Cambridgeshire County Council

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Dear parents/carers

In the early years the most important type of learning happens through play and the home environment is where the majority of learning happens. You are your child's most important educator.

You have already taught your child to walk, talk, socialise and how to use the toilet and you have set the foundations for reading and writing by giving them the opportunities to draw and by reading to them.

We would love to see photos of you and your child trying some of the ideas either from this pack or from the links attached. You can e-mail photos to maneapreschool@manea.cambs.sch.uk we can then use these to add to your child's learning journey.

Kind regards

Manea Pre-school staff

Getting ready for school

To be ready for school pre-school will concentrate on the **prime areas** which are communication & language, personal social & emotional development, and physical development. It is very important that these are well embedded for children to be able to thrive at school. Below are some ideas to promote these areas.

- Use the emotion photos on the attached page and discuss what the emotions are and ask questions such as "How do you think they are feeling?" "Why do you think they feel like that?" "What do you think happened to make them feel like that?" As often children will know what the emotion is but won't understand why you would be feeling like that. It is important that they know that all emotions are ok and what they can do for themselves if they feel like that.
- Talking to your child may sound simple but having conversations with your child where you both respond at least 5 times can make such a difference to your child's future learning. On a communication course the tutor said to us "Do you have conversations with your children at home?" To which we all replied "of course", She then said "Yesterday I really thought about my communication with my child and it went something like this – Time to get up – Are you up yet – Get out of bed – Have you done your homework – Will you pick that up please – Eat your breakfast – etc…" So finding something to REALLY TALK about is so important.
- Asking your child to collect items that a certain person might use, e.g. "Can you find me 5 things that a pirate may need?" When your child finds the items ask them "What do you think the pirate would use this for?" and discuss them with your child. This will help him/her to come up with their own ideas which will be very useful for school. An example from pre-school is when we found some keys for the pirate the children told us "For opening the treasure box" and "To lock his ship up." You could then try the same thing with a police officer, a witch, a superhero or a teacher. And remember there are no wrong answers, if your child thinks the police officer would use a peg to lock bad guys up then that is correct for their imagination.
- Sports or activities that use the shoulder, arm and wrist muscles are important for writing so do lots of throwing, catching and bouncing balls. Also things like making and playing with play dough and mixing ingredients for cooking.
- Look through old photos in albums or on your phone. Discuss what's happening in them and use different tenses (this will also help with literacy).

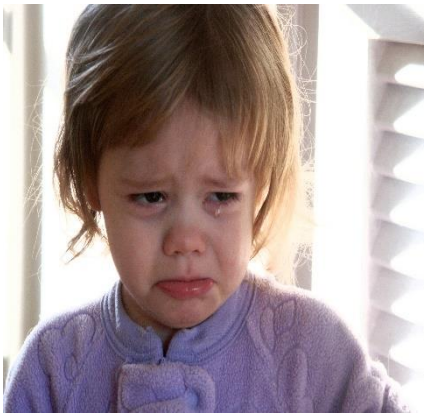
"This is when we made cakes and ate them," "Maybe we can make cakes again and eat them,"

- As you know being independent is a large part of our ethos. Children get so much pride from doing things themselves. Some of you may have seen a poster in pre-school that says 'When you draw it for me, cut it for me, build it for me or put it on for me, all I learn is that you do it better than me'. So even if you think they may not be able to do it, let them try, they may surprise you. We work on children getting changed and putting their shoes and socks on and off, getting their own food for snack and making decisions independently. This means that when they drop their toy on the floor when they've finished with it we would ask "Where do you think would be a better place for that?" Tidying up can often be easier when we ask for help "Could you help me pick these up while I get these ones please" usually works better than "Put your toys away".
- Listening skills are very important for all future learning. There are lots of activities to do that encourage this.
    - We will do listening walks or moments. This is exactly what it says on the tin, either on a walk or over a 3-5 minute period in your garden, or when out and about, listen without any talking and then discuss what you have heard and maybe try to make the sound yourselves.
    - Drum outdoors. This can be done with sticks that have been found or you can use wooden spoons. Go outside and try your 'instruments' on various items to see if the noise changes, e.g. is the noise louder or quieter on the patio compared to the grass.
    - Favourite sounds. Make a poster to record their favourite sounds by drawing pictures of them, such as singing birds or a loved one's voice. They could also add some sounds that they don't like e.g. barking dogs or crying babies.
    - Adjust the volume. You will both need identical 'instruments', these can be wooden spoons on saucepans. You play the instruments together and then the child has to listen to you play either quietly or loudly and then has to copy.
    - Lots of rhyming, this can be found in a lot of children's books and it's important to point out the rhyming words "They sound similar" or when reading use the wrong word, e.g. "His tongue is black, he has purple prickles all over his fingers" and hopefully your child will say "No, his back"
    - Initial sounds, this is knowing that a word starts with a certain sound e.g. 'sun' and 'snake', 'pig' and 'penguin', using their name helps so 'Mary makes marshmallows'. You could challenge your child to find something that starts with the same sound as your item. You could also extend the colour table below to be a sound table!

- **Specific areas** – *These are Literacy, Maths, Understanding the world and, Expressive arts & design. Below are some things you can do to help your child in these areas.*
- *Having a colour table – Around the house or on a walk ask if your child can find 5 things of the same colour to display on the colour table. They can then add to the table throughout the week and then change to a different colour the following week. These colours could be chosen by a loved one in a different household e.g. grandparents on skype/facetime and your child can then show them at the end of the week. Try a shape table as well, remembering to talk about how many sides the shape has.*
- *Numbers & patterns, this is the maths programme we use to lay the foundations for future maths learning. This is something that a lot of us struggle with "I'm not good at maths" is often heard. So it is important that children have a really positive start with maths from everyone they come into contact with. A lot of the things we would be doing with your children wouldn't even include numbers. We would be talking about simple quantities, more, less, the same and lots. We would also be talking a lot about guessing, estimating and checking e.g. "How much will we need?" "Let's find out". We do a lot of work on using 1-2-1 correspondence when counting so that children understand that counting is not just reciting 1-10 but that the numbers they use mean something.*
    - *If we are lucky enough to have some nicer days you can have a bowl of water outside and some pebbles. Encourage your child to close their eyes and count while you drop the pebbles one by one into the water. Ask "How many pebbles do you think I dropped in?" and then "Can you check by finding them all?" Your child will enjoy you then closing your eyes so they can drop them.*
    - *As well as being able to count small groups of objects children would be starting to recognise a group of 1-3 items e.g. seeing 3 spoons and knowing there are 3 without counting. If they start to count ask "How many do you think there are?" and then check by counting.*
    - *Matching the number to the quantity – Have different quantities of objects e.g. 1 can of beans, 2 spoons, 3 pencils up to 5 and have the numbers 1 to 5 written on small pieces of paper under the correct amount. Ask your child to shut their eyes and count to 5 while you mix up the numbers and then ask your child what is wrong and then challenge them to sort out the problem. If your child is ready you can use the 1, 2 and 3 groups and ask them how many objects there are all together i.e. 6 in total. (Make sure you remove the 4 and 5 groups before you do this). You can also try removing one of the numbers and*

seeing if your child can tell you which one is missing, don't worry if your child struggles with this, try it again in a few weeks.
    - If you have toy cars and chalk you can chalk parking spaces on the ground for the cars, you could use 5 cars but only 3 or 4 spaces and ask your child "Do we have enough spaces?" "What do we need to do?" This could also work with dolls and flannels (for beds).
    - Ask children to record numbers – this could be while playing skittles or throwing a basketball into a hoop – children will need either chalk to mark on the ground or paper and a pencil, every time you knock down a skittle or get a basket your child can make a mark, this doesn't have to be the number, it should be a line or tick. When you've finished you can count the ticks.
    - When playing with blocks you can say "I want to make a tower with 5 blocks, can you help me get 5 blocks?" If you both make towers ask "Which one is taller/shorter?" Also you can use patterns in your tower, red, yellow, blue, red, yellow. Seeing patterns is a big part of having a good maths foundation so use these while colouring as well "I am using red, blue, red, blue, what colour do I need next?"
    - When reading look for the 'maths' on each page. Which is the tallest tree? I can see lots of insects. How many flowers are there? Can you see any shapes?
    - See maths around the village. Look for the street sign shapes and numbers on them. The numbers on front doors. The straight lines on the road. The shapes of the windows, doors, bricks or drains. The tall and short houses. The long roads. The tall trees and shorter flowers.
- Have a look at textures in the house and garden. Are the leaves smooth or bumpy? Is there anything soft in your lunch? I need something shiny to show nanny/grandad. My biscuit has bumps.
- Talk about our lovely village. What does your child know about it? Do they remember it has some parks, a lake, a shop etc. Who do they think works in the village?

























EYFS ideas pack for families, settings and schools

https://cambspboro.50thingstodo.org/app/os#!/whats-it-all-about
The 50 things to do before you're 5 app is now available and has lots of lovely, and low cost of free activities to do with your child in the local area

https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/
Lots of great ideas to help engage with children at home and chat, play & read together. The activities are in age groups from 0-5 years and there is also a list of quality approved apps that support language and communication development.

http://literacyfamilyzone.org.uk/
The National Literacy Trust have developed a comprehensive web portal for parents. It will be regularly updated with new and useful content to engage children at home, while benefiting their reading, writing and language development.

https://small-talk.org.uk/
Small Talk is another website from the National Literacy Trust with lots of ideas to help develop language and communication skills at home for ages 0-5.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people
Support communication skills at home with this BBC website.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/the-baby-club
Play, sing and listen to stories with your baby from your own home.

https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lists/50-things-activities-to-do-in-your-back-garden
50 things for embracing nature in your garden from the National Trust.

https://www.playscotland.org/parents-families/playful-families-library/
Free to download Messy Play and Loose Parts Play booklets from Play Scotland.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/7-tips-for-gardening-with-children
https://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/grow-plants/10-gardening-projects-for-kids/
Both these websites have good ideas for gardening with children.

https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga
Yoga, mindfulness and relaxation for children age 3+

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYlRfn6rYQ
Joe Wickes, The Body Coach, famous through COVID-19

https://www.familydaystriedandtested.com/free-virtual-tours-of-world-museums-educational-sites-galleries-for-children/
There are many virtual tours of museums and galleries around the world that you can access for free.

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/jessie-and-friends/
Online safety education for families at home

https://www.playfulchildhoods.wales/ideas-for-play-things-to-do
30 ideas for indoor play from Playful childhoods that are fun and cheap to do using things you have around the house.

https://www.rspb.org.uk
Find days out to go bird spotting

https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/
A new digital hub from The Book Trust to help entertain children and families at home.

https://ican.org.uk/a-message-to-our-supporters-on-coronavirus/activities-to-develop-speaking-and-listening-skills/?utm_source=ICC+March+2020&utm_campaign=b2f76d15fa-I+CAN+Communicate+-+March+2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3c0e36dac3-b2f76d15fa-116395037
Fun, indoor activities from ICan to support speech, language and communication development.

https://usborne.com/play-and-learn-at-home/
Lots of resources and activities for different age ranges available for free from Usborne.

https://www.tts-group.co.uk/home+learning+activities.html
TTS have produced free home learning activity books that can be downloaded for EYFS, key stage one and key stage two.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChw_M0-qiWfT0_SkrCU1-LA
A daily maths broadcast for 3-7 year olds

https://www.leyf.org.uk/home-learning/
Home learning ideas for different EYFS age ranges from LEYF.

https://www.startingharrypotter.com/?utm_source=wwd_web&utm_medium=collection_page&utm_campaign=shp-2022
A new Harry Potter home hub with lots of activities and resources.

Many authors and publishers have story recordings and live storytelling, for example:
https://www.facebook.com/OfficialGruffalo/
Julia Donaldson has launched a weekly live broadcast via The Gruffalo Facebook page to share stories and songs with families at home. You can watch it live on Thursdays at 4pm.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7D-mXO4kk-XWvH6lBXdrPw
Michael Rosen's YouTube channel has lots of fun poems and stories to watch together.

BBC Learning have created a wide range of activities available here: https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/early-years-teaching-resources/zhhf92p including activities for discussing feelings, as well as songs, games and stories to share with your child.

Virtual School Trips - Why not take a virtual trip to Edinburgh Zoo to see the penguins or visit the Georgia Aquarium to see the under water animals?