

Small steps, big futures.

with 50 things to do

How 50 Things to Do Before You're Five supports the Best Start in Life Strategy

Briefing Paper 4

Talking, Reading, Exploring: How 50 Things to Do Before You're Five Supports Early Learning Through Play

Showing how activities that encourage language, literacy, and curiosity help children reach a good level of development by age five.

Why Early Language and Communication Matter

A strong start in life is fundamental if children are going to reach a good level of development by age five. The Best Start in Life policy highlights the importance of early intervention to support speech, language, and communication. 50 Things to Do is designed to help parents use play to nurture their child's early literacy skills so that all children have equal opportunities to become confident speakers and listeners.

Yet we have a big gap to close. 1.9 million children in the UK experience difficulties with talking and understanding words (Speech and Language UK). Around 50% of children in areas of disadvantage start school with language delay (Bercow: 10 Years On). Early identification and targeted support from Best Start teams are essential if we are going to close this gap and give every child the language skills they need to succeed.

A Practical Tool for Families and Professionals

50 Things to Do Before You're Five is a practical, evidence-informed approach which aligns with Best Start in Life priorities. It provides Family Hubs and other professionals with a tool which:

- Helps families engage in playful activities which support listening, attention, turn-taking, and understanding - all of which form the foundations of what's needed to become a confident young communicator.
- Exposes children to new age and stage-appropriate vocabulary, concepts, and ideas through play.
- Supports families to create a language-rich home learning environment that nurtures communication and early literacy skills.

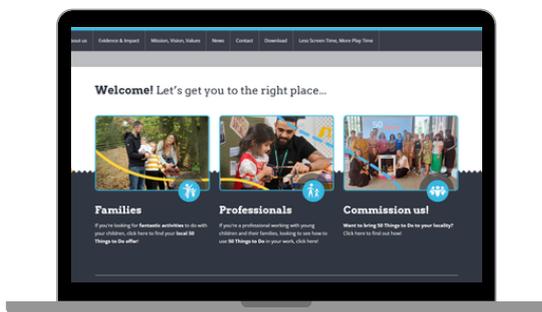
50 Things to Do is an exciting initiative offering 50, screen-free, low or no-cost activities for families with young children, helping them reach their social, emotional and physical milestones and ultimately, improving their life outcomes.

50 things to do before you're five

BEST START IN LIFE

Embedding Language and Literacy Through Everyday Play

The 50 Things to Do website and app includes a 'Key Words' section, offering professionals inspiration for words and phrases to use during activities or to share with families. Daily play helps children hear and use new words and concepts in meaningful contexts.



Play strengthens children's understanding of words, introduces them to new vocabulary which in turn supports the early literacy skills they need to have a confident start to school.

“Through play, children can express their thoughts, ideas and feelings, building essential communication skills. Play stimulates creativity and innovation, creates a solid foundation for literacy and ignites a lifelong love for learning.”

National Literacy Trust, The Power of Play to Boost Early Language (2024)



Interested in bringing 50 Things to your area?

50 Things to Do provides you a scalable, local and flexible approach that aligns directly with local and national Best Start in Life objectives. By integrating language, literacy, and curiosity into everyday play, 50 Things to Do helps children receive consistent, high-quality experiences in Family Hub sites, years settings and at home, so that developmental gaps reduce and support school readiness improves.

If you are interested in commissioning 50 Things to Do in your local area, email us at info@50thingstodo.org, or call us on **01274 543282**.

Get in touch:

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50thingstodo.org

