

Help your child at home

Welcome to our 'Universal Service Offer'.

You may be looking for some ideas of how to help your child at home or you may be waiting for an appointment and looking for some things to do whilst you wait. Schools may also be looking for extra resources and information and can utilise this sections.

Our universal offer is also for children ages 0 to 18 (19 if they are in a special school) with sensory preferences affecting their daily activities.

We aim to empower parents / carers to facilitate their CYP's development and participation in everyday activities which they want to do and also have to do. We hope that these ideas will help you to find ways to assist your CYP.

We like to take a strengths based approach and want your CYP to enjoy engaging with you. So we would suggest that you start and end practice sessions with a short, quiet and calming activity which your CYP loves to do and is good at.

We have increasing evidence which shows that it can be very effective to work with families in this way.

Under 5's Area:

Play, Games and Daily Activities

Young children start to use their hands in daily activities as soon as they are born.

They start with sucking fingers and thumbs, grab at their bottles and cups, swipe at their toys, then they start to grab toys, shake them, bang them together, clap their hands, wave bye bye. They then progress to moving toys within their hands to manipulate and explore them and then they start to use their hands to manipulate tools such as spoons or crayons. All of the time they are using their hands in play, they are learning about their world.

Here are some types of toys, games and daily activities that help to develop the skills just described, grasping and holding, placement skills (hand eye co-ordination), using 2 hands together, manipulation skills, pre writing skills and body awareness.

Choose the activities which are appropriate for their stage of development, ie choose activities which are easy for them to start with and then progress from there.

ALWAYS USE TOYS WHICH ARE SUITABLE FOR YOUR CHILD'S AGE AND BE AWARE OF CHOKING HAZARDS, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR CHILD IS STILL MOUTHING TOYS. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD UNATTENDED WHEN CARRYING OUT THESE ACTIVITIES.

Washing and Bath time:

Floating bath toys are good for your baby and young child to watch as they float around. Watching toys move helps them learn to focus and track toys as they move.

They are also good to swipe at, different sizes and shapes of floating toys help develop different grasps.

Containers for pouring help with grasping and lifting. Pouring from container to container helps with hand eye co-ordination.

Hand washing games are great for all hand skills, catch the soap in a bowl of water, rub it between the hands without dropping it, then rub hands together palm to palm, spread fingers and interlace them and rub back and forth. Use a nail brush to scrub nails.

Of course all the above games can be done in a bowl of water on the floor or table, just for play time.

Grasping different textures of sponges and flannels helps to explore texture.

If your child does not seem to like washing eg because water on their face, hands or body for washing, try this:

Choose an activity they really love first, so they are calm and happy and do this for 10 minutes first.

Use a small bowl of water for washing. Then let them choose soap products which they like the smell of, sponges or flannels which they like the feel of and just wash part of them, only do what they can tolerate, help them to wash rather than you washing them, so they feel more in control. Try and make it as much fun as possible, put toys in the water which they really like.

Teeth Cleaning:

Use products suitable for your child's age and stage of development.

Gently assist them with your hand over their hand, until they develop the control to do this safely by themselves.

Sitting down will help them to concentrate on the task.

Small chunky handled tooth brushes may be easier to hold

If they seem a bit averse to this daily activity:

Try it without toothpaste first, is the smell or taste too strong?

Is the feel of the brush a bit aversive? Try different brands of toothbrush, using a rubbery end, soft bristles, harder bristles, see what their preference is

Try gentle face washing first, to get them used to their face being touched and then progress to tooth brushing.

Dressing:

Use backward chaining to teach these skills, whatever the age or stage of development. This means letting your child finish off the last step. As they learn to manage the last step, you can then let them do a bit more until gradually they take over the whole activity by themselves.

Choose easy garments, light large and stretchy tend to be easier.

Do this when they are not tired.

Pull off hats and socks

Put arm out for tops

Sit to dress lower half, put legs in leg holes

Finish pulling up pyjama bottoms

Drinking:

Help your child to hold their cup / bottle with both hands.

Eating:

Give your child a spoon to play with when you are feeding them.

Let them dunk their spoon in their food pot.

Choose small food pots which are easy for them to hold in their small hands and help them to pull the lids off (holding it steady at the same time)

Help them to load their spoon.

Let them try and take their spoon to their mouth, let them be messy when they are practising!

Using Hands to Play:

Baby gym (encourages eyes looking and following, swiping and grasping)

Rattles

Shakers

Musical instruments, shaking bells, shaking maracas

Mirrors

Pull along toys to watch

Bubbles to watch

Finger puppets

Cause and effect toys eg pop up toys, musical toys

Activity centres with push buttons, sliders, twist action buttons

Sensory toys, with different textures, brushes, sponges

Water play, pouring buckets and containers, ducks to grasp and watch float around

Hand rhymes / action rhymes eg 'Round and round the garden', 'Wind the bobbin up', 'Peter Pointer'

Put toys in boxes, start with big boxes and progress to smaller ones

Stacking rings

Shape sorters

Bricks, stacking cubes, stacking cups

Inset puzzle boards with chunky handles

Inset puzzles with small peg handles

Board books, turning pages

Paper books, when they are good with board books, progress to paper books, turning pages

Finger painting, with child friendly paints

Messy play with food, hands in bowls of jelly

Other sites that you might like to visit for more information:

EI SMART <https://eismart.co.uk/>