

Box of Feelings

A throwing game with boxes showing different emotions as the target

You will need

- Baskets or boxes
- Paper and pens
- Balls

Feelings



! Why this activity is important

- It will improve your child's understanding of emotions and feelings.
- It helps children to recognise that all feelings are important.



Playing together

- Collect three empty baskets or boxes and lay them on the floor.
- Draw a happy face, an angry face and a sad face to stick on each basket.
- Use a ball, sock or scrunched up paper and throw it into the sad box then encourage your child to have a go.

*Let's throw the ball into the angry box together.
Can you throw it into the happy box?*

- You can choose to add more baskets with other emotion faces.
- Whilst playing the game, why not talk about times that they have felt the different emotions?



Wiggle and Dance

Put on your favourite songs or videos and have fun dancing around!

Feelings

You will need

- Songs or music
- Dance props (scarves, ribbon, hat)

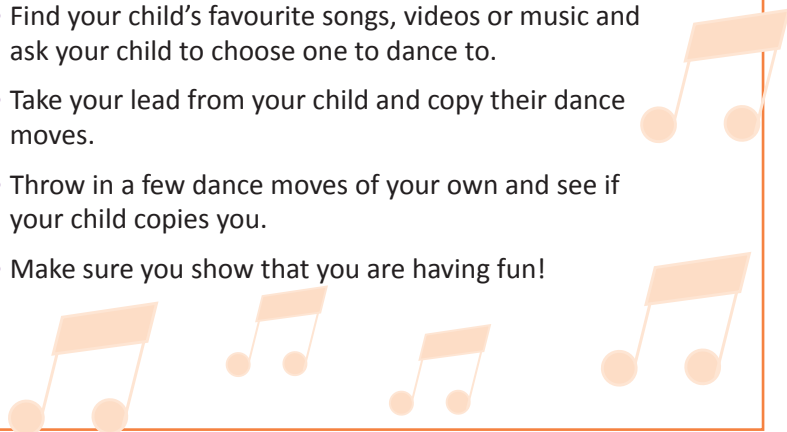


! Why this activity is important

- Dancing together makes you smile!
- Being physical has been shown to release 'feel good' feelings.
- Copying is a key way that young children learn. If you show you are having fun, they are more likely to take part in and enjoy activities such as dancing that promote good feelings.

Playing together

- Find your child's favourite songs, videos or music and ask your child to choose one to dance to.
- Take your lead from your child and copy their dance moves.
- Throw in a few dance moves of your own and see if your child copies you.
- Make sure you show that you are having fun!





Relax

Find calmness by practising mindfulness activities together

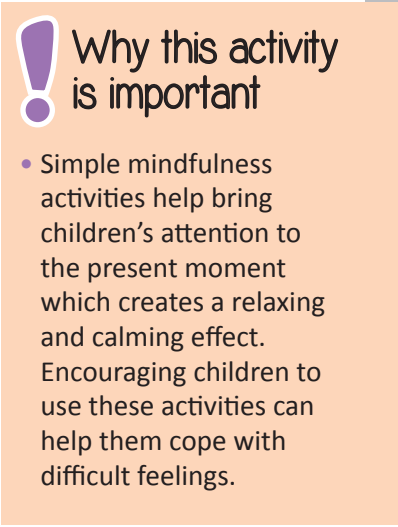


Feelings



You will need

- Balloons
- Empty plastic bottle and glitter



Why this activity is important

- Simple mindfulness activities help bring children's attention to the present moment which creates a relaxing and calming effect. Encouraging children to use these activities can help them cope with difficult feelings.



Playing together

- **Cloud Spotting:** Lying outside or looking out of the window, spot the clouds in the sky. Spend time talking about the different shapes the clouds make and see how fast or slow they move across the sky.
- **Balloon Game:** Blow up balloons and try to keep them in the air by gently tapping them with your hand – don't let them touch the floor!
- **Glitter Bottle:** Fill an empty plastic bottle with water and glitter – let your child shake the bottle and focus on the swirling glitter in the water.
- **Using Senses:** Other activities which focus on using children's senses – sight, sound, smell and touch - e.g. drawing shapes in a tray of sand, talking about all the things we can hear outside, smelling flowers on a walk.

Storybag

Communication

Fill a bag with props from your child's favourite story

You will need

- Your child's favourite book(s) and appropriate props
- Bag, box or basket

! Why this activity is important

- A storybag makes reading more fun and memorable and helps stimulate language development.



Playing together

- Choose together which book or books you want to make your storybag for.
- Look through the pictures included in the book to decide which props you are going to add to your storybag.
- Go on a hunt around the house to look for them and collect them in your bag, box or basket.
- Use the props to retell the story and act out sections of the story.
- You can discuss your child's favourite part of the story and ask your child questions about the characters and plot.



Hide and Seek

Play hide and seek with a favourite toy or teddy

Communication



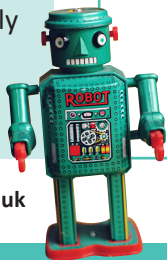
You will need

- Teddy bear or toys



! Why this activity is important

- Listening and following instructions are key skills in becoming an effective communicator.
- Hide and seek provides lots of opportunities for children to listen carefully to, follow and provide instructions.



Playing together

- Ask your child to choose a toy or teddy to hide.
- Explain that you are going to play hide and seek together and that means the toy is put in a hiding place and we have to find it.
- Practise putting your hands over your eyes together and waiting until you hear 'I'm ready!' to open your eyes.
- When your child is finding the teddy, you could help your child by saying...

Where is it? You are nearby.

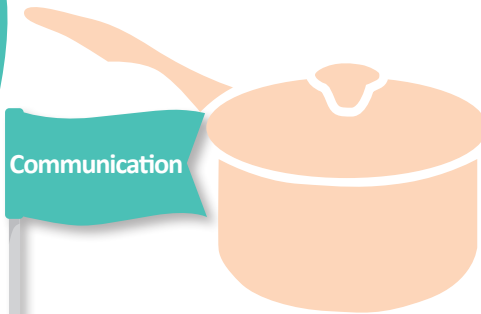
Yes, you have found it! It was under the cushion.

- On the next turn, your child could hide the toy and you have to find it.

Kitchen Band

Find lots of pots and pans to bang!

Communication



You will need

- Pots, pans and tins
- Spoons (metal, wooden, large and small)
- Whisk, potato masher, brushes

! Why this activity is important

- Exploring sounds encourages active listening, this helps a child's communication development.
- Playing with mouth sounds works children's muscles in their mouth, which helps their speech development.



Playing together

- Choose together the things you are going to use for your instruments.
- Pick up a spoon and show your child what to do and then give them time to enjoy creating sounds with different objects.

Wow! That's a really loud bang!

How quietly can we tap the pan with the little spoon?

- You could start a 'copy me' game where you bang a pan a number of times, then your child copies. '1,2,3 bang, bang, bang. Your go...1,2,3 bang, bang, bang.'
- You can also try creating other sounds with your teeth, lips and tongue instead of the objects. 'What noise can you make with your lips?'

Teddy Bears' Picnic

It's time for a picnic with your child's teddies and toys

You will need

- Teddy bears and toys
- Rug and cutlery
- Picnic food (real or pretend)



Friendship



Playing together

! Why this activity is important

- Imaginative play is great practice for real life. Through a teddy bears picnic, children are learning skills that promote positive friendships such as sharing, initiating activities and making conversation.

- Choose together which teddies and toys are coming to the picnic. Think where you will have your picnic and layout the rug out. You could also create invitations for the teddies.

- Help your child organise their teddies around the rug.

You sit there Ted next to my dolly. It's a special friends picnic and you can all come.

- Plan together what food you will have for your picnic.

*I know you like cheese sandwiches so shall we have some of these?
What do you think big ted may like to eat?*

- Help your child have a go at putting food on dishes and plates to take to the rug.
- Enjoy your picnic together.

What would your doll like to eat first?

Teddy please can you pass the crisps?

Our Friends

Talk about who our friends are and what makes them special

Friendship



You will need

- Photographs of your friends and your child's friends



! Why this activity is important

- Chatting together helps your child to learn that conversations are a fun thing to do! Developing this sense of fun around conversations helps them to initiate and take part in them too, a great skill for friendship building.
- Talking about friends and why they are special helps your child build up an understanding of important describing words.

Playing together

- Show your child the photos you've chosen and ask them to point to a particular one to start talking about.

Where is.....?

Pick up the photo of....

- Talk about the friend in the photograph, including their name and some of the things you have done together.

Do you remember when we went to the park?

When....came to your party, wasn't that fun?

- You could print out photographs of friends and put them in a special basket or box to encourage more chats about them.



Storytime: Friends

Time to share stories about friendship

Friendship

You will need

Books about friendship:

- *Supertato* by Sue Hendra
- *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister
- *Do you want to be my friend?* by Eric Carle
- *Elmer* by David McKee
- *Arnie the Doughnut* by Laurie Keller
- *Hedhugs* by Steve Wilson and Lucy Tapper



! Why this activity is important

- Reading books about friends helps your child build up an idea of what being a friend is, how it makes you feel and the kind of things you can do with a friend.



Playing together

- Either collect your own books about friendship or choose the ones online you would like to read.
- Find somewhere that you can get comfy to look at the books together.
- Start by pointing to and talking about what is happening in the pictures.
- Repeat words related to friendship which are in the book e.g. love, play, kind, laugh, happy, care, miss.

Look, she misses her friends. Can you see them playing together?

- Ask your child simple sentences from the pictures in the books and give them lots of time to think and reply. 'Where are his friends?' 'What game is she playing with her friends?'

What's Gone?

Solving problems

Try to memorise objects and notice what's gone

You will need

- A tray
- Tea towel or some material
- Three objects (e.g. toy, spoon, hat)

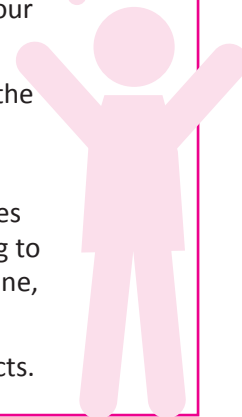
! Why this activity is important

- Developing memory skills helps your child to store and retrieve new information they are learning every day - very important for problem solving.
- The game tests children's understanding that objects are still around, even when they can't see them. This develops their imagination.



Playing together

- Show your child each object one at a time (three should be enough) and name what it is. Then put them all on a tray so your child can see them.
- Tell your child that you are going to cover the tray and one of the objects will disappear when they cover their eyes.
- Take one object away and reveal the tray with two objects on. Ask your child *What's gone?* You can also go through the names of the objects again, leaving a pause for the one that is missing to help your child. When your child names the object that has gone, bring it back out. *Yes! Here it is.*
- Repeat as many times as you like. You can also add more objects.



Obstacle Course

Make your own obstacle course with your child using things you have around the house

Solving problems



Why this activity is important

- You are working through a problem together which will help your child's independent problem solving skills in the future. You are also modelling perseverance: if you keep trying with the obstacle course, you will make it to the end.
- Maybe part of the obstacle course might break and you have to try a different set up. Children are then learning there are different solutions to problems.

You will need

- Cushions, chairs, blankets, any garden furniture or toys you may have (hoops, skittles, balls)



Playing together

- Talk about what an obstacle course is and what you need to do to make one.

We need to put things in the front room/in the garden first, then we need to jump, climb and run all the way to the end.

- Gather equipment and create the course together.

*Shall we put this chair here?
What shall we put here, the blanket or the cushion?*

- Show your child what you need to do by going first! Talk about what you are doing as you go through the obstacle course. When your child has a go, help them with instructions

Crawl under the blanket, run round the chair....

All the Colours of the Rainbow

Sort objects into the different colours of the rainbow

Solving problems



You will need

- A big basket of toys, clothes, teddies (anything which is made up of one main colour)
- Coloured paper

! Why this activity is important

- Sorting is an important problem solving skill which helps your child develop an understanding of how to match things which follow a similar pattern. This activity also gives your child the chance to develop their colour recognition skills and helps with the tidying up too!



Playing together

- Bring the basket in and tip everything out in front of your child. Start to talk about the things you have, particularly what colour they are.
- Lay out different pieces of coloured paper on the floor and show your child where the objects go. 'I've got your blue jumper ...Let's put it on the blue paper.'
- After you have done a few, give your child the chance to choose and sort.
Can you find all the pink things? What else is yellow?
- Carry on until you have sorted all the objects onto the matching coloured paper.

Thinking of You

Create a photo frame of someone important in yours or your child's life who has died

Change and loss

You will need

- Photograph(s)
- Plain paper and glue
- Decorations for the frame (pasta shapes, buttons, etc.)

! Why this activity is important

- Talking about photographs of family members or friends who have died helps your child to remember these special people so they can remain an important part of your child's life.
- If children have grown up seeing photographs and talking about loved ones that have died, this can help them to cope with difficult feelings due to bereavement when they are older.



Playing together

- Find a photograph of someone important in your life who has died – they may be someone that your child never met or someone who has died more recently.
- Chat about who is in the photograph and what they are doing.

This is your Grandad baking a cake. He made yummy cakes!

- Place the photograph in the middle of your paper and from your collection of objects stick a couple things on yourself to show your child what they need to do and then carry on filling in the frame together.
- Keep chatting about the people in the photographs as you fill.

Do you remember when we...?

- Ask your child to place the photo somewhere in the house.

Snuggle Book Corner

Change and loss

Share books about change and loss

You will need

- Cushions, blankets, glow toys, rugs, chairs, duvets, pop up tent or a big cardboard box, pegs, scarves, mirrors, teddy bears, books

Books about change and loss

Dogger by Shirley Hughes

Owl Babies by Martin Waddell

The Rabbit
Listened by Cori Doerrfeld



! Why this activity is important

- Making a snuggly space together gives your child (and hopefully you too!) a place to rest and feel calm.
- Giving time and space to talking about change and loss helps tackle anxiety and fear around it and demonstrates how to find positive ways to move forward.

Playing together

- Make your snuggly book corner together using what you have found around the house.

Where shall we put these cushions?

I wonder what would feel snuggly here?

- Share the books about change and loss together as you snuggle up.
- Spend time talking about the pictures, how the characters felt and how they coped.

Look what the rabbit is doing...he is talking to his friend... now he looks like he is smiling.



Look How I've Changed

Change and loss

Recognising and preparing for changes in our lives

You will need

- Objects (photographs, clothes, toys) from when your child was younger and similar things now they are older



Playing together

! Why this activity is important

- Chatting together about how things change (especially using things that your child can see and touch) helps children to understand that things change over time (including themselves!). This activity can be very helpful in preparing children for upcoming changes.

- Choose one group of objects to look at first (photographs for example) and lay them out in a line so you and your child can see them.
- Start with the photograph showing your child as a newborn at the left, moving towards the right.

Here's you as a little baby.

The next photo is when you were a little bit older and you started waving.

- As you move through the timeline of photographs emphasise the changes that you are seeing e.g. crawling to walking or being fed to feeding themselves.
- Carry out similar chats using the other objects you have collected.
- You could then compare objects and introduce objects for upcoming changes e.g. 'tiny hat when you were a baby....look at your bigger hat now.'

You used to wear nappies, now you use a potty and soon you will use a toilet.

Journey to Nursery

Create a map of your journey to nursery

Moving forward

! Why this activity is important

- Talking about the journey to nursery helps to reduce children's anxiety about new experiences, and creating a map encourages children to think of it as an adventure.
- Sequencing the journey helps your child to build up a sense of what happens first, next and last, which are important skills when they are learning to read and retell stories.

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You will need

- Paper, pens and cardboard boxes
- Photos or drawings of landmarks you pass on the way to nursery



Playing together

- Stick together big sheets of paper to make a map on the floor. Draw a road or pavement with spaces to stick photos of landmarks you pass on your way to nursery or make buildings out of cardboard boxes.
- Start with your house at the left hand side of the paper.

Here is our house. This is where we will start when we go to nursery.

- Place the nursery at the other end of the paper to how where the map finishes.

Look, here's nursery. The bit in the middle is what we will pass when we go to nursery.

- Go through your map, placing photos or boxes onto the paper and talking about each place.

Here's the shop where we get your cereals from...

- Make sure you include special sequencing words such as 'next, after that, last bit.'

Pack my Bag

Pack a bag together with all the special things needed for nursery or a trip

Moving forward



You will need

- Items needed for nursery or a trip (spare clothes, water bottle, special teddy, snacks)
- Items not needed (toothbrush, pet food)



! Why this activity is important

- Preparing for something new in your child's life by talking about it reduces their feelings of anxiety of the unknown.
- Finding items which are special to your child to take into new situations can comfort them.



Playing together

- Talk to your child about things they might need to take to nursery or a trip out of the house.
- Share each of the items your child might need as you pack their bag together. Talk about the items as you pack them.

These are your special shoes for nursery.

- If your child is ready you can make this a sorting activity. Place all items in a pile and then ask your child to sort them into their separate groups, one pile for nursery and one pile of items not for nursery.

What's this? Do you need this for nursery?

I Choose

Provide opportunities for your child to make choices and say what they prefer



You will need

Examples of when choices happen:

- Mealtimes, getting dressed, playtime, TV time, going shopping
- Real objects for making choices (or pictures drawn on paper)

Moving forward



Playing together

! Why this activity is important

- Making choices helps your child build up an understanding that they can make decisions and are able to make their choices known to you. Acting on their choices builds up self-esteem.

Some of the choices you may like to include could be:

- **Clothes to wear:** Allow some thinking time for your child to choose and then make sure you put their chosen top on them!
Which top would you like to wear today, this blue one or this green one?
- **Snacks:** *You can have chopped up apple or breadsticks. Which one do you want?*
- **Storytime:** Choose two books and show them one at a time to your child, telling them the title. Place both in front of your child and ask them which one they would like to read. Give them time to look at them both and make their choice.
- **TV time:** Show your child two pictures of their favourite programmes to help them choose which one they want to watch.