

Early Years Scotland

Parent Chat

Magazine for Parents of Babies and Young Children

Issue no.17 • Autumn/Winter 2020



**Stories Matter
Transitions
Playing with Puppets
Baby Massage
and much more..**

BECOME A MEMBER OF EARLY YEARS SCOTLAND



WHO CAN BE A MEMBER?

- All Early Learning and Childcare Settings (Voluntary, Local Authority, Private) • Parent and Toddler Groups
- Combined Early and Learning and Childcare and Parent and Toddler Groups • College Departments
- University Departments • Primary Schools • Individual Practitioners • Individual Students • Childminders
- Local Authorities (Some local authorities purchase membership for all their Early Learning and Childcare settings)
- Voluntary Sector Organisations • National Organisations (other than voluntary) • Companies and Businesses

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP?

Helpline: 0141 221 4148

For information, support or advice about any aspect of Early Learning and Childcare, our members can call our helpline Monday to Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm.

Website with exclusive members' area

Access free downloads, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section, sample policies and much more.

Magazines

Early Years Scotland publishes and sends two different magazines directly to members by post three times per year - one magazine for early years professionals and the other for parents and carers, called Parent Chat. All magazines are available to members on our website.

E-Bulletins

Regular e-bulletins and surveys are sent to all members to ensure that they are kept up to date and to make certain we are aware of their views. We are the representative voice of the Early Years sector.

Publications and Resources

Early Years Scotland publishes a number of publications on our website, some of which are free and others are for sale. Members log in at the members' only area (My EYS) to access free policies. We also offer Top Tips for Parents focused on a range of themes such as puppets and visiting the supermarket.

EYS Professional Learning Academy

We offer bespoke professional learning sessions on request. We provide a regular calendar of Professional Learning opportunities in our Professional Learning Academy premises in Glasgow City Centre. We run conferences and seminars with discounted rates for members.

Insurance

We can arrange excellent discounted insurance cover and legal advice for our members.



Welcome to Parent Chat

A few words from the Chief Executive of Early Years Scotland, Jane Brumpton

A warm welcome to our latest edition of Parent Chat. I think the title of our regular update from Ms Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Children and Young People, 'Getting back to some kind of normal', sums up very well what families have been working towards after all the months of the coronavirus lockdown.

To help your family to continue on the road to normality, we have an

I think you will find our Stories Matter article written by Shirley Husband who is a children's author and one of Early Years Scotland's Story Champions, of practical help too. Apart from all the other benefits that stories bring, just listening to them is a wonderful way to take children's minds off their worries. Speaking of which, in our book review, Emma Dunn of the Scottish Book Trust, has

"FROM ALL THE OTHER BENEFITS THAT STORIES BRING, JUST LISTENING TO THEM IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO TAKE CHILDREN'S MINDS OFF THEIR WORRIES."

article which gives you some advice on how to support your children's health and wellbeing; and linked to that we have one which explains how to do baby massage, which describes the benefits this activity brings for both you and your baby. You can even view a demonstration of how it is done on our Facebook page.

Enjoying happy family time together can lift the spirits, so in our 'Together we can make' series, we have some absorbing, fun filled activities for you to enjoy, from cooking minestrone soup and making fruit kebabs, to creating your own soap!

In addition, we have some great ideas in our Top Tips for Parents series, about making and playing with puppets. Puppets can help children to express their emotions safely, which is particularly helpful at this time.

recommended Colin and Lee, Carrot and Pea by Morag Hood, which is a funny 'uplifting story about friendship and acceptance'.

We are delighted to feature articles about transitions. Joanna Murphy, Chair of the National Parent Forum of Scotland, has written about how you can make transitions easier and you will also hear from a parent and child about their own experiences.

Finally, we are pleased to share the uplifting story of how Glasgow University Nursery managed to keep in touch with their families over the last few months and were able to arrange a special graduation ceremony for the children.

Please do continue to keep safe and well everyone.

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REMEMBER!
WHEN WE USE THE TERM 'PARENT', WE INCLUDE ALL MAIN CARERS



MAREE TODD MSP, MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, UPDATES PARENT CHAT ON THE LATEST EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE NEWS

Getting back to some kind of normal



Firstly, thank you and well done to the many parents and carers who have been juggling the demands of caring for children and working from home. We know it has been difficult while early learning and childcare (ELC) settings were closed. I hope that in spite of the difficult circumstances, you have been able to enjoy some very special moments with your children.

Thankfully ELC settings were able to reopen from 15 July. While there might still be some restrictions to keep children and staff safe, we are grateful to childcare professionals for all the work they are doing. We expect ELC settings will be in touch with families to

let them know about any changes they are making.

Coronavirus's impact has been wide-reaching and unfortunately has delayed local authorities' plans to increase their capacity with the goal of delivering on our planned expansion to 1,140 hours a year of funded ELC. Unfortunately, we have had to take the difficult decision to pause the expansion commitment for now.

From August, all children across Scotland have been able to access at least 600 hours of funded ELC. However, I'm delighted that many local authorities will offer increased hours where they can, and we will

reinstate the duty to provide 1,140 hours of funded ELC as soon as it is reasonable to do so. The offer may well increase as the school year progresses and local authorities and the Scottish Government (through Parent Club) will continue to communicate these changes to you.

I would again like to express my thanks for your patience and hard work. I hope that your children are now able to enjoy playing with their friends and attend their ELC setting very soon, if they are not already doing so.

• Visit: www.parentclub.scot

A grand graduation for university nursery

Nursery Manager Caroline McVeigh, who has worked for Childcare Scotland Ltd. for twenty three years, tells Early Years Scotland what it has been like for the nursery children during the last few months whilst it has been closed due to the pandemic, and how the nursery staff were able to plan a memorable day for those going off to school.

This year has been a year that we certainly won't forget. Our staff team have been looking forward very much to welcoming our children back to the nursery. We have certainly missed them all and are very happy to have reopened now, with all the Scottish Government's guidelines with extra safety measures in place. We've enjoyed hearing the children's stories of what they have been doing during lockdown, the new things they have learned and the milestones they have reached over the last few months when we haven't been able to see them.

Our parents have been very supportive and have emailed photos of their children being creative and having fun using activity ideas that we sent out to them. It has been lovely seeing the children and their creations. The 3-5 years group have kept in touch and enjoyed weekly Zoom meetings with the nursery staff and their friends. This has been a good opportunity for the children to see familiar faces, enjoy a story and a song together and participate in some science experiments like making rainbows with ink and water.

For the children moving on to school it has been sad that they have missed their last few months with us at the nursery. Most of these children have attended the nursery from a young age. It has been a pleasure helping and supporting them grow and develop into the confident boys and girls they are now, ready for the next chapter of their lives, one that may bring them back to the University of Glasgow in the future.

We wanted to do something special for them, so we were delighted to be able to hold our annual graduation celebration. This meant that the children did not miss out and that they had the opportunity to say goodbye to their friends and the nursery staff, before starting school. Lots of the children had seen previous nursery graduations and had been there when their older brothers and sisters had graduated from the University Nursery.

Consequently, there was great excitement last month, when twenty children were able to attend their own



outdoor, socially distanced, graduation ceremony, which was held in the Cloisters of the University campus. The children wore graduation gowns and hats. They were presented with scrolls during the second half of the ceremony by Robert Garnish, Commercial Services Director, and Karen Lury, Professor of Film and Television Studies, who is also Chair of the Nursery Committee. It was a very special day.

Parents commented:

'It was great for the children to see old friends and have a chance to say goodbye to each other and to their teachers before starting school. Thanks to all the nursery staff and to the University for making this happen.' Tereza Neocleous

'After the experience of lockdown, it was wonderful to see the children back together again and able to celebrate their move to primary school, the nursery staff and university did a wonderful job putting it together.' Dannielle Macpherson

*The University Nursery provides childcare for 74 children aged from six weeks to five years for parents who study or work at the University of Glasgow. Childcare Scotland Ltd. who manage the nursery on behalf of the University Glasgow have many years of experience in working with children whose parents are associated with the University. They also have nurseries at Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Strathclyde.

STORIES MATTER!



Shirley Husband, Children's Author and Early Years Scotland Story Champion, writes for Parent Chat

Once upon a time the famous physicist Albert Einstein was confronted by an overly concerned woman, who sought advice on how to raise her small son to become a successful scientist. In particular, she wanted to know what kinds of books she should read to her son.

'Fairy tales,' Einstein responded without hesitation. 'Fine, but what else should I read to him after that?' the mother asked.

'More fairy tales,' Einstein stated.

'And after that?'

'Even more fairy tales,' replied the great scientist, and he waved his pipe like a wizard pronouncing a happy ending to a long adventure.'

Jack Zipes, Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales

I love this short fable, which transforms a famous quote by Albert Einstein about the importance of imagination into its own powerful story.

When tiny children settle down to hear a story, there's magic in the air. You can sense the anticipation and see the expectation in their faces; the way they look at you as if you're about to tell them something that's wonderful and life changing.

As a children's author, I've visited many nurseries and schools, and no matter the circumstances of the children there, it's the same. Reading to them is a joyful experience, and you sense a special kind of energy as they absorb what you can offer them.

Early Years Scotland wants to ensure that every young child in Scotland has the chance to listen to at least one story a day through the 'Every Day's a Story Day' campaign. I'm very proud to be one of

their Story Champions, and I'd like to tell you why I believe stories are so life changing.

All young children deserve to grow into happy adults, able to take advantage of the opportunities that come their way. It is suggested that 90% of the brain develops before the age of five, and so interaction is vital at this crucial stage. Parents, carers and practitioners can make a huge difference by sharing stories that fire up little minds in the simplest, yet most effective way.

Reading stories with children means that they learn, but it's fun. Stories teach them about life, themselves, civilisation and culture all over the planet. Stories can help them discover the kind of people they want to be, or even the kind of people they don't. They can boost feelings of empathy and can motivate them to make the world a better place. The patterns in stories will give their life meaning.

Listening to you will transport them far, far away from their worries, and their favourite characters will become friends.

Stories take children to another world, a visual world of the imagination and inspire their creativity in all sorts of different ways, whether it's with crayons, crafts or Lego.

They leap across generations as children, parents and grandparents share their love for classic tales.

Stories help children subconsciously absorb complex patterns within language, boost their vocabulary and help them become fabulous communicators themselves.

Of course, this stands them in good stead for the rest of their lives, no matter what they may choose to do. We need to keep reminding ourselves just how simple, yet effective a tool stories are in early years education.



To find out how you can support our book 'Ralph's Rainy Day Adventures', please keep an eye on our social media.

You can help our campaign by encouraging as many parents, carers, and childcare settings as you can to sign up. It's so easy, just a case of registering and making a simple pledge.

To raise awareness, Early Years Scotland has been on a 'Story Trail', enlisting the help of children at ten nurseries around Scotland to write one part of a tale about a cute West Highland Terrier

called Ralph. The results are now a beautiful picture book, 'Ralph's Rainy Day Adventures', which proves beyond doubt that childhood imagination has no limits!

I was delighted to be asked to pull the children's ideas and words together, and I've tried to keep the language as original as possible. Our little authors are really going to love seeing their story come to life through the bold, colourful illustrations created by Maurice Hynds.

We're delighted with the results and have had hours of fun creating a very special book to transport you all over Scotland and back in time for tea, ice cream and jokes. I can't give any more away - you'll just have to wait until you see it.

Please pledge your support to Early Years Scotland's 'Every Day's A Story Day' campaign - it's for Scotland's children and their future. Read to your children as much as you possibly can. You may feel tired but listening to a story is the best part of their day, and the most amazing gift you can give them.



Reading stories with children means that they learn, but it's fun. Stories teach them about life, themselves, civilisation and culture all over the planet.



SUSAN HOGG, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OFFICER AND EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONER FOR EARLY YEARS SCOTLAND, GIVES YOU SOME TIPS ON THE ART OF STORYTELLING

I love storytelling...

My first memories of being read to as a child were of being cuddled up on my mum's knee looking at the book together, or at bedtime snuggled up in bed, listening to her make different voices for all the characters in the stories. Then I progressed to be the one reading stories as a teenager to my young cousins at bedtime, using similar techniques as my mum had used, completing the story whether my charges were still awake or not!

In my professional role I enjoy nothing more than reading a story to a group of children or even taking time out to read to one child who has requested a story.

Stories can be:

- ◆ Verbatim – using the same words as those in print.
- ◆ Made-up from the pictures in the book.
- ◆ Told using props.

With stories that you have made up in your head, why not involve the child if they are able to take part in the storytelling process? Not only are they developing their language skills but also their imagination.

Ensure there are no distractions from music or televisions, or from other people talking, and that the process is not rushed. Make sure that the length of the story is suitable for the age and stage of the child or children you are reading to.

Make the story sound exciting, read at a steady pace, changing your tone of voice.

Read out loud to your baby, or in fact to your unborn baby. Statistics show that children can start to respond to pictures as early as three months of age. It's a lovely way of spending quality time with your baby, bonding with them, and it stimulates their language and cognitive skills too.

Have fun!

- You can visit our Facebook page to watch me talking about the importance of storytelling at: www.facebook.com/earlyyearsscotland/videos/241009847095865/

Making and playing with puppets



**Does your child enjoy listening to stories, then acting them out?
Does your child enjoy putting on shows?**

Does your child enjoy listening to music and playing games like I Spy and Simon Says?

By using puppets, when involved in these activities, you can help develop a variety of different skills and encourage your child's development. Children naturally invent stories, develop characters, create different settings and use dialogue and the use of puppets can help develop and extend these skills. Puppets help children to bring stories to life and they can provide a fun focus for their play.

Using puppets is good for your child because it:

- Improves their motor skills through manipulation of the puppets.
- Encourages their concentration and imagination.
- Encourages language development by taking on different roles and characters.
- Helps build their confidence.
- Provides opportunities for them to play with other children.
- Helps them to learn about other cultures.
- Provides a focus for their role play.

BY USING PUPPETS, YOU CAN HELP DEVELOP A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT SKILLS AND ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

You can help to develop their play by watching and listening to them. Encourage them to use different props and introduce different types of puppets to help develop their play. Often, if a child is shy, playing with puppets can help them to talk more freely as they feel that it is the puppet speaking, not them! This can really help to build their confidence.

Making Puppets

There are lots of different types of puppets that you can make easily at home with your child. You can find plenty of materials available in and

around the home that your child can use to make their own characters. Puppets can be people, animals, or anything that the child wishes. Puppets can be made from a variety of materials including socks, paper plates/bags, wooden spoons, gloves and card. Children can use their hands, fingers, and /or sticks to manipulate the puppet. As your child's skills develop and your confidence grows you will find the possibilities are endless for making puppets. It is important to remember to supervise the use of scissors and to be aware of any smaller items that are used, for example, buttons, beads when making puppets.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO HELP GET YOU STARTED. YOU AND YOUR CHILD MAY COME UP WITH LOTS OF OTHER IDEAS FOR PUPPETS. REMEMBER THIS IS AN ACTIVITY THAT YOU AND YOUR CHILD CAN SHARE

Wooden Spoon Puppets

Materials: wooden spoon, felt tipped pens.

These puppets are easy to make and can be as elaborate or as simple as your child wants to make them. Your child can draw on the spoon and add some wool, stick on eyes, buttons and some fabric. Let your child use their imagination to create lots of different puppets.

Paper Plate Puppets

Materials: paper plate, crayons/ pencils/ felt tipped pens, lollipop stick, sticky tape and scissors.

Show your child their reflection in a mirror and talk about what they see - their eyes, nose, mouth, ears, eyelashes and hair.

Encourage them to draw a face on the plate and talk about the colour of the hair, eyes and skin.

Once your child has finished drawing attach the lollipop stick to the back. They may wish to add wool for the hair or stick on eyelashes.

Let your child decide on the features of the face and remember you will need to supervise cutting out eye holes if required.

Sock Puppets

Materials: clean socks, wool, buttons or stick-on eyes, needle and thread.

To make the hair, with supervision, your child can cut strands of wool according to the colour and length they wish. Fold the wool in half and tie some wool around the middle of the centre to create a parting. You will need to help pin the hair to the top of the sock and attach the wool by sewing it on. If your child wishes to have buttons for eyes you will need to sew these on securely for your child.



This information comes from one of Early Years Scotland's series of Top Tips for Parents which are available for individual members and group members to download from the 'MY EYS' members' area of our website:

www.earlyyearsScotland.org

Baby Massage: tips and benefits



Early Years Scotland Practitioner, Margaret-Ann McGoldrick, describes the benefits of baby massage and how to do this with your baby

Baby massage can be a lovely way for you to express your love and care for your baby. It can calm and soothe your baby as well as having health benefits. It can be very effective in improving blood circulation, weight gain, digestion and can also ease teething pains.

Learning baby massage will give you a toolkit to help soothe common issues with your baby and an opportunity to have fun with your baby. To get

the most out of it, try to choose a time when your baby is quietly alert, lying awake and interested in the environment around them, as it means they will be ready to interact with you.

The first thing that you need to do before massaging your baby is to find the best place for the massage. The area should be comfortable for you both. Make sure the room is cosy and warm for your baby. Follow your

baby's lead, don't massage them if they are cranky or irritable. You can smile, talk and sing to your baby during the massage session. If you find that your baby is uncomfortable during massaging a particular part of their body, it's advised to skip that part and move to another part. If your baby is not in the mood for a massage, if they appear unhappy or uncomfortable, stop the massage.



WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU START

- ♦ Choose a good room for baby massage.
- ♦ Make sure it is warm (around 24 degrees C) with no draughts.
- ♦ Lay your baby down on a towel or blanket with a changing mat beneath.
- ♦ If massaging the abdomen wait thirty minutes after a feed.
- ♦ Remove distractions, for example pets, television, mobile phone.
- ♦ Play some relaxing music, have it low enough that your baby can hear your voice.
- ♦ Take time to make sure you are relaxed.
- ♦ Have everything to hand that you might need.
- ♦ Massage oil – grapeseed or plain vegetable oil, something that won't cause a problem if baby puts their hands or feet in their mouth.
- ♦ A nappy change.



Photo: freepik@onlyyouqj



BENEFITS FOR THE BABY

Sleep: Regular massage helps produce serotonin, a feel-good hormone, which is turned into melatonin which can help babies sleep better.

Digestion: Regular abdominal massage can stimulate the gut so that babies absorb their food better, can pass wind more easily and help with constipation.

Reflux: Regular massage can help stimulate the development of the baby's gut and can also help with digestion, so babies can keep their milk down more easily.

Growing Pains: The firm pressure helps babies feel less pain from growing, teething and digestion discomfort.

Attachment: Focused 1:1 time with good eye contact. Singing and firm touch massage helps babies securely attach to their primary care giver.

Development: Helps babies to develop mentally, socially and physically.

BENEFITS FOR THE PARENTS

Bonding: A gentle way into creating bonding and attachment with your new baby.

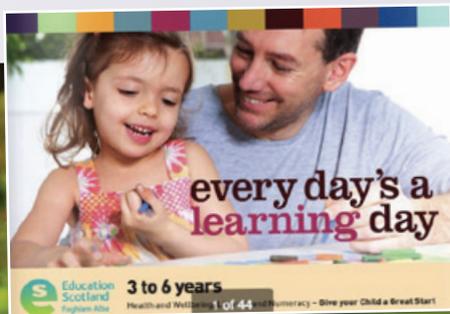
Empowering: When parents use massage, babies can be less fussy, sleep better and have fewer digestive issues.

Communication: Loving touch is an essential form of communication and with few other distractions, parents learn to pick up on their baby's other cues.

• Visit our Facebook page to view our baby massage demonstrations:

www.facebook.com/earlyyearsscotland

• If you are a member of Early Years Scotland, you can download this Top Tips for Parents Baby Massage information from the MY EYS members' area of our website www.earlyyearsscotland.org



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Every Day's a Learning Day are two books produced by Education Scotland. One covers 0-3 year olds and the other 3-6 year olds. They are designed to help you to support and extend your child's learning and development in everyday natural situations. They cover the topics of health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Here we share the information on health and wellbeing for 3-6 year olds.

Health and wellbeing is about learning how to lead healthy and active lives, becoming confident, happy and forming friendships and relationships with others that are based on respect. It is also about managing feelings and having the skills to meet challenges, make good choices and manage change. You can foster your child's health and wellbeing during everyday activities.

Just think about mealtimes

- Preparing food together will help your child try out lots of different taste experiences as preparation and cooking are taking place.
- Encourage your child to talk about likes and dislikes while offering as many healthy choices as possible.
- Having meals together as a family, when you can, allows you to talk together and develop relationships.
- Create opportunities for your child to have responsibility, such as setting the table.
- Involve your child in helping to tidy the kitchen and keep it clean. Talk about why this is important.

Learn together all about staying healthy and well. Help your child to develop an understanding of a healthy diet and how this helps us to grow strong and improves our concentration when learning.

Encourage your child to learn about ways to keep safe, how to cope in an emergency and travel safely.

- Involve your child in shopping for healthy foods - many food labels have colour codes that let you know how much sugar or fat is in food. Help your child to spot healthy products.

- Encourage your child to experience different tastes, colours and smells. Your child will become familiar with a wide range of foods and eat a variety of things.
- When you travel together, talk about how to keep safe. Look at ways to cross the road safely by using pedestrian crossings and traffic lights. If you travel by car you can discuss the importance of booster seats and seat belts.
- At the shops, talk to your child about what to do if they get lost. Help them to learn their address and telephone number so that they could tell a responsible adult and ask for help.
- Make your child aware of emergency services and how to phone the police, ambulance or fire brigade for help.

Get active

Taking part in regular physical activity indoors and outdoors is essential for good health and can be an enjoyable part of life. Encouraging children to be active now will help them continue to develop a healthy active lifestyle as they grow.

Set a good example. If you are active this will encourage your child to be active too. Try to walk wherever possible instead of taking the car or bus. Be positive about being active and your child will be too. Involve your child in household activities, such as taking the rubbish out, sweeping and dog walking to keep physically active.

Feelings and friendships

Children often enjoy playing alongside others before they are ready to play together. Children reach different stages at different times. You can help your child to understand all about their own and other people's feelings.

- Talk about feelings and encourage your child to express feelings and chat freely. A good opportunity for this may be when you are having a quiet time, such as cuddles and stories before bed.
- If your child is upset, provide reassurance that everyone feels like this at times. Talk about the reasons, and also the strategies, that may be used to make things better.
- Create opportunities for your child to mix with other children and to build friendships.
- Encourage your child to respect and value others' opinions. Help your child understand that everyone is an individual and has different needs.
- Get out and about with other adults and children. Seeing you spending time with others and enjoying their company will show your child that friendships are special.

• Early Years Scotland is grateful for the kind permission of Education Scotland to reproduce this material from the Every Day's a Learning Day books. Visit: <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/Documents/EveryDaysaLearningDay3to6.pdf>

FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CHILD'S WELLBEING





Together
we can
make...



MINISTRONE SOUP

Amanda McCrann, Early Years Practitioner for Early Years Scotland, describes how to make this hearty and nutritional soup, which is made with seasonal vegetables, beans and pasta.

Making this delicious minestrone soup is a great hands on activity for parents to involve their children in. Children will enjoy helping to cut up the vegetables and stirring the soup. The recipe is one of the ones that was included, along with a soup making kit containing all the ingredients, in Early Years Scotland's monthly lockdown activity packs we distributed to families.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 40 minutes
Total Time: 55 minutes
Serves: 4

Ingredients

You will need:

- ✓ 1 onion, finely chopped
- ✓ 1/2 large leek, cleaned and finely chopped
- ✓ 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- ✓ 1 celery stick, diced
- ✓ 1 large carrot, diced
- ✓ 2 tbsp tomato paste (puree)
- ✓ 1 litre (4 cups) vegetable stock (you can use chicken stock as an alternative)
- ✓ 1 can (410g) tomatoes
- ✓ 1 can cannellini beans, drained
- ✓ 68g (1/2 cup) small pasta



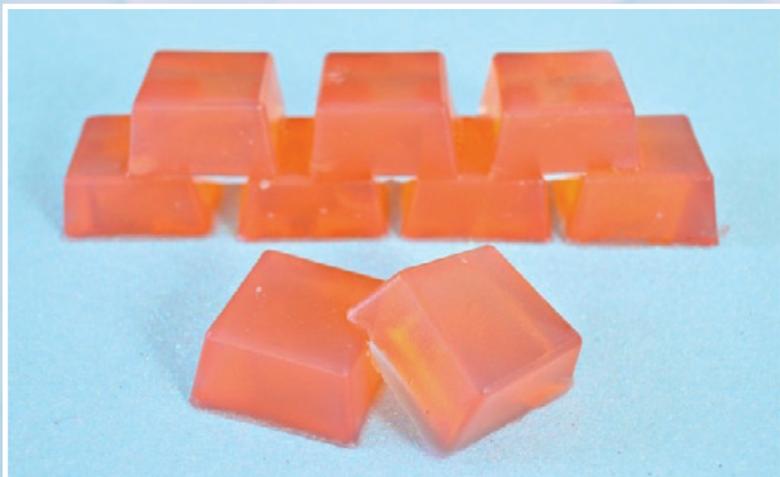
Instructions

1. Heat a little oil in a large saucepan; cook onion, garlic and leek for two minutes. Then add the celery and carrot and sauté (fry quickly) for 5 minutes.
2. Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring for 2 minutes.
3. Add the stock, tomatoes and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook for approx. 20 minutes.
4. Add the beans and pasta and cook for a further 5-10 minutes (according to pasta packet instructions).

You can freeze this soup for up to one month.

CHILDREN'S SOAP

Our Early Years Practitioner Amanda also describes a great way to encourage children to wash their hands.



This is a great activity to involve your child, let them help add the ingredients and place into the moulds. They will then have a soap to use that they made themselves – great result!

What you will need to make your own bar of soap:

- ✓ ½ cup of water
- ✓ 1 teaspoon of salt
- ✓ 2 sachets of gelatine
- ✓ ½ cup of any antibacterial hand soap

1. Add the water and the salt into a pot and bring to the boil.
2. Empty the gelatine into a bowl and slowly add the boiling salty water and mix until the gelatine has melted.
3. Add half a cup of hand soap, mix and pour into the moulds.
4. Place the moulds into the fridge and leave for about 30 minutes until the moulds have set.



FRUIT KEBABS

Early Years Scotland Early Years Practitioner, Karen McKay, describes a fun and healthy activity you can enjoy with your children.

Making colourful fruit kebabs with your children is not only great fun, but the end product is very healthy indeed! This activity is perfect for encouraging your children's creativity as they learn about creating patterns, colours and textures as they thread the fruit pieces onto the skewers.

At the same time, this activity provides an opportunity for them to learn about basic food preparation and learn how to handle sharp kitchen utensils, and about being careful when threading the fruit onto the pointy end of the skewer.

Involving your children in the chopping and threading of the fruit kebabs can motivate them to eat more fruit and it can be a great way to introduce and encourage them to try new fruit.

You will need:

- ✓ A selection of fruit of your choice - bananas, strawberries, grapes, kiwi, melon, oranges etc.
- ✓ Small knives that the children can safely use to slice the fruit.
- ✓ Wooden skewers, lollipop sticks or cocktail sticks could also be used.
- ✓ Plates and a chopping board.

Preparation

Take time to talk about the importance of hygiene when handling food and ensure hands are washed before starting the activity. Wash the fruit you have chosen.

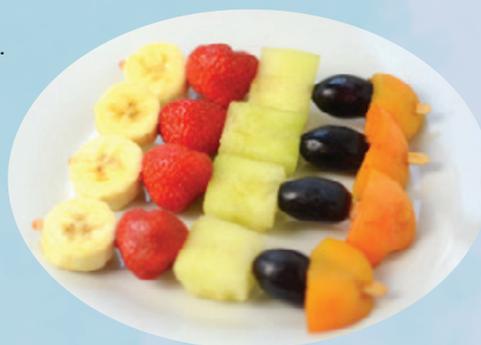
Instructions

Firstly, encourage your children to chop the softer fruit into pieces; adults should cut the harder fruit. Encourage discussion about the colours and textures. Allow them to choose the patterns for

example; what fruit will go on the skewer first, what will be next and encourage them to repeat the pattern. Supervise the threading of the fruit pieces, as the ends of skewers can be sharp. Lastly enjoy the refreshing, tasty fruit kebab snack and maybe add some yogurt as Maisie suggests in the video.

• To watch Maisie and her mum making fruit kebabs visit:

www.facebook.com/earlyyearsscotland/posts/2948547405203000





Joanna Murphy, Chair of the National Parent Forum of Scotland, is passionate about parental involvement and engagement in education and is keen to represent the voice of parents at a national level while helping everyday engagement in schools flourish. Here she looks at the topic of transitions.

Making transitions easier

From my own experiences as a parent, I still remember all the emotions of the first day of school and my daughters are 24, 21 and 17! This is one of the most exciting (and nerve wracking) days of a child's life and it's fair to say as a parent you go through the wringer! The transition from early learning into Primary 1 is a big step, and the process brings about a wide range of feelings for parents. The day comes with a sense of excitement, but also some trepidation. We are often filled with a sense of pride alongside the bittersweet feeling of them growing up so fast. We have hopes for our

children's experiences of school, the friends they'll meet, the memories they'll make, and all that they will learn. But we also have some fears too – will they settle in, make friends, be happy, and thrive? Will they forget me?

Early years practitioners and teachers can be so valuable in these times. Their experiences of the transition process help to reassure parents. It is particularly helpful when a practitioner appreciates all our children, and our family situation, as individuals. Although they will see many children go through the transitions through the years, for parents, each experience is unique. Ultimately, we want to know that our child and their needs are seen and met, as our primary concern will always be their wellbeing and happiness first and foremost.

This year's transitions have been far from routine for families, schools, and early learning settings. The disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of our children and young people, but some have been disadvantaged more than others. Children in key transition points are, in my view, the most touched by the recent disruption and they and their parents will need the most reassurance and support in the coming weeks from the start of term and beyond.

Moving through the next term please I'm sure that staff will continue to do what they do best, that is, to communicate with their families, as they know them well from pre-March; to treat them as individuals,

Let's be mindful that the last few months have affected our young children a great deal and while they are resilient, they will need more nurturing than usual

remembering the specific circumstances they are in and to talk to them with dignity and compassion, providing them with the support they ask for and need. I know that parents are likely to be more anxious this year than usual as their child starting school has been a unique experience for them, and they are relying on staff to draw from their knowledge of previous years to allay fears and remind them that, like other years, this is natural. I'm sure that early years practitioners and Primary 1 school staff are always ready to assist in any way they can to make the children feel welcome, comfortable, and happy.

Let's be mindful that the last few months have affected our young children a great deal and while they are resilient, they will need more nurturing than usual. Early years practitioners are well placed to help parents with this, perhaps sharing information on what to look out for in their children's behaviour or emotions, and ideas on how to reassure, comfort, console or encourage their children to lessen any fears and build up their resilience and confidence.

This year, my daughter's Goddaughter starts Primary 1 (I know I can't believe it either!) and I know that she will be as well supported with this transition as she would have been last year or the year before. Thinking back to my own nervous moments standing with a 5-year-old in new uniform at the school gate I now realise I couldn't have been in better hands.

• Our 'In a Nutshell...' series provides parents with clear information about a wide range of areas of education, written for parents, by parents. You can find all our publications on our website.

Visit: www.npfs.org.uk

• 'Curriculum for Excellence in a Nutshell' is a great starting point to understanding the curriculum as your children transition into early learning and childcare or school.

Visit: www.npfs.org.uk/downloads/cfe-in-a-nutshell/

Early years practitioners and teachers can be so valuable in these times. Their experiences of the transition process help to reassure parents



Transitions: a parent's perspective

Early Years Scotland Early Years Practitioner, Leahan Edmonds, describes her daughter's transition from her nursery setting to her primary school.

Moving on from early years provision to primary school is a big milestone in a child's life. We know that every child copes with change in different ways, depending on their early experiences and resilience. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the transition from one setting to another is flexible and adaptable and takes into account the needs of each individual child to fully support their emotional wellbeing and development. As an Early Years Practitioner, I recognise that the process of transition not only supports children, but also their parents and teaching staff to build relationships through effective communication and provide reassurance.

This year I am supporting my own child, Eilidh, in her transition from nursery to school. I could never have imagined how different her transition would be, due to COVID 19. I have had to consider the impact this situation may have had on my child's mental health. My daughter has attended the same nursery since she was one year old, and without any preparation, she left nursery in March this year, on what would have been a normal day in for her and never went back. There were no goodbyes to the staff team with whom she had built positive relationships with. The part that has affected her the most is that she never got to say goodbye to her best friends who will be attending a school in a different area.

I was relieved when I was finally contacted by the school to offer a thirty minute transition visit which I felt would be very beneficial to my daughter. It was reassuring to me



When I looked at my daughter, smiling in her graduation cap with her class of 2020 balloons, I couldn't help but feel somewhat sad that she had missed out on the last few months of nursery with her friends

as a parent to hear directly from the teacher what the situation would look like in August 2020. I was then able to explain to her that she would go to school two days per week and she would be learning at home with me on the other days. The following day it was then announced by the Scottish Government that they were hoping that children would return to

school full time. After this I made the decision to not discuss it further with her until we have a definite decision so as not to confuse her further.

During the last week of term, two of the nursery staff came to visit us at home, following social distancing guidance. They delivered a graduation pack which contained images of her time at nursery, a

collection of her artwork, some presents and a graduation hat and scroll. My daughter felt very shy when they arrived as she has only ever spent time with them in her nursery environment, so it was very strange for her to have them standing in her garden. As they could not hold their normal celebrations, the nursery requested an image of each child so they could put together a picture collage. When I looked at my daughter, smiling in her graduation cap

with her class of 2020 balloons, I couldn't help but feel somewhat sad that she had missed out on the last few months of nursery with her friends.

However, I am proud of how well she has adapted during this difficult and confusing time. I am confident that when my daughter is finally able to start her new journey into school life, that she will be well supported to move forward from what has been an unusual and challenging time for everyone.

... and through a child's eye

Early Years Scotland Early Years Practitioner, Pauline Scott, asked her son Hayden how he was feeling as he moved from nursery school to primary school. This is what he said to her.

How do you feel about the lockdown?

'I like being at home with Mummy and Daddy. We play lots of games, read my animal books and watch films.'

Have you missed going to nursery?

'I miss nursery a wee bit. I miss the nursery garden the most. I liked doing bug hunts in the garden.'

'My friends from the nursery are not going to my school. I don't know the names of the boys and girls at my school yet.'

How do you feel about going to school?

'I liked going to see my school last week, I wanted to see the playground. I know my teacher's name now.'

'I wanted to see all my new friends, but I've only seen one. Because of the virus everyone can't go to school at the same time.'

'My teacher showed me my classroom and gave me a cool tie and homework.'

What are you most looking forward to about school?

'Playing the big snakes and ladders in the playground with my new friends.'

'I am excited to go and get a new school bag with Mummy.'

'I don't have to go back to nursery because I'm five. I will like going to school but I don't want Mummy and Daddy to go back to work all the time.'

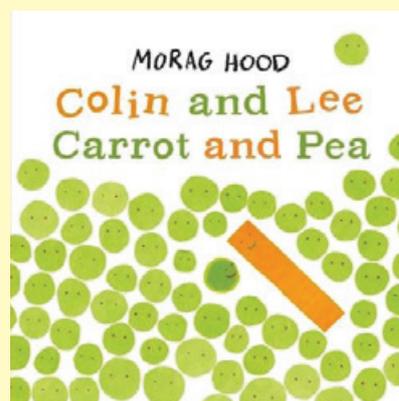
BOOK REVIEW

Emma Dunn, Early Years Operations Administrator at Scottish Book Trust, discusses Colin and Lee, Carrot and Pea by Morag Hood, published by Two Hoots. Emma recommends this book for two year olds and up.

Colin isn't like other peas, he's orange, rectangular, very tall and... he's a carrot! He may not be very good at playing hide and seek, but he makes an amazing slide and an excellent tower. Colin and Lee couldn't be more different, but they are the best of friends. Deceptively simple and extremely funny, Colin and Lee is a fantastic way to introduce the idea of diversity and empathy to young readers. It is an uplifting story about friendship and acceptance, and one which celebrates difference in all its green and orange glory.

To find other great books on the Two Hoots website visit: www.panmacmillan.com/twohoots

The Scottish Book Trust's Early Years programme Bookbug provides free Bookbug Sessions and free bags of books to every child in Scotland. If you have any questions about books or reading, why not get in touch with the Bookbug Detective who'll be happy to help at bookbug@scottishbooktrust.com Visit www.scottishbooktrust.com





You Are
BRILLIANT

Young artist Archie Kettles, who is Early Years Scotland Policy Officer, Lorna Kettles' son, has been inspired to draw this picture to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to all the key workers. Archie has family members who are keyworkers, so he was very proud to be asked to create it in order to show everyone's gratitude for the outstanding work they have done during lockdown.