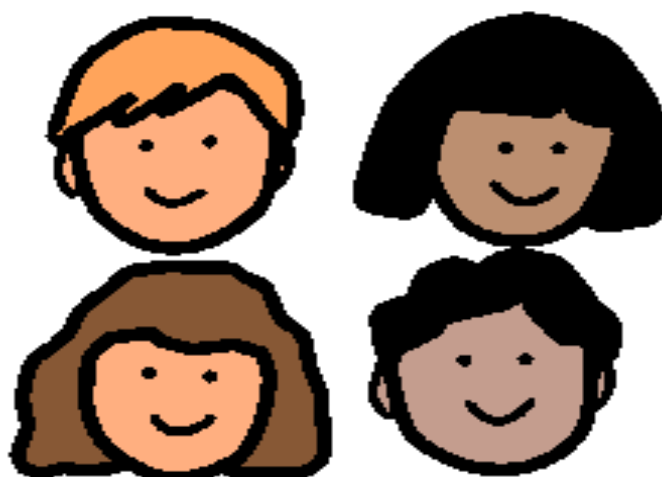


**Early Years  
Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)  
(for 0-5 year olds)**



Supporting social communication skills at  
home

**Starter Pack**

June 2020

## The Pack

This **home programme** has been designed by Speech and Language Therapists and is based on the most up-to-date research on communication development in the early years.

**This STARTER PACK is designed to give you some initial suggestions about supporting your child's communication development.**

### How-to-use this pack

- 1) Think about how you can use the ideas in your **daily routines** (e.g. snack time, small group time, outside play) to increase the opportunities for the child to learn throughout their day
- 2) If the child isn't responding in the way you expect or the activity isn't working; move on to another activity, and come back to it
- 3) Keep it **fun** and keep it **going**!

## Learning Through Play

- ▶ Children explore the world through play.
- ▶ Through exploratory play they learn about the world and the effect they can have on the environment.
- ▶ This type of play starts from very early on in a child's life and is one of the first types of play they experience.



- ▶ Exploratory/Sensory play involves the child using all their Senses.
- ▶ They will examine objects by:
  - Looking
  - Touching (with hands and mouths)
  - Listening
  - Moving it

to learn about how they can influence the world around them.



Here are some ideas for sensory play..  
Try something new!  
Encourage your child to explore and experience



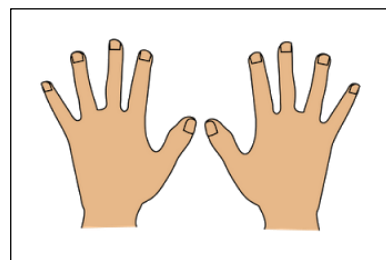
- ▶ Feely Bag
- ▶ Playdough
- ▶ Water Play
- ▶ Sand Play
- ▶ Rub-a-Dub-Dub
- ▶ Touch Different Textures
- ▶ Bake Together



## More Activity Ideas



Let your  
child use....



And other  
mark  
makers!

- ▶ Make a Jelly
- ▶ Messy Play
- ▶ Garden Play
- ▶ Playing with Food
- ▶ Arts and Crafts
- ▶ Slime
- ▶ Cornflour Play
- ▶ Shaving Foam Play



## Things to Consider with Sensory/Exploratory Play

- ▶ Not all children like all textures and this is perfectly normal, however it is important to give your child plenty of opportunities to experience different touch sensations.
- ▶ Never force your child to touch something that they find distressing.
- ▶ Do only what your child will tolerate. Tolerance builds up gradually. Over stimulation can result in challenging behaviours and an increased activity level.
- ▶ It is essential to approach activities sensitively, starting with less challenging textures and building towards more challenging textures.
- ▶ Allow your child to control the level of contact and stop when they need it



# Play People Games

**People Games** are games which don't need toys or any equipment – they are all about interaction!

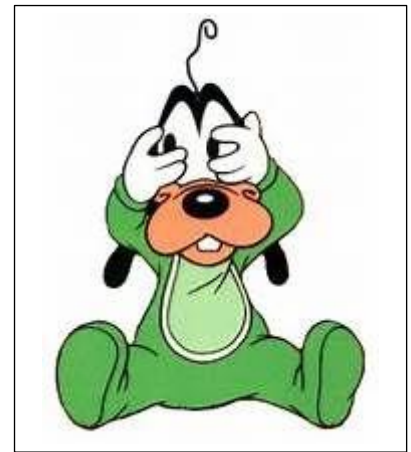
Think about what physical touch and kinds of physical activity your child likes

## The main idea is:

- 1) Do something your child likes
- 2) Wait and keep looking at your child to show you are expecting them to do something
- 3) See if they 'ask for more' with their body language, voice or words
- 4) Do the action again.... Keep it going!

## Ideas for People Games:

- ★ Tickle games
- ★ Making Funny faces
- ★ Chase
- ★ Blowing raspberries
- ★ Peekaboo
- ★ Swing high, Swing low –push child on a swing, swing in your arms or wrap child in a blanket and swing high/low
- ★ Jelly on a plate – sit child on your knee and wobble side-side
- ★ Rocking rhymes e.g 'row, row, row your boat' – sit opposite your child on the floor



Develop back and forth interactions

Encourage your child to start interactions

Help your child keep an interaction going

Help your child understand and use words in a familiar game

## Top tips...

- ★ Most of these games require being face-face, so have your child and yourself in a position where you can give each other your full attention
- ★ Exaggerate your use of facial expressions, intonation and eye contact
- ★ To build anticipation, encourage your child's attention to your face and encourage his/her use of eye contact.

# Give your child choices throughout the day

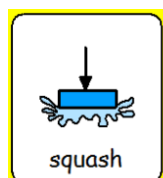


## Steps in learning to choose...

- 1) Offer your child a choice between something you know they like and something you know they are not particularly interested in. This provides the child with the incentive to indicate a choice, rather than reaching for both.
- 2) Give your child the item as soon as he/she indicates a preference, whether through looking, reaching, making noises, pointing.
- 3) Label the item as you give it to the child.
- 4) Once the child is able to indicate a clear choice, use choice-making to help develop vocabulary by adding a word, for example 'blue ball or red ball?'
- 5) Once your child is able to indicate choices using real objects/foods, they may be ready to start using a 'choice board'. This is a piece of card with pictures or photos to choose from. Start by offering a choice of two photos/pictures, one of which you know he/she likes and the other he doesn't like



or



or



## Ideas... when to use choosing:

- Snack time
- Offering choices between toys or play activities
- Offering choices of songs using toys/objects to represent songs
- Encouraging children to offer each other choices at small group time
- Offering choices of musical instruments
- Choosing a friend to play with – using a photo choosing board
- Offer choices using verbs, for example take a ball and ask 'kick or throw?', gesturing each action or using a symbol choosing board. Take a bowl of water and ask 'pour or splash?'



Use songs and rhymes to support your child's communication  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/hang-it-on-the-line/zhd6rj6>  
click on this link for more ideas!

## Make a song bag/basket



**You will need:** - a bag (a simple draw-string one is ideal, but any will do), basket or box

- 'Objects of reference', symbols or photos for the songs your child knows and likes e.g. a toy bus/photo/symbol of a bus for 'the wheels on the bus' a toy boat/photo/symbol of a boat for 'row-row-row your boat' (see 'using visual support section in 'resources' for which will work best for your child)

### What to do:

- Put the objects/photos/symbols into your bag/basket or box
- Offer the bag to your child and let them choose an object/ picture
- Sing the song together and encourage your child to join in with the actions



You can find song cards here:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/nursery-rhyme-cards-t-l-545>

## Websites

You may also find the following websites helpful:

- ❑ Our speech and language therapy website: <https://www.clch.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy-children>
- ❑ **NSPCC's** 'Look, Say, Sing, Play' campaign' with the following link <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/look-say-sing-play/sign-up>
- ❑ **Vroom:** Boost your child's learning with **Vroom's** fast and fun tips to your phone or via email. <https://www.vroom.org>
- ❑ The **Hungry Little Minds** campaign provides lots of ideas that can help boost your child's learning. [www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk](http://www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk)
- ❑ **Local Offer website:** (search "SEND local offer with the name of your borough). This website has lots of useful information for parents about local help for children with additional education and/or health needs
- ❑ **Parent forums:** Contact for support if your child has additional education/health need
  - Parents Active (Hammersmith & Fulham) [www.parentsactive.org.uk](http://www.parentsactive.org.uk)
  - Full of Life (RBKC) [www.fulloflifekc.com](http://www.fulloflifekc.com)
  - Make it Happen (Westminster) [www.wppg.org.uk](http://www.wppg.org.uk)
- ❑ **The Communication Trust:** for what to expect at different ages [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)
- ❑ **ICAN:** a children's communication charity [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)
- ❑ **Hanen:** [www.hanen.org](http://www.hanen.org)

## CLCH NHS Trust

The speech and language therapy service is provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust.

For more information visit [www.clch.nhs.uk](http://www.clch.nhs.uk) or call us on **020 7266 8777**