

Your child's learning & development

Everyone agrees that the earliest years in a child's life are important as they provide the foundation for everything else that follows. We know that you want to encourage and support your child to achieve their potential as curious, confident and secure individuals.

Learning is also about your child being social, aware of the world around them and having the language in which to express themselves. There are a wide range of services in Southend that can work in partnership with you and your family to achieve this including early years providers (for instance childcare, childminders and children's centres).

How can I help my child learn?

There are a wide range of ways you can help your child learn. If your child is with an early years provider, they will work in partnership with you to support you in this (for example through the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework). Depending on the age of your child some of the ways that you can help are by:

- Encouraging them to explore new places and to meet new people;
- By getting them into a regular routine at bedtime;
- Encouraging them, if they are able, to toilet independently; and
- Reading stories together and looking at and talking about picture books.

Basic skills like toilet training, communications skills, being able to understand and follow simple tasks, taking turns and having some social skills all prepare a child to be ready for learning. Teachers and classroom assistants are then freed up to teach rather than spend time toileting, feeding children and helping them with the most basic social skills.

Developmental Assessment

There are a range of ways in which you can support your child's learning. One of these ways is through the Ages and Stages Questionnaires offered through your health visiting team. In Southend you may also be offered (or can request) other assessments such as communications and language. These are family friendly, and can be used from when your child is one month, all the way up to 5½ years depending on the assessment.

The benefits for you are as follows:

- They will highlight your child's strengths;
- They will support your understanding of your child's development;
- They will indicate any potential additional support that you might need to help your child's learning; and
- They can be done in a variety of settings depending on your preference;

They will not take up much of your time.