



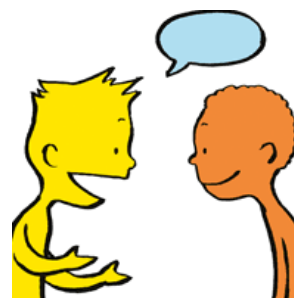
Weston Schools Federation

Ready for School?

How You Can Help

Talking

Good communication is essential for all learning and is the foundation for reading and writing. Being able to talk about what they think and explain how they feel are the most important skills for any child starting school. Children who can't communicate their wishes, feelings and concerns are more likely to become disruptive or withdrawn in the classroom.



At home you should:

- Share stories. Talk about what is happening and encourage your child to predict what might happen next. Don't just limit stories to bedtime. Research shows that children who are read to daily do better in all areas of learning.
- Share family photos as a starting point for conversation.
- Use puppets, soft toys or small world figures to make up stories and role play everyday events.
- Talk about days out or what they have done at preschool. Can they recount what they have done to a family friend or relative?
- Making decisions – give your child opportunities to state their preferences, offer opinions or talk about how they feel.
- Talking to other children – social experiences will give them confidence as well as teaching them to negotiate, collaborate and cooperate.
- Ask questions – Why do you think...? What will happen if...? How does...?
- Sing nursery rhymes songs – this will help develop their language and communication skills. We have included a list with lyrics at the back of this booklet.

Listening

We follow a play-based curriculum but children are still required to do a lot of listening at school. Good listening skills will help them get off to a good start.



- Model good listening – get down to your child's level, get eye contact, give them your full attention away from distractions such as mobile phones. Talk about what they are doing or what they have done today.
- Provide quiet times at home – away from devices and TVs.
- Story time – encourage your child to recall key events from stories
- Play games such as 'Simon Says', 'I spy' or 'I Went to the Shops and I Bought...'
- Sound walk – encourage your child to stop and listen to things they can hear when you are out – a distant siren, birds tweeting or an aeroplane.

Reading

The most valuable home learning you can do.

A daily bedtime story is an excellent routine that calms your child ready for sleep and provides valuable 1:1 time at the end of a busy day. It also introduces them to rich vocabulary and provides opportunity for conversations about the wider world. This is a MUST do!

Weston has a great local library just down the road in Weston Lane – why not register to access more books for your child!

Self-care

Support your child in becoming more independent at the following routines:

- Going to the toilet. Support your child in being confident to ask when they need to go to toilet and getting there on time. Often children prefer or are used to having a parent or carer help them with wiping but you can support them in improving on this skill.
- Washing their hands. Chat with your child about the importance of washing our hands especially after going to the toilet or before eating food.
- Dressing and undressing. Allow extra time in your morning routine to allow your child enough time to practise this. Support them in folding their clothes as they take them off and putting them all in one pile. Teach them little tricks to support them in putting clothes on the right way round, on the right feet and how to pull on socks. This will be great preparation for PE lessons.
- Recognising their name. This will help your child to look after all of their belongings independently as they will be able to read the labels on their clothes and bags.
- Feeding themselves. School meals are free for children in year R, 1 and 2. Can your child use a knife and fork independently? Can they make choices about the food they want or ask for help if needed? If your child will be taking a lunchbox, take time to show them how to open packets and containers.
- Using a tissue – catching a sneeze or wiping a runny nose. Teach them good hygiene routines about putting tissues in the bin and then washing their hands.
- Tidying up. Support your child in becoming responsible for their own things – hanging up their coat, putting their toys away, clearing the dinner table.



The School Run



Practise getting everyone up and ready, including eating breakfast, in time to leave. If you need to rely on buses for your journey, check the times and routes. Do you need to make any child care arrangements to support dropping off and collecting your child whilst you are at work?

Mark Making

Mark making is a great start to learning how to write and draw. Before children begin to form letters they will explore different marks and they will use them to represent different things in their lives. It can be done in so many different ways indoors and outdoors meaning there is something to appeal to all children.



- Use sticks to make marks in wet sand.
- Move hands through paint or gloop to explore different swirling patterns.
- Drive toy cars through puddles to look at the tracks they make.
- Explore different pens and crayons – draw lines, circles, dots. Experiment in big and small movements, and moving vertically and horizontally as well as anti-clockwise circles.
- Use a tablet to explore different drawing apps.
- Explore the marks that different objects make by printing with paint.
- Allow your child the opportunity to add their marks and squiggles to real things – shopping lists, birthday cards are great.
- Value their efforts – provide lots of praise and pin up their drawings in the home.



Writing letters

If your child shows an interest in writing their name or the alphabet, please use lowercase letters as shown below. Capital letters should only be used for the first letter of their name. Do not allow your child to write their names just in capitals as it will take time to unlearn this at school.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Developing Strength

Your child will need to develop a series of muscles in their bodies to learn to write, starting with their shoulders and working down through their elbows, on to wrists and finally fingers. These can be developed easily through a variety of different tasks:

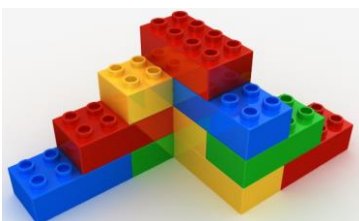


- Gardening – pulling up weeds, digging in soil with a big spade to exercise shoulders.
- Cooking – kneading or rolling out dough
- 'Cleaning' – wiping large surfaces, sweeping or mopping floors
- Playing football and other sports in the garden or local green space,
- The local park – where they can have space to run faster and further.
- Scooping and pouring opportunities – water, dry cereal, rice and pasta provide great opportunities to practise this. Combine with different size containers and spoons and add small animal toys or figures for interest.

Fiddly tasks and games that exercise little fingers:

- Threading beads or dry pasta onto string, threading pipe cleaners or dry pasta into colander holes.
- Playdough – cutting, rolling, moulding, pinching. See our handy recipe at the back of this booklet!
- Dressing and undressing dolls or action figures
- Colouring and drawing
- Cutting and sticking
- Construction – joining together small pieces such as Lego and Duplo.
- Pegging up washing
- Water sprayers – great fun and great exercise for little hands!

These pre-writing skills are an essential part of learning to write and crucially, are play based and fun!



Numbers

Teaching Maths at school today is quite different to how we might remember our own experiences at school. It is fun, play-based and children have a wealth of opportunities to get involved in practical problem solving. If you did not enjoy maths at school, try hard to avoid passing on these feelings and attitudes to your child.

- Engage your child in spotting familiar numbers – their age or house number for example. Can they spot it at the bus stop? On number plates or on front doors?
- Role play – incorporate counting into every day play – how many apples are you buying at the shop, how much does it cost?
- Counting songs – encourage your child to join in singing rhymes such as '5 Little Ducks', 'Ten Green Bottles' or '1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Once I Caught a Fish Alive'. The BBC school radio website has an impressive selection of rhymes that you can play if you are looking for new songs.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/earlylearning/nurserysongs>
- Board games – snakes and ladders, Uno, Top Trumps, snap etc all offer good opportunities to count and compare quantities.

Everyday Maths

- Weight – unpack the shopping together. Can they compare different items and say which is heavier or lighter?
- Counting – anything and everything! Sweets in the packet, cars on the road, ducks in the pond, steps up to bed...
- Can they share out the fruit so that everyone has the same?
- Money money money – use coins to play shops, write receipts and give change.
- Cooking – there are loads of great opportunities for maths in the kitchen. Measuring, counting spoonfuls, sharing the mixture or counting out the toppings.



Nursery Rhymes

Five Currant Buns

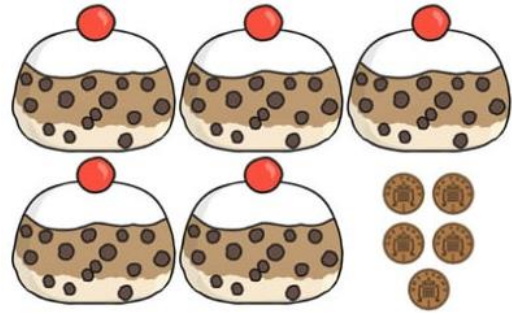
Five currant buns in a baker's shop.
Round and fat with a cherry on the top,
Along came a boy with a penny one day,
Bought a currant bun and took it away.

Four currant buns in a baker's shop.
Round and fat with a cherry on the top,
Along came a boy with a penny one day,
Bought a currant bun and took it away.

Three currant buns in a baker's shop.
Round and fat with a cherry on the top,
Along came a boy with a penny one day,
Bought a currant bun and took it away.

Two currant buns in a baker's shop.
Big and round with a cherry on the top,
Along came a boy with a penny one day,
Bought a currant bun and took it away.

One currant bun in a baker's shop.
Round and fat with a cherry on the top,
Along came a boy with a penny one day,
Bought the currant bun and took it away.



Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Heads, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
Heads, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
And eyes and ears and mouth and nose
Heads, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes

(Repeat, getting faster each time)



Incy Wincy Spider

Incy Wincy spider climbed up the water spout
Down came the rain and washed the spider out
Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain
And Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again



Miss Polly Had a Dolly

Miss Polly had a dolly who was sick, sick, sick.
So she phoned for the doctor to be quick, quick, quick.
The doctor came with his bag and his hat
And he knocked at the door with a rat-a-tat-tat.
He looked at the dolly and he shook his head
And he said "Miss Polly, put her straight to bed!"
He wrote on a paper for a pill, pill, pill
"I'll be back in the morning yes I will, will, will."



Pat-a-cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake as fast as you can;
Pat it and prick it and mark it with a 'B',
And put it in the oven for Baby and me,
For baby and me,
For baby and me,
Put it in the oven for Baby and me.



Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream

Row, row, row your boat
Gently up the creek If you see a little mouse
Don't forget to squeak!

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream If you see a crocodile
Don't forget to scream!

Row, row, row your boat
Gently to the shore
If you see a lion
Don't forget to roar!



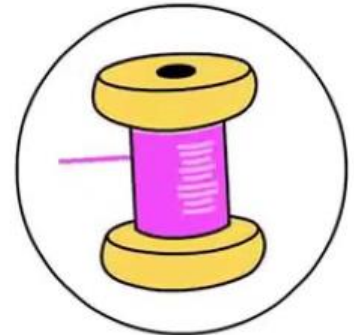
The Grand Old Duke of York

Oh the Grand old duke of York
He had ten thousand men
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again
And when they were up they were up
And when they were down they were down
And when they were only halfway up
They were neither up nor down



Wind the Bobbin Up

Wind the bobbin up,
Wind the bobbin up,
Pull, pull, clap, clap, clap.
Wind it back again,
Wind it back again,
Pull, pull, clap, clap, clap,
Point to the ceiling,
Point to the floor,
Point to the window,
Point to the door,
Clap your hands together, 1, 2, 3,
Put your hands upon your knees.



I Hear Thunder

I hear thunder, I hear thunder
Hark don't you, hark don't you
Pitter patter raindrops, pitter patter raindrops
I'm wet through, so are you!



The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
round and round,
round and round.

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
all day long

The wipers on the bus go Swish, swish, swish;
Swish, swish, swish;
Swish, swish, swish.

The wipers on the bus go Swish, swish, swish,
all day long

The horn on the bus go Beep, beep, beep;
Beep, beep, beep;
Beep, beep, beep.

The horn on the bus go Beep, beep, beep,
all day long

The children on the bus go Chatter, chatter, chatter;
Chatter, chatter, chatter;
Chatter, chatter, chatter.

The children on the bus go Chatter, chatter, chatter,
all day long

The people on the bus go Up and down,
Up and down,
Up and down.

The people on the bus go Up and down,
all day long

The money on the bus goes, Clink, clink, clink;
Clink, clink, clink;
Clink, clink, clink.

The money on the bus goes, Clink, clink, clink,
all day long

The babies on the bus say "Wah, wah, wah;
Wah, wah, wah;
Wah, wah, wah".

The babies on the bus say "Wah, wah, wah",
all day long

The mummies on the bus say "Shush, shush, shush;
Shush, shush, shush;
Shush, shush, shush."

The mummies on the bus say "Shush, shush, shush"
all day long

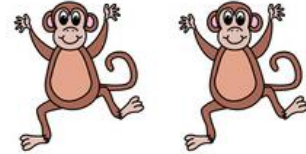


Five Little Monkeys

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and bumped his head.
Mother called the doctor and the doctor said,
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"



Four little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and bumped her head.
Mother called the doctor and the doctor said,
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"



Three little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and bumped his head.
Mother called the doctor and the doctor said,
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

Two little monkeys jumping on the bed,
One fell off and bumped her head.
Mother called the doctor and the doctor said,
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"

One little monkey jumping on the bed,
He fell off and bumped his head.
Mother called the doctor and the doctor said,
"Put those monkeys straight to bed!"

Playdough

- Playdough is great because it has so many uses and supports so much learning.
- Make pretend 'cakes'. Add real cake tins or silicon cake cases for extra fun and engagement
- Explore different skills – rolling balls or snakes, pinching, patting, smoothing, squashing
- Use different tools – rolling pins, cutters, plastic pizza style cutters or plastic knives
- Use cutters to make different shapes – learn about circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles
- Count up how many shapes you have – practise accurate counting
- Make different size balls – talk about small, medium, big. Put the balls in order.
- Make the letters of your name



Dough Gym

Make a really big ball of playdough (double the recipe quantities).

Play some of your child's favourite songs – pop music is perfect

Show your child how to move the dough in time to the music, side to side, up and down. With the dough on the table, poke it with fingers, pat it, squish it – all in time to the music.

This is great exercise for their shoulders and elbows and will help them so much later on with control of tools and pencils.

Playdough Recipe

This is our tried and tested playdough recipe. It's great because it's so quick and you don't need to use a hob or a microwave!

Ingredients:

1 mug of flour

□ mug of salt

2 teaspoons cream of tartar

1 tablespoon of oil (baby oil is best because it smells better!)

Food colouring (1 bottle will give you a nice bright colour)

1 mug of boiling water

Method:

Add all the ingredients to a mixing bowl in the order listed. Stir until you have a dough. Tip the dough out onto a clean surface – **be careful it will be hot!** Knead together with your hands to make a nice smooth dough.

Keep your playdough in an air tight container – clip lock plastic lunchboxes are best but you can use any tub or tin. It will keep for several weeks.

Variations:

You can use different colours or you could experiment with the following:

Different smells – strawberry or peppermint essence

Glitter for added sparkle

