



Child Development Resource

22-36 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

2 year olds are experimenting with their own and other people's views of who they are. They are developing a sense of themselves as competent, independent individuals. From their relationships with their parents/caregivers, they come to understand themselves and other people and develop their ideas about how relationships work and how to behave in them.





Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Making Relationships

Key ideas about development

- 2 year olds build relationships with special people and are wary of unfamiliar people but are becoming more able to separate from their parents/caregivers and explore new situations with support and encouragement from another familiar adult.
- 2 year olds are beginning to understand that other people have needs, wants and ideas that are different to theirs and so begin to be able to cooperate. They show empathy for the feelings of others but are still easily overwhelmed by their own needs, which they will put first.



Diverse paths of development

Toddlers and two year olds with autism may avoid interactions with peers and may show little interest in the play of others. Playing alongside, with similar materials or nearby is still beneficial as connections in interests between children can be observed.



Consider

- How caring adults support the child and each other during times of separation.
- How adults support the child and themselves during times of separation.

To support development

- Ease children in gradually when starting a new group, so they can get to know the people, the environment and the routines.
- In childcare settings, mealtimes are seen as an ideal time to build social skills. Sitting toddlers and key workers together in small groups allows for conversation and for children to feel the benefits of being part of a group.



Look, listen and note

Watch how toddlers and two year olds interact with other children. Note their efforts at inviting others to play, their acts of kindness and empathy.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Being Self-aware

Key ideas about development

- Toddlers and two year olds are increasingly self-conscious. They know their own name, their preferences and interests and are becoming aware of their unique abilities. They understand that they are a girl or boy and show interest in obvious differences in ethnicity and ability. These concepts are still forming in a toddler's mind and can change as they add to emerging ideas about themselves and who they are.
- Toddlers and two year olds experience themselves as powerful, creative doers. They show a sense of independence in asserting their ideas and preferences, making choices and decisions. It is through this that they gradually learn that actions have consequences but not always the consequences hoped for.



Diverse paths of development

It is important that toddlers and two year olds with developmental differences are given an opportunity to communicate about the things they like about themselves in a positive way. For example, *"I am in my wheelchair and I love to dance."*



Consider

How caring adults discuss which rules are necessary and which are not and identify the circumstances in which the adult might need to be flexible.

To support development

- Learning environments should be inclusive and limited in stereotypical thoughts and images. This allows toddlers and two year olds to celebrate the differences in themselves and others and helps them to see difference as a positive.
- Mark making and collage materials allow children to represent a variety of appearances, skin and hair colour, or hair type and clothing styles, etc.
- Ensure that toys and play experiences are open to everyone and that toddlers and two year olds play with a variety of objects including those traditionally designed for specific genders. This enables them to develop more skills through using different parts of the brain. Try to ensure that children with disabilities are able to access the play in the best way they can.
- Support toddlers and two year olds' autonomy. Enable them to participate in the daily organisation of the home.



Look, listen and note

Note how a toddler and two year old shows a positive sense of self: Do they show pride in their achievement and who they are by commenting on their positive actions?



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Emotional Understanding

Key ideas about development

- 2 year olds and toddlers frequently exhibit contrasting shifts in their mood and emotional states and are beginning to express the first self-aware emotions of pride, embarrassment and shame as well as a wide range of other feelings.
- 2 year olds and toddlers are beginning to try to manage their own feelings: They have a growing ability to be able to say how they are feeling, seek comfort from familiar adults when needed and distract themselves when upset. However, their intense emotions can still overwhelm them, resulting in an emotional collapse when frightened, frustrated, angry, anxious or over-stimulated.

Diverse paths of development

2 year olds with emotional difficulties may be overwhelmed while navigating play in groups or with materials they find challenging.

Consider

How you can provide caring and consistent boundaries which reflect reasonable expectations for a child of this age. Do parents/caregivers respond fairly consistently or are they giving the toddler and two year old different messages about what they can do?

To support development

- Smaller group opportunities, spaces for retreat and relaxation and play with open-ended materials which can be used in a wide variety of ways, will encourage 2 year olds to express their feelings in constructive ways.
- Adults model empathy and talk about others feelings. For example, *“Amaya is feeling sad today because she is missing her mummy.”*



Look, listen and note

Notice how a toddler and two year old deals with setbacks or challenges.

- Do they bounce back or take a long time to recover?
- Do they then avoid that experience or show a willingness to try again?



Communication and Language Development

Although a 2 year old's spoken language is developing rapidly, the ways in which children communicate at this age varies hugely. Non-verbal communications are very important to expressing themselves and understanding others. Their spoken communications are often misunderstood by adults who don't know them well, which can lead to frustration and confusion.





Listening and Understanding

Key ideas about development

- 2 year olds and toddlers listen with interest to stories for a short time and to the noises adults make when they read, pointing to things they recognise and actions in pictures such as the cat in the tree or the child running.
- 2 year olds and toddlers understand simple sentences and follow a simple instruction or request and the use of 'who', 'what', 'where' in simple questions and real situations but they have single channelled attention, so can only shift to a different task if their attention is fully obtained, usually by using their name.



Diverse paths of development

A child with communication and language needs including a hearing impairment may not understand requests or instructions. It is in these moments that typically developing peers can learn alternative ways to invite children into play, for example teaching children Makaton signs to aid communication.



Consider

How using screens (like a TV, tablet, or smartphone) leads to reduced opportunities to talk and listen to others. Children aged 2-5 should have no more than 1 hour of screen time per day, less is better. Parents/caregivers can watch with their toddler and use the opportunity to chat about what is happening on screen.

To support development

- Talk with 2 year olds and toddlers at their eye level and close-by. Speak slowly and clearly, using familiar and consistent language and avoid asking too many questions. Make simple statements or comments and pause to give the child time to respond.
- Stories and songs are enjoyed in one-to-one or very small groups with maximum participation and movement.



Look, listen and note

Listen carefully and note down the different phrases, words or noises that a 2 year old or toddler hears from stories, songs and videos.



Responding and Expressing Myself

Key ideas about development

- 2 year olds' and toddlers' use of spoken (and signed) language is increasing rapidly (approx. 200 words): They use single and different types of everyday words (nouns, verbs and adjectives, e.g. banana, go, sleep, hot) and are beginning to ask simple questions and to talk about people and things that are not present.
- 2 year olds and toddlers increasingly use language as a way of making social contact and hold conversations using simple sentences, recounting events but jumping from topic to topic. They often stutter or stumble over their words as they try to express themselves.



Diverse paths of development

Children with additional speech, language and communication needs may have an alternative form of communication, for example they may use visual routines or signing such as Makaton. Ensure that non-verbal expression is acknowledged and understood.



Consider

How you can wait patiently and attentively for a child who is having difficulty expressing themselves; listening rather than interrupting or getting the child to repeat.

To support development

- Adults understand that repetition of talk, songs and stories are an important part of 2 year olds and toddlers making sense of language and then being able to use it.
- When children make mistakes with language, repeat it back in the correct form rather telling them it's wrong, e.g. Child: "we goed park", adult says "yes we went to the park didn't we?"



Look, listen and note

Listen carefully and note down the different phrases, words or noises that a 2 year old or toddler hears from stories, songs and videos.



Physical Development

2 year olds and toddlers are movers and doers; their understanding of the world is underpinned by their physical self, movement and their ability to manipulate objects and tools.

The stimulation of movement and the physical experiences they are exposed to enable their brains to lay down more and more connections.

The way that movement and different physical experiences stimulate 2 year olds' and toddlers' brains, means the more experiences they can have, the stronger the foundations in their brains as more connections are made and strengthened.

For better health children 2-4 years of age should have:

Physical Activity



At least **180**

MINUTES

at least **60mins** moderate to vigorous

Sedentary Screen Time



No more than

60

MINUTES

Good Quality Sleep



10-13

HOURS



Physical Development

Moving My Body

Key ideas about development

- 2 year olds and toddlers are usually very mobile and as their ankles and feet develop further they can run safely using their whole foot and kick balls. They often enjoy large equipment that moves such as trucks, scooters and prams.
- As practice improves their balance, they jump off low steps and climb confidently. They may also be able to walk upstairs and downstairs with two feet to a step, walk on tiptoe, stand on one foot and squat steadily, getting up without using their hands.

Diverse paths of development

2 year olds and toddlers with physical disabilities will usually take more time to move around than their peers. Adults need to be patient and also provide equipment that the child can use to move around in whatever way they can.

Consider

Those 2 year olds and toddlers who have had less opportunity to take physical risks.

- How can you support them not to overstretch themselves, and to draw attention to their environment and the space around them that they can use safely.

To support development

- Adults provide 2 year olds and toddlers with lots of push and pull play called "heavy work" which strengthens their muscles and joints and can help them to feel grounded in their play. Large building blocks, construction activities and learning to pedal and steer a tricycle can support this.
- Allow 2 year olds and toddlers to have access to play outside for a lot of the day. Enable them to experience a range of different surfaces and levels, including, grass, tarmac, stones, steps, slopes and hills.



Look, listen and note

- Observe toddlers and two year olds moving about in their play.
- Look for how confident they are in the environment. Do they skilfully navigate or show cautiousness or reluctance?



Physical Development

Handling Objects

Key ideas about development

- 2 year olds and toddlers show increasing skill in controlling finer movements such as pouring liquids from a jug, turning pages in a book or threading beads but often have difficulty regulating the direction or force of their gestures.
- 2 year olds and toddlers begin to hold tools with fingers instead of the fist and to show a preference for a dominant hand.



Diverse paths of development

Children with developmental delays or differences may have difficulties using their hands. They need access to a wide array of exciting tools and materials for exploration. It is important not to pressure them to use the tools correctly; allow lots of time for practice.



Consider

How do you respond to mishaps such as spilling drinks or patting too hard?

To support development

- Make sure there are many opportunities for 2 year olds and toddlers to play freely with toys and resources which they can manipulate easily: fill, pour, shape, grasp, post and move and malleable materials such as dough, clay and 'gloop' for them to poke, pinch, prod, squeeze and shape.
- Adults provide activities that allow the child to go from big to small movements, this will help them to learn to be more precise with their movements. A good example of this is sand play, large movements to fill and tip a bucket and then smaller movements required to make a pattern with a lollipop stick in the wet sand.



Look, listen and note

Watch a 2 year old or toddler playing with something like a construction toy or a mechanical / electronic toy:

- How are they using their dexterity to achieve what they set out to do?
- Is the play object a good match for their skills, is it too hard or too easy?



Physical Development

Being Healthy and Safe

Key ideas about development

- When 2 year olds and toddlers are allowed to take manageable risks in their play and explorations, they begin to recognise danger and seek help from an adult when needed.
- 2 year olds and toddlers can usually feed themselves competently with a spoon, drink without spilling, wash their hands and put on simple garments but they still need adult support with more complicated items and actions. They are gradually gaining bowel and bladder control and start using the toilet or potty but many are not able to consistently control their bowel or bladder.

Diverse paths of development

Expectations of toddlers and young children to be independent vary between families and cultures. For example, some will be expected to feed themselves, others not.

Consider

How adults often have different ideas of what is safe for a child to explore.

- What are the things that cause you anxiety when you watch a 2 year old exploring?
- How do you resolve these issues?

To support development

- Adults avoid unnecessary restrictions or unfounded personal fears to prevent children from exploring. They stay alert to danger and reduce risks.
- Introduce 2 year olds and toddlers to spaces which are more physically challenging.
- Use cutlery and tableware that supports children to eat and drink as independently as possible but provide help when it is needed.



Look, listen and note

Look out for signs that a 2 year olds or toddler is aware of their need to use the toilet.

- Is their physical awareness coinciding with their social awareness and cognitive understanding?



Cognitive Development

Thinking and understanding continue to be underpinned by 2 year olds' and toddlers' active exploration of people and their world. They process this information through their sensory and movement abilities. Their early understanding of symbols emerges in their language and pretend play.





Cognitive Development

Thinking and Understanding

Key ideas about development

- 2 year olds and toddlers think about and remember past actions and experiences and recreate them, using their previous experience to plan their actions or to predict their outcome. They continue to be very interested in cause and effect in their actions with objects and their relationships with people.
- 2 year olds and toddlers notice more subtle differences and similarities between objects; this coincides with an interest in filling and emptying containers and organising and categorising objects into groups, making comparisons and series of objects. This 'matching' often comes before having the words for the groups of objects.

Diverse paths of development

Individual children are different in the way they see and think about the world. Some notice very small details, others are particularly sensitive to taste and smell. Some connect ideas very quickly, others need a lot of repetition and practice to understand an idea.

Consider

How you can explain the preoccupation a two year old has with emptying and filling, transporting or scattering and heaping objects (schemas) to someone who doesn't understand what they are doing.

To support development

Provide a wide range of play resources. Use things that allow for open-ended play, have many different properties and can be used in different ways. Things that 2 year olds can use to sort, match, post, group and line up are really helpful.



Look, listen and note

Observe what toddlers and two year olds are playing with and how they are playing. Their own ideas and interests are often indicators of the type of experiences they are becoming ready to learn and develop.



Cognitive Development

Exploring, Playing and Imagining

Key ideas about development

- 2 year olds and toddlers respond to experiences in individual ways: Some seem to have a go at everything, others may hang back and approach new things with caution. For some children these approaches vary according to the situation, for others it seems to be a more consistent approach to life.
- 2 year olds and toddlers are beginning to make-believe by pretending in their play and to think about 'what could this be?' or 'who might I pretend to be?' as well as 'what is it?' and 'what does it do?' However, they can easily become confused between what is real and what is pretend at this stage.



Diverse paths of development

Children with developmental differences can have difficulties in knowing how to play. It is useful to model and demonstrate play skills to support them.



Consider

How some children spend a lot of time watching play from the side-lines rather than joining in. In order to support them it is helpful to reflect on why this might be the case: are they shy? Are they waiting for permission? Is the environment too boisterous /quiet? Is this type of play unfamiliar to them? Does it match their interests/cultural experience? Or could it be an indicator of a developmental issue?

To support development

- Pay attention to a child's creative explorations and provide assistance in a way that does not disrupt the child's flow of thinking. Through unobtrusive support, give the child the emotional security to experiment. Play alongside the child, engaging in and extending the imaginative content of their play without taking it over.
- Provide real objects such as telephones, brooms, metal or wooden bowls and dressing up materials such as lengths of fabric, shoes and bags which can be used in a range of ways.
- Provide a range of mark making tools that are easily grasped and manipulated, large surfaces to make marks on and different materials to make marks with.



Look, listen and note

Observe a toddler at different times and in different situations. How many different ways of exploring, creating and learning do they use?