Communication and language

Sharing attention, words and ideas

Skills beginning to develop

- Share an activity and take a few talking turns with an adult.
- Enjoy a short familiar story with pictures or props.
- Follow a familiar instruction, with gestures if needed.
- Use words and short sentences to share needs or ideas.
- Begin to answer simple who, what and where questions.



How you can help at home

1 **Join their play**

Sit alongside your child and notice what interests them. Say “The car is going fast!” Pause and give them time to respond. Follow their ideas.

2 **Add a little more language**

If your child says “big dog”, reply “Yes, a big dog is running.” Model useful words without asking them to repeat every sentence.

3 **Enjoy a familiar book**

Look at the pictures and name what you see. Repeat favourite phrases together. Use a toy or an action to help your child understand the story.

Join their play → **Pause and listen** → **Add a few words**

Use the language you know best for warm, lively conversations. Children can also communicate through gestures, signs or other supports. Tell Nursery about concerns in any language.

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Informed by Development Matters. These are suggested early checkpoints, not official age cut-offs.

Personal, social and emotional development

Feeling safe and beginning to do things together

Skills beginning to develop

- Seek comfort or help from a familiar adult.
- Show or name feelings and accept help to settle.
- Choose a familiar activity and become involved in it.
- Show interest in other children and begin joining play.
- Try parts of everyday routines with adult help.



How you can help at home

1 **Help with big feelings**

Stay nearby and use simple words: “You are sad. I am here.” Help your child calm down before trying to talk through what happened.

2 **Take a small turn**

Roll a ball to each other or add one block each to a tower. Say “My turn, your turn.” Keep waits short and help when sharing is difficult.

3 **Give one manageable job**

Let your child put toys in a box, pull up a zip you have started or help wash their hands. Show the next step and celebrate their effort.

Stay close → **Help them settle** → **Try together**

Needing help with feelings, sharing or self-care is common at this stage. Tell your child’s key person which routines and comforts work well at home, and agree support together.

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Physical development

Exploring movement and making deliberate marks

Skills beginning to develop

- Enjoy running, climbing and balancing in familiar places.
- Begin to stop or change direction with more control.
- Use both hands to build, squeeze and handle objects.
- Make deliberate marks, lines or circular movements.
- Explore brushes, crayons, utensils and child-safe scissors with help.



How you can help at home

1 **Make time to move**

Dance, walk, climb or play with a ball. Make a simple route around cushions or along a line, giving the support your child needs.

2 **Build and squeeze**

Use blocks, dough or everyday containers. Roll, squash, push and pull. Let your child practise helping with clothes and using a spoon.

3 **Make big marks**

Try chalk outside or a large brush with water. Offer paper and crayons too. Draw alongside your child and talk about their marks. Supervise tools and scissors.

Move and play → **Use both hands** → **Make some marks**

Help your child find a comfortable position. Do not force a particular writing hand or pencil grip. Tell Nursery if movement or using tools seems painful, unusually tiring or difficult.

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Literacy

Enjoying stories, sounds, pictures and marks

Skills beginning to develop

- Enjoy sharing a favourite book with an adult.
- Comment on pictures or join a repeated story phrase.
- Join familiar songs, rhymes and actions.
- Make marks on purpose and begin saying what they mean.
- Notice familiar print or try a letter from their name.



How you can help at home

1 **Share a few happy minutes with a book**

Let your child choose. Talk about pictures and repeat favourite stories. They can point, act or use their own words to join in.

2 **Sing and play with sounds**

Sing a familiar rhyme with actions. Pause before a favourite word so your child can join in. Enjoy funny sounds and repeated words together.

3 **Give marks a meaning**

Make a card or pretend shopping list. Ask “What does it say?” Accept your child’s explanation. Write their spoken message beside it if they want you to.

Share an idea → **Make a mark** → **Tell me about it**

At around 3½, marks and drawings are valuable early writing. Some children try letters; independent name writing, spelling words and writing sentences are not requirements for this checkpoint.

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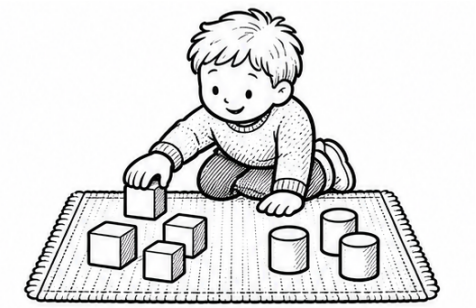
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Mathematics

Exploring small numbers, shapes and everyday patterns

Skills beginning to develop

- Notice one or two objects, and sometimes three, without counting.
- Join in a short counting sequence.
- Begin matching one number word to each object in a small group.
- Respond to “Give me one” or “Give me two”.
- Match or sort objects and explore size, shape and position.



How you can help at home

1 Count a little group

Start with one, two or three toys. Touch each one as you count together. Say the total: “Three toys!” Stop while your child is still enjoying it.

2 Use numbers in a useful job

Ask for one spoon or two socks. Show what you mean if needed. Compare an obviously bigger and smaller group: “This plate has more.”

3 Sort, build and copy

Match socks or sort blocks by colour. Build a tower and use words such as big, small, in and on. Copy a simple clap-stamp pattern together.

Play with objects → **Notice a small group** → **Count together**

Keep the amounts small and use real objects. Reciting numbers and understanding quantities develop together. Your child can show what they know through actions, objects or words.

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Understanding the world

Noticing familiar people, places and nature

Skills beginning to develop

- Recognise and talk about familiar people.
- Share something about a recent experience with prompts.
- Notice features of a familiar place or walk.
- Show curiosity about plants, animals or weather.
- Begin using words to describe what they notice.



How you can help at home

1 **Look at family photographs**

Name the people and talk about a shared experience. Say “We went to the park. You went on the swing.” Let your child add a word, gesture or idea.

2 **Notice something on a walk**

Follow your child’s attention. Look closely at a leaf, bird or puddle. Name it and add one describing word, such as wet, soft or tall.

3 **Explore a small change**

Water a plant together or watch ice melt in a bowl. Say what is happening and invite your child to look again. You do not need a complicated explanation.

Notice something → **Name it together** → **Look again**

Talk about your own family’s experiences and show interest in other people’s lives. Supervise exploring and help with handwashing afterwards. Everyday experiences give children useful things to talk about.

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Expressive arts and design

Exploring materials, music and pretend play

Skills beginning to develop

- Explore colour, texture, materials and sounds.
- Make a picture or model and begin giving it meaning.
- Use a toy or object in pretend play.
- Act out a familiar experience, such as feeding a teddy.
- Join familiar songs, actions or movement to music.



How you can help at home

1 **Explore without a perfect end product**

Offer crayons, paper, dough or safe boxes. Let your child choose what to try. Describe their actions: “You are making long lines!”

2 **Pretend together**

Feed a teddy, make a pretend meal or drive a toy bus. Follow your child’s idea and add one small action. Take turns being a character.

3 **Sing and move**

Repeat a favourite action song. Clap or tap a short rhythm and let your child try. Copy their rhythm too. Dance together and enjoy their ideas.

Explore together → **Try an idea** → **Enjoy and share**

Offer art, music, construction and pretend play to every child. Follow individual interests rather than assuming boys or girls prefer certain activities. Talking about play supports later storytelling and writing.

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