



# A Parent/Carer Guide



# Helpful Hints for Parents - Toileting



## Top tips:

- Even the initial stages of toilet training can take 3-6 months so don't lose heart and work closely with your early years setting.
- Many people's bodies naturally tend to have a bowel movement 15-30 minutes after eating. Sitting a child on a potty or toilet then may help but if not, noticing your child's routines will make a great difference. As your child's confidence develops, encourage them to wipe their own bottom celebrating their attempts! (See the games and activity section for ideas about how to develop this skill.)
- Use lots of positive praise!

## Places to find information, help and support:

Your local health visitor

If your child is at or near school age, speak to the school nurse.

## Websites:

ERIC - The Children's Bladder and Bowel Charity <https://www.eric.org.uk/>



This helpful website has factsheets, frequently asked questions and useful personal accounts and resources.

<https://www.eric.org.uk/top-10-potty-training-tips>

## Helpline for problems:

ERIC helpline: Call on 0845 370 8008. The Helpline is open Mondays to Thursdays, 10am to 2pm.

## Games and activities:

Help your child learn how to self-wipe:

Practise touching your toes from standing or sitting.

Encourage your child to play games passing a small toy to you or a friend between their legs, front to back.

Next try getting a child to pass a small toy or bean bag between their legs from front to back, one hand to another in a figure of 8.

When playing the games above, why not try beating a timer or a friend/family member.

Sit your child on a small chair and encourage them to pass something diagonally under the chair to you.



# Helpful Hints for Parents – Mealtimes



## Top tips:

- To encourage your child to eat healthily, try to have a variety of healthy snacks available such as carrots cut into sticks or pieces of fruit.
- Remember to offer your child food that you don't eat yourself. They might like something you don't.
- If you don't want your child to eat something, either don't buy it or don't let your child know it is in your home!
- As often as possible have family mealtimes with no additional distractions. Try turning the TV off and put phones and tablets away. Eat with your child encouraging them to sit down, reminding them, if need be, to stay sitting down. You are a fantastic role model.
- Try to make sure mealtimes are fun and a time to focus on each other. You could even try a picnic together on the carpet!
- Encourage your child to get involved in preparing the food that you eat; shopping, growing vegetables, mealtime preparations and cooking. Children are likely to be more adventurous and try new things when they are part of making the meal.
- Help your child to recognise when they are thirsty instead of hungry and encourage them to drink water as soon as they are weaned.
- Praise your child for trying new foods even if it is just a very small amount and remind them that it is OK not to like something but not until they have tried it.
- Try serving each new food on different occasions. For some children it can take offering them the new food 10 - 15 times with gaps in between each attempt and then a child will have a go and try it!



## Places to find information, help and support:

Your local health visitor -the contact number for the Bournemouth and Christchurch Hub is 01202 456790.

If your child is at or near school age, you could speak to the school nurse.

Contact the school or phone the Christchurch School Nursing Team on 01425 891162. You can also speak to your G.P. if you are concerned about your child and their eating.

# Helpful Hints for Parents - Mealtimes



## Websites:

<https://www.henry.org.uk> - This website supports families to provide the best possible start in life for children from 0-5. There are pages containing simple recipe ideas as well as top tips pages including sections on eating well for less, happy family mealtimes and healthy teeth. It includes activity suggestions and videos.



Change4Life - <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life> - This website contains lots of information and advice including activity and recipe suggestions and possible sugar swaps. Joining 'Change 4 Life' allows you to access a further range of free resources.



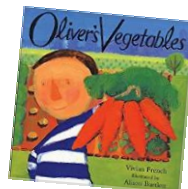
<https://www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/our-services-hospitals/physical-health/school-nursing> - This website gives information about the role of the school nursing service.



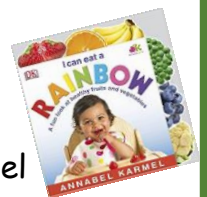
## Games and activities:

Read books such as;

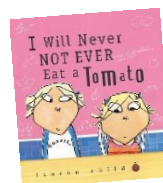
Oliver's Vegetables by Vivian French



I Can Eat a Rainbow : a Fun Look at Healthy Fruit and Vegetables by Annabel Karmel



I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato by Lauren Child



Create mini vegetable or fruit people together and eat them for a snack.

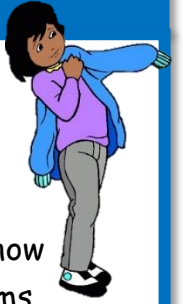


Play Guess the Vegetable or Fruit with different items in a Feely Bag.

When they have guessed by feel, try tasting the vegetables with their eyes shut and guessing again which one it is.

Create appealing plates of food to capture your child's attention and interest.

# Helpful Hints for Parents – Getting Dressed



## Top tips:

- Start practising these skills on days when you are not in a hurry. For some items of clothing it is easier to learn how to take them off before learning how to put them on so help your child to gain confidence by taking off simple items of clothing like their socks, shoes and coats.
- Always praise a child for having a go.
- Use larger sized holes to begin with when learning how to use fastenings as your child is more likely to be successful.
- To help with putting shoes on the right feet cut a sticker in half and place half in each shoe so that when the shoes are put together the picture on the sticker looks complete.
- It can help to break down each dressing task into simple steps and to teach the last step first. For example, when putting on shorts, teach your child to pull up the shorts once they are the right way around on their legs. Once this last step is mastered, teach the second to last step and so on.
- It is easier to learn to put clothes on when sitting down. Standing means that your child has to concentrate on balancing as well as learning new skills!
- When buying clothes or uniform, look for clothes that are easy for your child to use. Elasticated waists and velcro fastenings are useful for children especially when learning to dress and in the first few terms at school! Add a ribbon or a zip pull to make a zip easier to do up and undo.



## Websites:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/health-daily-care/dressing/how-to-get-dressed>

[https://www.swft.nhs.uk/application/files/4614/5995/2570/dressing\\_skills.pdf](https://www.swft.nhs.uk/application/files/4614/5995/2570/dressing_skills.pdf)

This is an excellent booklet that contains many hints and tips written by the South Warwickshire NHS Occupational Therapy Department.

## Games and activities:

Posting coins or buttons into a slit is good practice for buttoning buttons.

Burst bubble wrap bubbles with thumb and index finger. (Always supervise young children when using bubble wrap.)

Draw a long curvy line on a piece of paper or use chalk on the patio and encourage your child to use one hand to drive their toy car around it. (This helps your child to develop the skills they need to take a jumper off crossing their arms over to the other side of their body. This action is called crossing the midline.)

Dress teddies and dolls together.





# Helpful Hints for Parents – Routines



## Top tips:

- Routines can help a child to feel safe and happy.
- Try to have a morning and evening routine so that your child gets used to what is going to happen next. Talk to your child about what they are going to be doing in a day. It can help to have photos or pictures of activities to show your child.
- Remember that you don't have to meet all of your child's requests immediately. Acknowledge what they have asked and explain as to when you will be able to do that (if you can) e.g "You'd like to go to the park. Daddy needs to finish the washing up, then we can go."
- Encourage your child to develop patience by praising them for waiting patiently even if they do it for only very short periods. Catch them doing this before they become impatient!
- Encourage your child to walk as much as possible. Practise holding hands when walking.



## Useful Websites:

<https://www.henry.org.uk/tips/bedtimes>

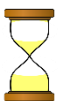
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/getting-baby-to-sleep/>



These websites make suggestions about establishing bedtime routines and give guidance for how much sleep most children of your child's age should need. If a child is well rested, daily routines are easier to establish.

## Games and activities:

Encourage your child to help tidying up. Set a timer to make tidying a game, have a competition to see who can put the most things away or use a song that you all love as a tidying song. Can you tidy everything away by the time the song has finished?



Plan in a pushchair free wander to encourage your child to walk. Collect mementos along the way such as a long blade of grass, an interesting leaf or pebble, your child's snack wrapper or a bendy stick and talk about your walk when you get home sticking each reminder on a piece of paper in turn to create a journey map.

Create a messy activity on a child sized table top and encourage your child to sit for short periods to explore. Try a cornflour and water paste or if you are concerned about the mess, cover an area with cling film, add some paint to the middle and then cover over again with cling film. This limits the mess but makes it fun for you and them.

If your child does not like messy play don't give up, just try another time. In the meantime, do a puzzle together or play a game.



# Helpful Hints for Parents – Nose Blowing



## Top tips:

- Help your child to practice the skills that they need for nose blowing when they are well. It's much harder to learn this skill when you are unwell.
- Play blowing games practising blowing through your mouth first - blow bubbles, blow through a straw, blow a feather. When children are confident blowing air through their mouths, move to blowing light objects such as a feather with air from their noses. Make sure that they close their mouths first!
- Have tissues that children can easily access around the house and have a bin nearby.
- Model wiping and blowing your own nose. Talk through what you are doing.
- Show children their face in a mirror.
- Talk about runny noses and the feeling of wetness.
- Encourage your child to wash their hands after blowing their nose.



## Websites:

There are a variety of webpages and video clips available linked to teaching nose blowing that you can find by using a simple search such as

<https://parenting.firstcry.com/articles/how-to-teach-your-child-to-blow-their-nose-5-easy-tips/>

## Games and activities:

- Using a mirror - play a game like Simon Says. eg Simon says, touch your nose.
- Hold a blowing race - who can get their feather to the other side of a piece of card or the table first or keep it in the air for the longest?
- Hold a piece of card under a child's nose and above their mouth and place part of a cotton wool ball on it. Can they blow the cotton wool ball across the card with their nose?
- Gently help them to close a nostril and practice blowing through the open nostril.



# Helpful Hints for Parents – Feelings & Choices



## Top tips:

- Children manage their feelings more effectively when their physical needs are met, that is if they are well fed, feel safe and have had enough sleep.
- Give your child opportunities to experience others going first either in a playground or at home. Model letting others go first, explaining what you are doing.
- Try to give your child time to listen and understand an instruction.
- When you see your child showing an emotion, use words that explain what your child is feeling e.g. "You look excited! You are smiling and jumping up and down."
- Talk with your child about how you expect them to behave before they enter a situation e.g. "We are going to see baby Tom now. We have kind and gentle hands when we see Tom." Praise your child when they choose to make the right choices and explain why you are praising them. "Well done, you held Tom's hand so gently. Did you see him smiling at you? He liked you being gentle. You are so kind!"
- Remember to use words to describe how you are feeling and the thought process you are using to help yourself. An example of this could be, "I am feeling a little frustrated because this is so tricky but I'm going to keep going" and when you have finished "I am happy that I have finished that job. I am proud that I kept trying until I did it."
- Ask your early years provider about which games or books the children love in the setting. Maybe you could read the books or play the games at home.



## Places to find information, help and support:

Your local health visitor -the contact number for the Bournemouth and Christchurch Hub is 01202 456790.

If your child is at or near school age, speak to the school nurse. Contact the school or phone the Christchurch School Nursing Team on 01425 891162.

Somerford Children's Centre and Christchurch West Children's Centre or the family partnership zone workers at 01202 225724 . The centres run groups, activities and courses. <https://preview-dorset.cloud.contensis.com/children-families/activities-for-children-young-people-and-families/activities.aspx>

Your local library will be able to help you find books that you can borrow to share with your child. Stories and pictures showing other peoples' feelings can be helpful to talk about.

Christchurch Library, Druitt Buildings, High Street, Christchurch, Dorset  
BH23 1AW tel 01202 485938

Highcliffe Library, Gordon Road, Highcliffe, Dorset, BH23 5HN tel 01425 272202





# Helpful Hints for Parents – Feelings & Choices

## Websites:

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/> This website also offers a confidential helpline (tel 0808 800 2222 ), forums, parenting TV and links to local groups.



<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1195/positive-parenting.pdf> - An online guide for parents.



<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/> - A useful website that helps you to support your child as they learn to communicate.



## Useful Internet Based Resources:

Daniel Tiger - An American based child accessible resource with stories, songs and activities about areas such as sharing and changes. The 'home page' can be found at <https://pbskids.org/daniel/>. Some of the clips might not play however it is possible to find You Tube links to various length stories and songs using a search engine.



There are many area specific stories to share with your child. Sharing, being kind, keeping on trying and new situations are just some that are covered.

## Games and activities:

Play stop and wait games - encourage your child to run and stop when you call, holding very still until you say run again. It's a very simple game but can be lots of fun!



Arrange play dates with family members or via contacts at parents and toddler groups and playgroups.

Be with your child as they play with others, explaining how others are feeling and thinking and modelling how to wait for a turn.

Give your child a simple activity to do like bringing you their shoes or putting the spoons on the table for a meal and praise them when they achieve this.



# Helpful Hints for Parents – Communication



## Top tips:

- Young children can need a little time to listen and understand what has been said. Adding short pauses into your conversations encourages your child to join in.
- Help your child to learn new words every day by using them in conversations or pointing them out when reading books. Talk to your child about everything that you are doing.
- When reading, make a game of adding extra words to a story. "How do you think the mermaid was swimming - fast or slowly?" Discuss what other words you can think of that mean the same thing e.g. "Oh it was a big boat. What other word could we use instead of big? An enormous boat, a massive boat, a large boat, a gigantic boat."
- It can be useful to cut out background noise so that everyone can hear each other and not get distracted.
- Encourage and model rather than correct.
- Explain non-verbal communication to your child to help them understand other people's reactions.
- If your child is watching television, watch it with them and talk about what they are watching. Point out any new words that they might discover and explain what they mean.

## Useful Websites:

[https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/262297/npdw\\_toptips\\_ey.pdf](https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/262297/npdw_toptips_ey.pdf)

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/> This is the website linked to I CAN, the children's communication charity. It has a wide range of resources, gives advice about communication development and has links to local services.



<https://www.henry.org.uk/tips/talking>



# Helpful Hints for Parents – Communication

## Places to find information, help and support:

Your pre-school practitioners

Your local health visitor -the contact number for the Bournemouth and Christchurch Hub is 01202 456790 or 01929 557593 or speak to your G.P.



The I CAN Help Enquiry Service gives parents and carers a chance to discuss questions or concerns about a child's speech, language and communication development with one of I CAN's speech and language therapists. They can be contacted on the following telephone number 0207 843 2544.



If you concerned about your child's communication skills, you can refer your child to a local speech therapist yourself using the links on the 'Talking Point' website. However, should your child need the support of a speech and language therapist, it is much quicker for your child to be referred via your health visitor, G.P. or early years setting.

'Come Talk With Me' is a Bournemouth initiative. You can access Come Talk With Me 'Tips of the Month' via Facebook by searching for 'Bournemouth Early Years'.

## Games and Activities:

Share books every day. Talk about the pictures and the story giving time for your child to answer your questions.



Plan a 'no screen' morning, afternoon or day together. Have fun doing it and talking about it afterwards.

Sing songs and rhymes together. If your child is confident with a favourite rhyme, try playing with the words, making up your own versions. Play 'let's pretend' with your child.



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