately
5. Knead until smooth

Non-cooked playdough

Ingredients

1 cup flour
1/4 cup salt
3/4 cup of water minus 3 tablespoons
3 tablespoons of lemon juice
1 tablespoon cooking oil

Method

1. Boil the kettle. Pour 2 cups of the boiled water into a bowl. Add lemon juice.
2. Meanwhile, mix together the flour and salt.
3. Slowly pour the liquid into the flour and salt mixture, and stir with a wooden spoon until it just barely begins to form a dough.
4. Add food colouring or essence as preferred.
5. Drizzle the tablespoon of cooking oil over the dough and stir again until it forms a ball. At this point, you may want to knead the dough with your hands.
6. It may feel a bit sticky, too, but DO NOT add more flour. As the dough cools it will thicken and become less sticky.
7. Now, once the dough is completely cooled, you may add flour a table-spoon at a time until it is the perfect consistency



Recipes

Bread

Ingredients

500g strong white flour, plus extra for dusting
2 tsp salt
7g sachet fast-action yeast
3 tbsp olive oil
300ml water

Equipment

Large mixing bowl
Baking Tray or bread tin
Cooling rack
Baking paper
Sharp knife

Method

Mix 500g strong white flour, 2 tsp salt and a 7g sachet of fast-action yeast in a large bowl.

Make a well in the centre, then add 3 tbsp olive oil and 300ml water, and mix well. If the dough seems a little stiff, add another 1-2 tbsp water and mix well.

Tip onto a lightly floured work surface and knead for around 10 mins.

Once the dough is satin-smooth, place it in a lightly oiled bowl and cover with cling film. Leave to rise for 1 hour until doubled in size or place in the fridge overnight.

Line a baking tray with baking parchment. Knock back the dough (punch the air out and pull the dough in on itself) then gently mould the dough into a ball.

Place it on the baking parchment to prove for a further hour until doubled in size.

Heat oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7.

Dust the loaf with some extra flour and cut a cross about 6cm long into the top of the loaf with a sharp knife.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until golden brown and the loaf sounds hollow when tapped underneath.

Cool on a wire rack.



Vegetable Soup

Ingredients

Leeks, potatoes, carrots,
celery
Olive oil
Vegetable stock

Equipment

Knife
Potato peeler
Chopping board
Pan

Method

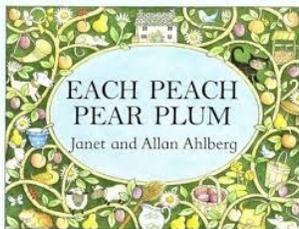
1. Peel and chop the carrots, potatoes and swede into cubes.
2. Cut the leek and celery into slices.
3. Add two tablespoons of olive oil into a large pan and cook the vegetables stirring frequently for five minutes.
4. Add 800ml of vegetable stock
5. Leave to simmer for fifteen minutes until the vegetables are tender.



Recommended Stories to Share

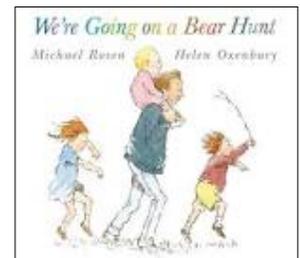
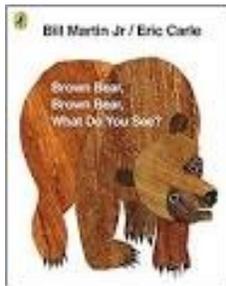
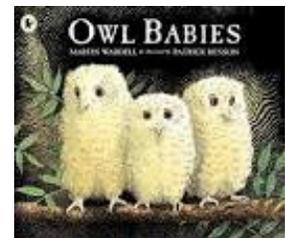
Reading stories is a great way to share time and expand vocabulary.

Here is a list of some of our core books from nursery school that you can read with your child.



Can't You Sleep Little Bear
Goldilocks
Little Red Hen
Walking through the Jungle,
Owl Babies
We're Going on a Bear Hunt
Whatever Next,
You Choose
Brown Bear
DinsoaurRoar
Each Peach Pear Plum
Kipper's Year
Pass the Jam, Jim.
Peace at Last
Rosie's Walk
So Much
The Gruffalo
The Way Back Home
The Tiger Who Came to Tea

Martin Waddell
Robert Southey
Ronne Randall
Julie Lacombe
Martin Waddell
Michael Rosen
Jill Murphy
Nick Sharratt
Bill Martin Jnr
Paul Stickland
Janet Ahlberg
Mick Inkpen
Kaye Umansky
Jill Murphy
Pat Hutchins
Trish Cooke
Julia Donaldson
Oliver Jeffers
Judith Kerr



Online Resources

National Literacy Trust — <https://wordsforlife.org.uk>

Book Trust — <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/>