

# 50 things to do before you're **five**™

## Using 50 Things to Do Before You're Five as a Health Visitor



# What is 50 Things to Do Before You're Five?

**50 Things to Do Before You're Five** is a multi-platform offer, free for families, comprising of an app and website, also supported by a range of printable resources and social media campaigns.

**50 Things to Do** is based on the simple notion that access to fun, **low or no-cost experiences** with your family, indoors and outdoors, is a great way to support children's development. Our activities help children thrive, by learning through play and establishing healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

**50 Things to Do** was developed by a team of health, education and early years specialists, in Bradford, using theories of learning, child development and play. But what parents really need to know is that **50 Things to Do** is full of loads of **fun stuff** to do with their children!

**50 Things to Do** can be used by health visiting teams, nurseries, schools and community organisations, or by anyone who wants to improve outcomes for young children.



## Our Digital Offer

Our localised apps and websites contain drop-down boxes, to help families engage with each activity. We also provide support for families whose children have special educational needs.



## Our printed resources

- ✓ Card packs
- ✓ Posters
- ✓ Leaflets
- ✓ QR code keyrings
- ✓ QR code sticker (for inside red health visitor books)
- ✓ Bespoke resources as requested

"I love introducing the 50 Things resource with parents especially when they are new to the area or lacking in confidence in what to do or where to go with their little ones. They really like the variety and ease of the activities and frequently comment "I never would have thought of that.""

**Vicki**  
**Health Visitor**



# Why use 50 Things as a Health Visitor?

## Working with Families

Whether you are looking at a **targeted service**, a **universal offer** or considering your **community offer**, **50 things to Do Before You're Five** is there to support your work. You play a crucial role in improving the health and wellbeing of children. **50 Things to Do Before You're Five** is based on such a simple idea: fun, low or no-cost experiences for the whole family, indoors and outdoors, are great ways to support children's development.



Action for Children remind us that health visiting and family support are vital elements of local systems for families. They interlink closely, rely on one another, and build connections between families and different types of support available. **50 Things to Do Before You're Five**, provides you with the **ideal resource** to build these connections, and help children get the best possible start in life.

"Health visitors have trusted relationships with families and play a vital role in supporting young children's health and wellbeing."

**Professor Viv Bennett, Chief Nurse at Public Health England**

## Universal in Reach - Targeted where Needed

There are many ways to implement **50 Things to Do Before You're Five** as a Health Visitor. For example, as a **Universal** offer, some Health Visitors **signpost** their families to **the 50 things app or website** activities during their home visits. They might use the card packs to talk through some of the activities. Some teams add a QR code sticker to the red baby books and others provide printed posters for families. In some areas, health visiting teams have embedded the activities into their Home Visiting Schedule, and focus on particular activities for discussion. You can read more about this in our **How you can use 50 Things to Do Before You're Five in your Home Visiting Schedule** document.

As a **Targeted** offer, **50 Things to Do Before You're Five** can be used as a tool for Social Prescribing. One way to do this is to develop small focused 'play' groups, which meet regularly to work through the 50 activities. Some areas have threaded **50 Things to Do Before You're Five** into Speech and Language programmes.

**50 Things to Do Before You're Five** is the perfect resource to deliver the **Community** element of the Healthy Child Programme, which reminds us that Health Visitors are ideally placed to provide information on activities and local groups. The events element of the 50 Things to Do app/website is perfect to enable you to encourage your families to attend opportunities in their local area, such as baby moves sessions, sensory activities and parent: baby groups.

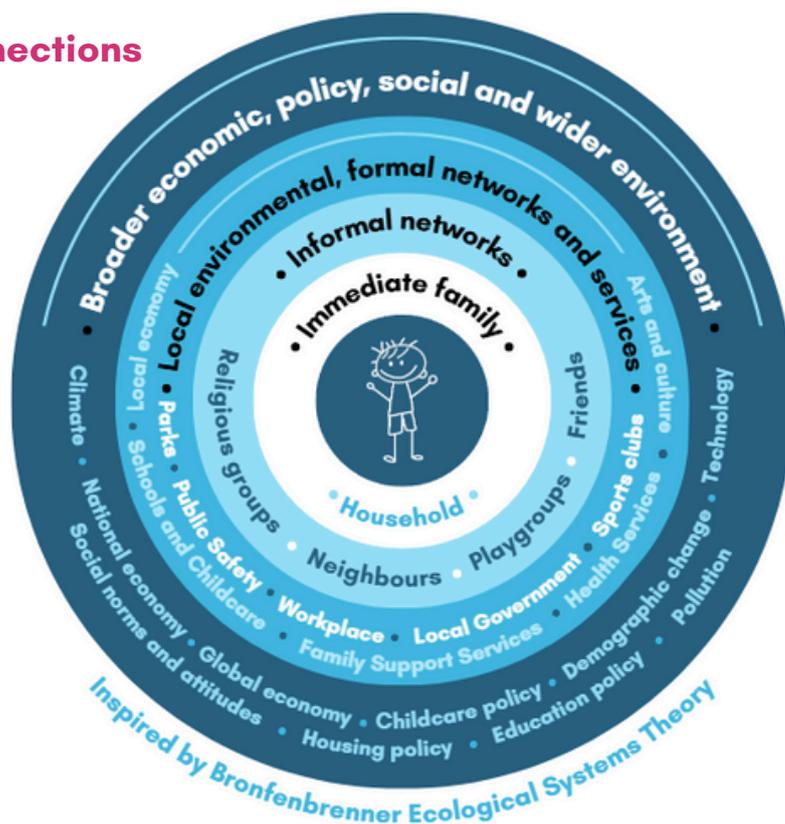


"Service and community connection was particularly associated with positive child development, parent confidence and mental health impacts."

**Health Visitor, cited in Kemp et al, 2022**

## Encouraging Community Connections

We recognise that children's development is not exclusively dependent on the input of parents, professionals such as health visitors, or their early years setting. Children grow up in a locality and are part of a community. Encouraging your families and their children to find opportunities to be part of their local area provides them with a sense of place and a greater connection to their community. Our localised approach not only highlights local groups to attend, it also encourages the engagement of local museums, libraries, community hubs, faith groups and local businesses.



This provides children and their families with more opportunities to be part of their local community. The initiative also encourages connections between health, social care, early years and other agencies who work with families. It helps individual agencies to achieve their targets whilst recognising a shared purpose: **improved life chances for all children.**



"Health visitors can play a crucial role in ensuring that families get good, joined up support at the start of life. They work with communities to build and use the strengths within those communities to improve health and well being and reduce inequalities."

(Department of Health and Social Care, Jan 2012)

## Promoting all areas of Child Development

**50 Things to Do Before You're Five** is there for you to use in a way that suits you and your parents best. The initiative is underpinned by evidence-informed, impactful pedagogies and parenting approaches, but what your families really need to know is that it is full of fun stuff to do with their children! The focus on families having fun together is a deliberate approach, promoting an inclusive, non-judgmental way for parents to engage fully with their children.

Please note: Families who use English as an additional language (EAL) can also engage with the website using the translate feature.

50 Things to Do links in well with our vision to enhance children's health, wellbeing and quality of life through play.

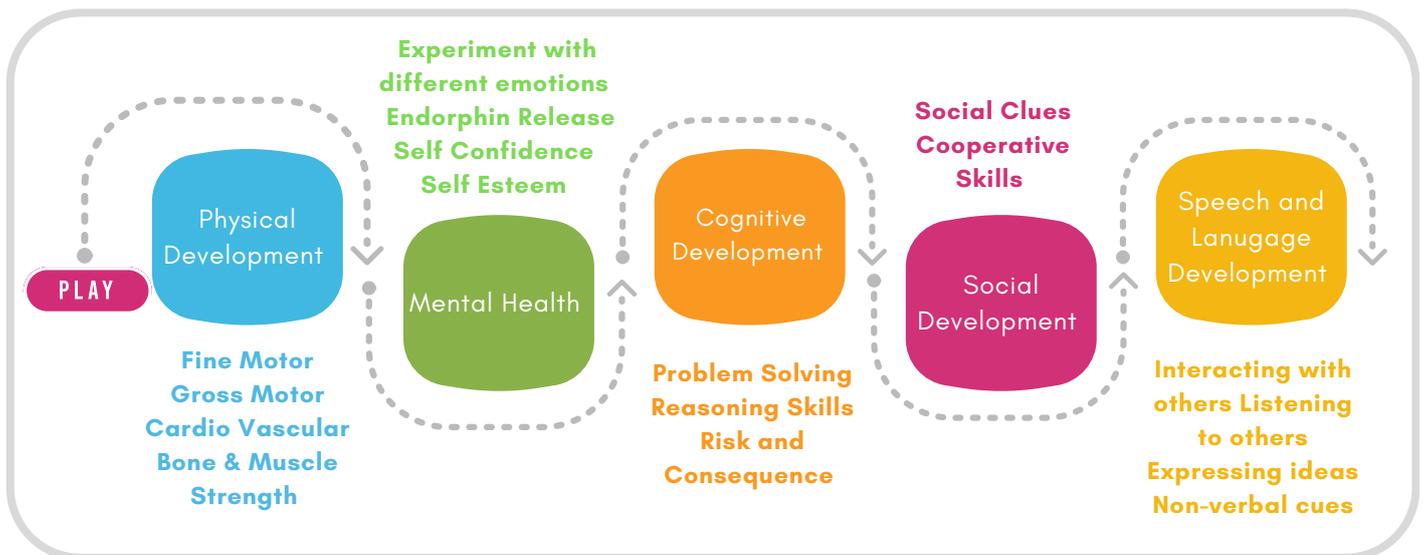
**Sharon**  
**50 Things Five**

# The importance of play

The early years high impact area 4 states that Health Visitors should be promoting physical activity at all mandated visits. Did you know that playing has been shown above to be a major contributor to children's physical activity, consuming more calories per minute than the equivalent structured physical activity event (Mackett and Paskins, 2008)?

We are **passionate** about **promoting play**. It underpins all development and learning for young children. We know that playing, especially outside, positively impacts health later in life and children's brain development. We help families establish active lifestyles through playing outside and connecting with nature. This improves mental wellbeing, coronary and respiratory health, and also maintains a healthy weight. We know that when parents **confidently play** with their children, there will be a **positive impact** on family health and wellbeing, and children's achievements in the long-term

Across the British Isles, **50 Things to Do** is **helping families to make their home a great place to play and learn**, supporting children's development and contributing to improved life chances.



By encouraging families to play together, we are having a **positive impact on the whole family's mental wellbeing**, reducing stress and boredom, while **promoting feelings of joy and happiness**.

By encouraging playful, positive interactions and improving communication, we are helping families bond. We are also **improving parents' confidence** in supporting the development of children's language, literacy and communication skills.

Of course, a great start to life goes on to **positively impact achievements** in primary and secondary school ages.



# The impact in numbers

We regularly gather feedback from families and practitioners using **50 Things to Do Before You're Five**, so you don't have to just take our word for it!

## Social and Material Circumstances

"Family circumstances, vital for development in the early years, have deteriorated for many. Rates of child poverty have increased and inequalities in many social and economic outcomes are widening. Parenting approaches are key to children's development in the early years, but it is important to recognise that parenting is also related to families' social and material circumstances." **Public Health England (2021) Early years high impact area 6: Ready to learn and narrowing the word gap.**

**91%**

of Health Visitors reported an increase in poverty affecting families over the past 12 months

**100%**

of the **50 Things to Do** activities are low or no cost.

**100%**

of the **50 Things to Do** events are low or no cost.

## Speech and Language Development

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the outcomes gap, and set back children's learning and development - particularly in language and maths - and hit those from disadvantaged backgrounds hardest. **DfE (c2022) COVID-19 Recovery Package, DfE Factsheet.**

One serious effect of the nationwide lockdowns was the negative impact on children and young people's speech, language and communication. **Nuffield Trust (2022) The impact of Covid-19 on health care for children and young people in England.**

**84%**

of Health Visitors reported an increase in children with speech, language and communication delay. **The Institute of Health Visiting (2023)**

**64%**

of parents said that, since using **50 Things to Do Before You're 5**, they communicate more purposefully with their child whilst they are playing.

**86%**

of parents said that the **50 Things to Do** activities provide different opportunities to communicate with their child.

## Parental Confidence

When parents feel competent in their parenting role they are more likely to be engaged in their learning and development. "An individual's belief in their ability to be successful in the role of parenting (i.e., confidence) is an essential component of the quality and sustainability of parenting behaviours." **Belsky J, Jaffee SR (2006) The Multiple Determinants of Parenting.** The role health visitors have, such as helping mothers to feel more confident and to interact with their child, can have huge benefits for both parent and infant (**IHV, 2013**). High-quality interactions between parent and child are fundamentally important. Yet, **many families feel judged by professionals and services, and lack the self-esteem and confidence** to engage in developmental activities with their children. Through utilising our initiative Health Visitors are able to promote an **inclusive, non-judgmental** way for parents to engage fully with their children.

**70%**

**of parents feel judged. The line between feeling judged and feeling inadequate can be a fine one.**

Royal Foundation, State of the Nation: Understanding Public Attitudes to the Early Years (2020).

**67%**

of parents said that, since using the **50 Things to Do Before You're 5** app they feel more confident to try new things with their children.

**72%**

of parents said that, since using 50 Things to Do Before You're 5 they feel able to help their child learn in more and different ways.



## Mental Health

Evidence suggests playful times can be relaxing and enjoyable for children and adults, impacting positively on their mental health. By encouraging families to play together, we are having a positive impact on the whole family's mental wellbeing, reducing stress and boredom, while promoting feelings of joy and happiness.

**83%**

of Health Visitors reported an increase in perinatal mental illness.

**82%**

of settings said that, using 50 Things to Do Before You're Five has promoted playfulness in their children and families

**76%**

of settings said that their families are enjoying using 50 Things to Do Before You're Five

## Physical Development

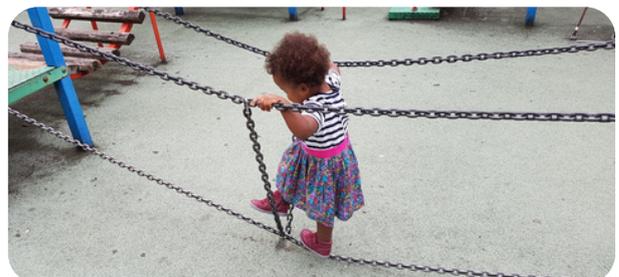
Time spent outdoors is a consistent predictor of children's physical activity. Playing has been shown above to be a major contributor to children's physical activity, consuming more calories per minute than the equivalent structured physical activity event. "Playing outside allows children to develop more advanced motor skills than children who spend most of their time indoors, including agility, balance and coordination. Children who spend time playing outdoors are more likely to move in ways that challenge their muscles, bones and physical endurance." **Miracle Recreation.**

**12%**

of toddlers and primary school aged children obese (NHS England, 2022)

**75%**

of parents said that, since using the **50 Things to Do Before You're 5** app, their child has gone outside to play more often.



50 Things to Do Before You're Five is a free resource for practitioners and families to use in 24 areas of the British Isles.

You can download the app here:



Or find your local website here:



The local website will give details of the team leading the initiative in your area, get in touch with them to see what additional resources are available for you to use.



- Calderdale 1
- Bradford 2
- Leeds 3
- Oldham 4
- Kirklees 5
- Wakefield 6
- Sheffield 7
- Birmingham 8
- Warwickshire 9
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough 10
- Norfolk 11
- Bedfordshire 12
- Oxfordshire 13
- West Berkshire 14
- Southwark 15
- East Sussex 16
- Jersey 17
- Suffolk 18
- Fife 19
- Coventry 20
- Hounslow 21
- Portsmouth 22

### Can't see us in your area?

50 Things to Do Local offers are commissioned by agencies, often based in local authorities. If you are interested in finding out more, do get in touch.

 [info@50Thingstodo.org](mailto:info@50Thingstodo.org)

 01274 543282

**50 Things to Do Before You're Five can also support your provision of targeted interventions, community-centred approach whilst being a universal offer. Find out more by reading How Health Visitors can use 50 Things to Do Before You're Five.**