



Child Development Resource

16-26 months

Introduction

Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) in collaboration with colleagues from Health, Early Years Education, and the Local Authority across Nottingham City, have created this resource to provide key child development information to support practitioners working with families. This resource aims to provide a quick reference aide memoire for practitioners who can then use it as a starting point to:

- develop knowledge of the key developmental milestones from birth to five years
- access additional support signposting
- support with making informed judgements on age related progress

This resource will also provide practitioners with an opportunity to reflect on their own practice; this will help them to support parents and carers by sharing ideas on how they can support their child to access learning opportunities to promote development and well-being, and enhance opportunities for improved outcomes during the child's early years and later life.

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Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Toddlers are 'person creating'; as their understanding of themselves grows, so does their understanding of other people. Their relationships with other people help them understand themselves and their feelings more.





Making Relationships

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers are learning to balance the excitement of independent exploration with their need to feel safe and secure. They use a familiar adult as a secure base to return to for reassurance if anxious or in unfamiliar situations.
- Toddlers are usually interested in other children and want to play together, although they may not have the social skills to do so. They can only manage to socialise cooperatively for short periods because their ability to understand other people's minds and consider others' needs is still developing.

Diverse paths of development

Some toddlers may have difficulty in trusting others and will seek lots of reassurance, while others will appear cautious and withdrawn. They need to know that you are looking out for them and thinking about them.

Consider

How to respond positively to toddlers who act aggressively towards other children. Let them know that you disapprove of their behaviours but still value them as a person. For example by saying: *"I can see you're cross with Priti but hitting is wrong because it hurts"*.

To support development

- Adults model gentleness and kindness in their interactions with toddlers and each other. They are on hand to support social interactions between children.
- Try to be available to provide encouragement and support when a toddler needs it.



Look, listen and note

Observe a toddler's secure-base behaviours:

- What do they do when they are feeling secure and outgoing?
- What do they do when they are feeling insecure and anxious?



Being Self-aware

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers understand themselves mainly through their physical selves; they constantly explore what their bodies can do and produce and are interested in the physical characteristics of themselves and others. They begin to use 'me, you and I' in their talk and to form their social identities.
- Toddlers demonstrate their sense of self through asserting their likes and dislikes, choices, decisions and ideas, which may be different to those of the adult or their peers; often saying 'no', 'me do it' or 'mine'.



Diverse paths of development

Children with communication difficulties need to be listened to very carefully to ensure they are able to indicate their preferences, avoid their frustration and build their sense of independence.



Consider

What words do you use to identify genitals, faeces and urine?

- Are they consistent with the words used by the toddler, their family and other caregivers?
- Do the toddler's adults agree how they will respond to their interest in these things?

To support development

- Adults show that they are on the toddler's side, willing them to succeed and empathising when their early attempts at assertion and negotiation go wrong. In such situations adults are able to show fairness, take the toddler's issues seriously and understand their motivations, they apply rules flexibly and reasonably.
- Toddlers are provided with many opportunities to practise making choices and decisions such as when serving themselves from dishes on the table and pouring their own drinks.



Look, listen and note

Notice how toddlers like to look at pictures of themselves and people they know. Listen out for them identifying themselves in different ways.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Emotional Understanding

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers experience a wide range of feelings with great intensity. They express positive feelings such as joy and affection and negative feelings such as anger, frustration and distress. These intense emotions often overwhelm them and they may lose control in an emotional and physical collapse.
- Toddlers are very aware of others' feelings and are beginning to show empathy by looking concerned if they hear crying or by offering a comfort object to another child.

Diverse paths of development

Children with developmental differences and delays may feel confused by their full range of feelings and can experience short bursts and prolonged experiences of emotions.

Consider

How you respond and support children who are struggling to manage multiple frustrations.

To support development

- Adults support toddlers' emotional understanding by putting feelings into words and showing empathy.
- Adults understand that 'emotional storms' (where a toddler can appear to lose control) are a sign of a child being overwhelmed. They show empathy and stay close to offer support and reassurance as the 'storm' passes.
- Adults use stories, music and play with sensory materials to support toddlers' emotional understanding.



Look, listen and note

Notice how a toddler uses their behaviour to communicate their emotions and needs.

Do they feel heard and understood?



Communication and Language Development

Toddlers' use and understanding of non-verbal and spoken language develops rapidly in the second and third years of life but they express their needs mostly using physical gestures and body language to express their needs mostly using physical gestures and body language.





Listening and Understanding

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers' understanding of language always comes before they can say the words. They mostly understand our communications through our body language. They use repetition and routine to help them understand the meaning of communications.
- Toddlers show increasing understanding of the names of objects (towards 20 or more), simple sentences ("Throw the ball") and may follow simple instructions.
- Toddlers may often fix their attention on what they are doing and so may appear not to hear.



Diverse paths of development

Toddlers with a visual impairment may miss non-verbal signals such as facial expressions and body language so it is important to narrate some of these expressions, for example, "Your friends are very happy to see you, they are smiling."



Consider

How you communicate with toddlers and families who use sign language or do not have much spoken English.

To support development

Adults use gestures and signs to reinforce their verbal communications. They use the toddler's name before asking them anything and allow the toddler enough time to process the information before expecting a response.



Look, listen and note

- Note down something that a toddler understood today - how did they understand it?
- Now note down something they misunderstood - why did that happen?



Responding and Expressing Myself

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers express their needs clearly using gestures and body language to communicate. They often develop rituals, imitate others' actions and use objects as props to communicate non-verbally with other children and adults.
- Toddlers use non-verbal communications combined with limited talk; putting two or three words together to make short phrases and ask simple questions such as, 'doggie gone' 'go park now?' using intonation to make their meaning clearer. This is called telegraphic speech.



Diverse paths of development

Children with a range of disabilities may be learning an alternative mode of communication, so it is important to look out for signs such as pulling at pants to indicate the need for the toilet, or spinning to show excitement. All attempts at communication should be responded to with verbal and non-verbal reassurance.



Consider

How to ensure that toddlers' attempts to talk and their less obvious non-verbal communications are not missed in a busy home or noisy group room.

To support development

- Adults repeat and expand what toddlers say to show they have been understood e.g. in response to 'go park now' say 'yes we can go to the park now'; this also helps expand the number of words the toddler understands.
- Adults know toddlers well and understand the ways they express themselves, including the meaning of particular words and gestures.



Look, listen and note

Make a note of all the different gestures, facial expressions and body movements a toddler uses to express themselves.



Physical Development

Toddlers are very interested in their own bodies and their ever-growing physical skills. By practising these new skills they strengthen their muscles and bones to support their continuing physical development. Too much physical challenge however can be emotionally tiring, making them irritable and leaving them feeling helpless and in need of support.

For better health children 1-2 years of age should have:



Physical Activity



At least

180

MINUTES

Sedentary Screen Time



0 mins

AT 1 YEAR OF AGE

No more than **60mins** at 2 years

Good Quality Sleep



11-14

HOURS

12-16 hours sleep (8-12 months of age)



Physical Development

Moving My Body

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers' increasing muscle strength supports their sense of balance; they usually become able to walk alone confidently and then to trot and to stop without falling. They may also be able to stoop, walk backwards a few steps, climb and carry things around.
- Toddlers are constantly on the move, and although they may be able to sit on a chair, they often prefer to kneel or squat to play. They can tire easily and often need to take a rest after a lot of exertion to gather energy for the next burst of activity.



Diverse paths of development

Children begin to navigate and explore with increasing independence but those with physical disabilities may find a lack of movement frustrating. Provide creative opportunities to move parts of the body and use props such as sensory items so that the other senses are being ignited, such as touch, smell and sight.



Consider

How much a toddler's play space is cluttered with furniture, inhibiting them from moving around.

Could you remove some things to allow more space?

To support development

- Play experiences include lots of opportunities for toddlers to climb into, onto, over, and under things, to roll, crawl, jump, and run throughout the day indoors as well as outdoors.
- Adults know the child really well and what skills they are currently refining. They will provide opportunities for practice and also experiences that contain some challenge.



Look, listen and note

Observe a toddler for 10 minutes.

Note down how many different large body movements they make and how many times they pause and rest.



Physical Development

Handling Objects

Key ideas about development

- Increased dexterity means toddlers use their thumb and forefinger in a pincer grip to pick up small objects, use tools and explore objects; this enables them to experiment and express themselves in a range of different ways.
- Toddlers can usually do a throwing action, use a stick as a tool to reach a toy and begin to balance blocks to build a small tower.



Diverse paths of development

Toddlers with developmental differences and delays may need support to develop fine motor skills. Help them develop these skills by using different sized tools, objects and materials.



Consider

Toddlers are keen to practise their new ability to throw.
How can you offer play activities where they can do that safely?

To support development

- Adults provide a range of resources, materials and tools in a range of sizes so that toddlers can grasp and use them according to their level of skill and experience.
- Adults use activities like mealtimes for toddlers to practice their fine motor skills. They offer just enough help to enable toddlers to continue with their chosen task, not presuming help is required or will be accepted.



Look, listen and note

Observe a toddler for 10 minutes.

Note down how many different fine motor skills they use; the different ways they use their fingers, palm and wrists.



Physical Development

Being Healthy and Safe

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers' health can change rapidly causing moment to moment changes in their mood, behaviour and sense of well-being.
- Toddlers are keen to be involved in their self-care and to actively participate in feeding, changing, washing and dressing; doing as much for themselves as possible with sensitive adult support.



Diverse paths of development

Not all children will indicate their need to use the toilet or understand self-care routines. Using visual reminders for using the toilet can help. For routines with different parts, help the child to complete the first steps, and allow them to complete the last step independently (known as backwards chaining).



Consider

How you respond to a toddler's curiosity about their bodies and bodily products positively, while still respecting their privacy and being alert to intrusive behaviour from adults or other children.

To support development

- Adults recognise care events as prime times for the toddler to be developing a sense of well-being and personal worth and for learning, so allow a lot of time for 1:1 interaction and for the toddler to do as much for themselves as possible.
- Adults provide just enough help at self-care times to help support independence by leaving a last small step for the toddler to try on their own.



Look, listen and note

Pay close attention to all the ways a toddler is stating their independence.



Cognitive Development

As toddlers interact with people and explore their environment, they are experiencing new sensations and developing cognitive understanding; remembering past actions and experiences and recreating them, using their previous experience to think about and plan their actions or to predict their outcome.





Cognitive Development

Thinking and Understanding

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers make connections between their experiences and form their own ideas from these. Usually this helps them to deepen their understanding of how the world works but sometimes misunderstandings lead to confusion and fear.
- Toddlers connect actions and results and make new connections between similar symbols (images and words), objects and events. They have a longer memory and have developed stronger ways of thinking about the world. They can remember the past and anticipate the future and know that things and people still exist when out of sight.



Diverse paths of development

When a child is non-verbal, we can often assume that thinking is limited. By narrating and following their play ideas, we can begin to see patterns in play.

Copying and mimicking their play behaviour will help us to understand their motivations. For example, a child may be fascinated by turning door handles or spinning and so we should plan experiences based on rotation.



Consider

How you respond to what seem to be a toddlers' irrational fear.
How do you offer them reassurance? (Think about how you want others to respond to your fear of spiders / heights etc.).

To support development

Adults help toddlers to make connections between experiences and ideas by talking about what happened before and re-visiting recent past events when they are together at mealtimes, changing or bathing and when they are sharing time looking at photographs of familiar places, objects and routines etc. Adults can also describe what is happening and they give toddlers time to think.



Look, listen and note

Note down examples of a toddler making connections in their thinking, when they are playing or when having a story.



Cognitive Development

Exploring, Playing and Imagining

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers are like research scientists, investigating and wanting hands-on experience and proof of what they are told and what they see. They explore and experiment with a range of media and objects through sensory exploration, using their whole body and by linking together different actions, showing pleasure at their accomplishments.
- Toddlers are much more interested in the process of activities than the end product such as when gluing or painting and are frequently exploring a particular pattern of thought and movement (or schema) such as in and out, transporting or rotation, when moving around and playing.

Diverse paths of development

Children with developmental delays may not always tell us what they are interested in so we should look for the 'hands-on' play, for example what are they drawn to?

How do they use objects and what patterns are there in the play?

Consider

How you resist the pressure for toddlers to produce something to take home.

How else could you represent their creative processes?

To support development

Adults provide open ended materials for play which the toddler can use in a range of ways and set their own challenges.

Organise activities that can include the outcome the child wants rather than the adults' idea.



Look, listen and note

Observe how toddlers use objects to plan further activities that allow them to practise skills and explore their ideas in different ways.