Introduction
Introduction

This booklet is published as part of the Early Support Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment.

The Developmental journal is for babies and young children with visual impairment, which is called limited vision throughout these materials.

Limited vision can range from profound impairment where a child has no vision or only light perception to severe where a child has some vision for ‘form’, or solid objects.

The Journal is designed to be used alongside the Early Support Information for parents booklet on Visual impairment, which provides general information and advice. It can also be used with other Early Support materials. Find out more about this at the back of the booklet.

Where words appear in blue, like this, they appear in the Glossary.

Where colour is used to identify different aspects of development, the colour coding follows that used by the Development journal.

Parents say:

‘It helped us understand what to expect and how to plan for the months ahead. As a distillation of good practice, the Developmental journal provides us with experience on tap whenever we need it.’

‘The Activity cards are particularly useful and can be copied and shared with grandparents, other people involved like health visitors and therapists, and child minders so every one is doing the same thing.’
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What is it?

The Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment is for parents, for children and for professionals who work with young children. It's a tool to help families track and understand development in their child and it supports partnership working – in particular, the sharing of information between families and the professionals they meet.

It provides standard material to:

- record children’s development over time
- celebrate achievement as children move on and learn to do new things
- help families understand what they can do to help their child make progress
- promote the use of vision
- improve everyone’s understanding of the developmental processes involved.

The Developmental journal:

- tracks development and progress from birth to about three years of age in children, where a visual difficulty or impairment has been identified
- tracks development and progress in vision, however it is developing
- provides a record for families of their child’s achievements, progress and development
- gives a sense of growth and progression
- makes it easier for families to share information about their child with the professionals they meet
- helps to identify areas of difficulty early where more help would be useful
- helps professionals target the provision of additional services by tailoring them to a child’s individual progress and learning style.
The Activity cards supporting the Developmental journal:

- provide practical ideas about how to help a child move on to the next stage of development
- provide practical ideas to encourage and promote a child’s vision as early as possible.

Some families like to add photographs and information about family events and holidays to the file to make it more personal and informal. That’s fine – it’s important to understand that the materials are flexible enough to be used in a number of different ways.

Who is it for?

The materials are designed to be held and used by families, in recognition of the essential role parents play in the life of young children. Parents support the gradual transformation of children from highly dependent babies into young individuals with particular personalities, likes and dislikes and real curiosity about the world. They’re also the people who know their child best and the ones who naturally support their child’s move on to the next stage of development, through everyday family events, social experiences and play.

However, sometimes the presence of a visual problem makes parents less confident about their ability to help their child learn new things and less confident about doing what they would normally do with young children. Research and experience both indicate that parents are the most significant supporters of a child with limited vision and that what they do contributes greatly to a child’s achievement. It’s therefore very important that parents don’t underestimate their own knowledge and abilities, or the importance of the everyday things they naturally do to support their child’s development.

This Developmental journal and the Activity cards can help with this, as they show parents how ‘natural’ ways of behaving at home gives babies and young children many opportunities to learn.
The Journal provides a basis for discussion and sharing of ideas between professionals and families about what a child is doing, what they’ll do next and the sorts of things everyone can do to help. The materials ‘come alive’ when they’re shared and discussed by families with the professionals who work with them. Talking about them is at least as important as filling in the bits of paper, because it builds greater understanding about what a child is doing and about how best to promote development. Everything in the file therefore supports and underpins the vital work that specialist support workers (usually specialist teachers for visual impairment) undertake with families in the early years of a child’s life.

What parents say they want to know

Parents of babies with limited vision say they want:

- an early diagnosis
- support and help to know how to interact with their baby
- support and help to assist their child learn and reach their full potential.

Where parents know their child has a visual impairment, they ask the following questions about areas of development that might be affected:

- How is my child doing?
- How can I help my child’s vision improve or use the vision they have as well as possible?
- Is my child making enough progress?
- How do I know?
- What will he or she do next?
- What can we do to make this happen?

Read more about this in Working together to support development in children
If you’re a parent, the Journal is designed to help you to:

- share your observations of your baby or child and their behaviour and communication in everyday situations
- recognise the importance of what you do with your child in encouraging development
- ask questions and seek reassurance about your child’s progress
- be clear about what everyone is expecting your child to do next
- understand what you and others can do to help your child learn – including to develop any vision that’s available.

If you’re a professional, it’s designed to help you to:

- provide a consistent way of tracking progress that covers all the areas of development that need to be tracked – including vision
- identify any areas which might need to be followed up further
- suggest practical ideas for activities to promote development and vision at appropriate times
- work in partnership with families and other professionals as you establish a relationship with families and give advice.
Introduction

Standard materials

A single, standard Developmental journal used in different places can help to ensure that:

- everyone working with a family ‘talks the same language’
- professionals working in different situations use similar yardsticks and have access to the same sort of information
- every family has a detailed record of their child’s progress over time, showing their strengths and current abilities
- discussion about a child is consistently supported – for example, as different nursery and school placements are considered. The information in the Developmental journal can help early years providers and schools meeting a child for the first time to understand their needs and it can inform decisions about how much additional support a child needs to ensure progress continues and that they’re fully included on the setting.

Standard materials also help families when there is change – for example, when they move house from one area to another or when a key professional in their lives moves on. The Journal can be used as a means to build understanding of a child’s abilities and needs when families meet professionals for the first time or begin to use new services. It can also be used in combination with other Early Support materials, where this is appropriate, to ensure families get the information and support they need, as quickly and smoothly as possible.

At the moment, there is no national screening programme to support the early identification of limited vision in babies. The Developmental journal therefore also has a part to play in raising awareness of the critical role that vision plays in early childhood development and in encouraging earlier diagnosis of visual disorder, so that babies and families get the help they need as soon as possible.
Finding your way around the materials

Component parts
The Developmental journal is made up of the following parts:

- Introduction
- Developmental journal
- Activity cards
- General overview of development
- Record of developing vision
- Developing vision activity cards
- Visual environment and visual materials cards
- Getting Stuck?

Developmental profile
The Developmental profile at the front of the Journal helps you to see the total picture of your child’s progress and how it changes across all areas of development, as time goes by.

Developmental journal
The Developmental journal helps you track and record development in your baby or young child over time. It’s presented as a series of tables, describing five areas of development, which are broken down into stages and developmental goals.

Each stage of development is presented as a separate booklet, so you can take it out of the file and carry it with you to meetings with professionals if you wish to do so.

Summary sheets are available online but are not included in the file. These help you to look at your child’s development across all areas in discussion with your professional advisor and can be downloaded from www.earlysupport.org.uk
**Activity cards**
Each area of development at each stage has accompanying Activity cards that make practical suggestions about how you can help your child move on to the next developmental step.

When using these cards, it’s important to refer across to the Visual environment and visual materials cards. They help you to use the most appropriate visual materials to help your child develop. Each card carries a prompt to help you remember to do this.

**General overview of development**
This booklet explains the principles of development in babies and young children with limited vision and how important it is to actively support the development of vision. The key areas of development in the Developmental journal are set out, with short explanations about the themes in each area. Strategies to support learning and ideas about toy materials are included.

**Record of developing vision**
This booklet helps you record how your child’s functional vision is progressing. It tracks the development of visual acuity (sharpness of vision) and control of eye movements. The sequence of this material does not parallel the stages of general development, as the level of vision differs in degree from baby to baby.

**Developing vision activity cards**
These cards accompany the Record of developing vision. They encourage vision and make practical suggestions for how you might promote your child’s visual development as quickly as possible, to ensure their full potential for vision is achieved.

**Visual environment and visual materials cards**
There is a prompt on every Activity card, to remind you to use these cards to guide your choice of toys and objects to suit your child’s current vision and needs.
Getting Stuck?
As the name suggests, this booklet is there to help if you feel that your child has got a bit ‘stuck’ and not much progress is being made in a particular area. There are suggestions for practical things you can do, listed under headings that refer to behaviours and aspects of development that sometimes cause difficulty for young children with limited vision. The booklet also suggests where you can get more specialist help, if you need it.

How the material is organised
Areas of development
The Developmental journal is divided into five areas of development:

- Social and emotional development
- Communication, language and meaning
- Play and learning
- Movement and mobility
- Towards independent self-care

These areas are colour coded throughout the Developmental journal materials.

The Activity cards are designed to be used alongside each developmental area and have been colour coded accordingly.

Each developmental area is sub-divided into themes that highlight important developmental processes at particular stages and goals, that further development in that broad area. For example, the developmental area of Communication, language and meaning is divided at Stage 1b into the themes of Listening and attending, Understanding language and meaning, Communication and Expressive language. Many of the same themes reappear at a number of different stages, showing how developmental processes continue through a child’s early years.

Themes are broken down into developmental goals, which are the goals that are typically achieved at that stage. The linked Activity cards help you help your child to achieve these goals.
It's a good idea to work across all the developmental areas of the Developmental journal at each stage of development because development is really a single process and each area of development affects other areas.

However, there are times when it may be more convenient or worthwhile to focus on one area at a time, especially if that area seems to need more attention than others.

**Stages of development**
The Developmental journal and associated Activity cards are presented as stages. Stages represent a grouping together of the skills and behaviours that can normally be expected to emerge at a roughly similar developmental age. This concept of ‘stage’ is not the same as that used by some groups (for example, developmental scientists) but one that makes it easier for parents to track development in their child.

Although we are still learning about the order in which children with limited vision acquire new skills, the order used in the Developmental journal is roughly that which can be expected for a ‘typically developing’, or steadily advancing child with limited vision – within the limits of current knowledge.

**How to use it**
The Developmental journal is an organised, structured tool, which can be used in a number of different ways to celebrate and record progress and encourage development in your child.

It invites you to watch what your child is doing and use the tables to record when you see them doing something described on the page. When you’ve been using the material for some time, this helps you recognise and record new things that your child is doing for the first time, as they move on and develop. As time goes by, this builds into a positive, cumulative picture of achievement. The material is designed to help you understand more about the way your child learns and their pattern of development.
You may decide to:

- fill in the Journal on your own and then review the material with the professionals who work with you
- ask your professional to fill in the Journal with you on an ongoing basis
- discuss what you have observed with a professional using the Journal but not actually fill in the tables
- ask someone who works with you and your child to keep a record of your child’s progress using the Journal on your behalf if you don’t want to do it yourself, but are interested in the information the material could provide.

There’s no ‘right’ way to use the material to record what your child is doing – it’s there for you to use in whatever way you find most useful. Do whatever helps you to observe your child and respond to their particular ways of learning and whatever helps you understand their skills and interests best. You may want to discuss this with the professionals who work with you, so you can use the material together in the way that suits you best.

It’s a good idea to move through the Developmental journal roughly in the sequence that it’s printed, although some children jump certain steps or acquire skills in a slightly different order.

**How to record change and progress**

There’s a table on each page of the Developmental journal. The material in the table is organised by developmental area, themes, and developmental goals.

**Example 1 (facing page)**

In this example, Understanding language and meaning is the developmental area, Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations is the developmental theme and ‘Showing excitement or anticipation when hearing a familiar phrase before a regular routine’ is the developmental goal.
Every day family and cultural routines and games are repeated. These allow your child to hear lots of familiar language many times over and this supports their emerging understanding.

Children are beginning to link familiar phrases with activities – for example, ‘Bathtime’, ‘Bedtime’, ‘going to the swings’. They’re also beginning to understand other familiar words like ‘No!’, their name and other simple phrases that they hear every day like ‘Clap your hands’, ‘Up you get’, ‘Sit down’. Children usually understand simple phrases before they can say them.

Children at this stage are also beginning to learn about familiar objects and what they’re used for (their function and purpose). Playing with everyday objects supports this learning. Later they must learn that there is a name or word label for each object. Children with vision hear you name an object as they look at it. Children with limited vision need to be touching and exploring or using the object when they hear its name being used in order to make the connection.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing understanding of link between objects and familiar routines, eg bib or spoon for mealtime, flannel or duck for bath time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing excitement or anticipation when hearing a familiar phrase before a regular routine eg ‘bathtime’, ‘go to swings’, ‘go in the car’</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding what objects are for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making attempts to use objects on self but may not hold them correctly, yet eg brush on hair, spoon to feed, telephone to ear</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with everyday objects showing how it’s used eg taking empty cup to mouth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When your child begins to do something new, it can be recorded as:

**Possibly (column 3)**
Record behaviour here that you are seeing for the first time or that you have only seen once or twice. Use it for recording progress when your child is just beginning to achieve a new skill but is not yet confidently using it.

**Definitely (column 4)**
Record behaviour here that you’ve seen your child do quite often in familiar situations. This tells you that the behaviour or skill has definitely been learnt and is now established.

It’s helpful to write the age and/or date when your child shows a possible behaviour because it tells you that they’re learning a new skill and may need help with it. It’s also helpful to write the age and/or date when your child shows a definite behaviour, as over time, this builds into a record to show and celebrate all the new skills that your child is learning and how long it has taken to consolidate new learning.

**What my child does and enjoys (column 5)**
Each child has their own way of doing things and this column encourages you to make what you record in the Journal personal. You might note down information here about how your child does different things, particular examples you have seen and what they like doing. This knowledge is useful to share with any professionals working with you.

As you fill in the Developmental journal over time, it shows your child’s progress and achievements and builds into a unique record of your child’s personality, likes and dislikes and interests.

To find out more about how to move on from recording progress to encouraging development in your child, read the section on Activity cards.
Making a start – finding a baseline

If you are starting to use the Developmental journal when your child is more than a year old, it’s important to find a starting level (a baseline), to help you find information that is relevant and useful. You do not have to fill out the Journal from the beginning.

Start by thinking about what your child is currently doing and all the different things that they’ve learnt over the last few months. This may include the way your child interacts with other people, feelings and interests, behaviour, the way they communicate and respond to you, what they like playing with, how they move around, and what they do when feeding, bathing or dressing. Think about how your child uses their hands, ears or eyes to find out about the world, as well.

Some parents find it particularly helpful to discuss this with a professional advisor and to share their observations.

Look through the Developmental journal (starting with the earlier stages) until you find some things that you know your child is definitely doing. If your child seems to be doing everything in a particular stage, move onto the next stage until you find a page where your child has definitely got some, but not all of the skills described. If there are some sequences (in some developmental themes) that your child has not yet started with, maybe the previous stage for that theme would be more useful.

This is your baseline, where it’s most useful to begin recording and looking for information about how to help your child in practical ways.

Remember to do this across all five different developmental areas because progress is often uneven – many children are further ahead in one area than another.
How often should I record what my child is doing?

Some parents say they prefer to fill in the Developmental journal by themselves or with their specialist advisor fairly regularly, so they don’t forget the particular ways in which their child does things.

How often you find it helpful to do this will be affected by the age of your child, their rate of learning and what fits in with your family. If you prefer to use the materials with a professional who works with you, like a specialist teacher for visual impairment, the pattern of their visits may affect how often you record what’s happening.

It’s usually most useful to record what your child does at least once or twice during their current stage, if you want to use the Journal to guide you on what goals to aim for and what activities to use to support your child – not just to record what’s happening.

A guide might be to fill in the Journal about once every two months in the first year of your child’s life and three or four times a year from Stage 2 onwards. Some parents may prefer to fill it in more often – for example, every couple of months.

Specialist teachers often say that they find it useful to review progress once a term, which is about once every three months, so this might provide a helpful routine.

If you use other Early Support materials, you might like to transfer the current Journal booklet into your Family file, so you can share the information in it at appointments with any new people involved with your child. They also link into Family service plans – they support discussion and planning of what would be most helpful for your child and your family at this stage of your child’s development.
Moving on – using the Activity cards

The Activity cards

It’s important to understand that recording what your child can do is only a first step towards helping them to move on and develop further.

The Activity cards provide suggestions and practical ideas to help you support your child to acquire new skills. They’re designed to fit in with the Developmental journal and should be used together. Each developmental goal in the Journal is supported by corresponding ideas and activities on an Activity card. Column 2 (Card) gives you the card number for the Activity card that’s most likely to be relevant.

Look at the example of a table from the Development journal on page 16.

You’re looking for ideas to help you assist your baby to get to the stage of ‘anticipating being lifted up’. Check Cards 3 and 4 and move on to Card 4, when you’ve done everything on Card 3. You need to find the same headings on the card as you see in the Journal – in this case, Stage 1b, Social and emotional development, Developing relationships, Learning about self and parent and others. The activities listed under this heading will help with the goals listed under the same heading in the Journal. The card that’s appropriate for this example is shown with the table overleaf.

There are two sets of cards for each developmental stage: Stage 1a (cards 1 and 2), Stage 1b (cards 3 and 4), Stage 2 (cards 5 and 6) and so on, except for Stage 5. Column 2 on the Developmental journal tells you whether to use the first or second card for each goal. Some goals have relevant activities on both cards – complete the first card before going on to the second one, which will be more advanced. Some cards suggest that you ‘continue’ to practise a particular activity to help strengthen the skill learning.
Example 2 Development journal table
Stage 1b Social and emotional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing relationships</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about self and parent and others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to approach of parent eg showing excited body movements, lifting head</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at and responding to parent’s smile</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Record of developing vision</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating being lifted up</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing feelings</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing a greater range of feelings eg delight, distress, excitement</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2 Linked Activity card

Stage 1b · Activity card

Card 3 · Social and emotional development

Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent/other

- Call your baby’s name gently as you approach them and watch how they respond to your voice before you start to pick them up.
- Encourage your baby to look at your face (if sufficient vision).

Showing feelings

- Repeat actions and routines which your baby seems to especially enjoy and watch how they show pleasure and delight.
- ‘Mirror’ your baby’s emotional feeling and expression to show them you understand they are sad or happy. If they seem sad, make a sad voice and intonation and face and hold them soothingly, if they show excitement, make a happy excited voice and face and respond with excited movements.

Beginning to show attachment to parent and familiar others

- Encourage different family members to interact with your baby so that they comes to recognise different voices, handling and faces.
- If your baby smiles to your voice or touch or smile, give them a special kiss and cuddle.

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Introduction

Planning goals
Filling in the Journal helps you plan ahead, looking at what to expect your child to do next and thinking about what you can do to help. Some people like to do this by planning the next developmental goal their child is moving towards (ie what they’re aiming at next) in quite a structured way. This is best done in conversation with the professionals who work with you. In general, if you like using the material in this way, it’s a good idea to limit the number of goals you identify to say three or four, and to review progress regularly, before moving on to more.

Making activities personal
The cards outline potentially useful activities and strategies. They’re also like a springboard, encouraging you to come up with your own ideas. You can make them personal, adapting them to reflect your own family style, culture and traditions and your child’s personality and interests.

Select the cards that are appropriate for your child’s current stage of development and use the cards that go with the goals that you have decided to concentrate on for the time being.

The cards are designed to be taken out of the file one by one and some parents like to put them somewhere they’re easy to see, like on the fridge with a magnet, or on a notice board, or maybe near where you change your baby’s nappy.

Your advisory teacher, other professionals, and other parents that you meet will be able to provide additional ideas for things to do, as well.
Moving on – readiness for learning

Children develop at different rates but there are times or stages when they’re likely to be most ready to learn a particular skill. This is called ‘readiness for learning’. It’s best if your child has definitely achieved a goal before moving on to the next. It’s important to build on success and mastery and not to move forward too quickly or in too big steps – your child may need time to consolidate an existing skill before they’re ready to learn another one.

Although the Developmental journal presents a sequence of goals, the order of the goals is a guide only – individual children vary in the order they master them.

Once your child has learned a new skill, encourage using it regularly and in the appropriate settings. This helps strengthen it. See if they’re starting to show some behaviours that are needed for learning the next goal or introduce activities to help encourage them.

A lot of skills are related to each other so it’s a good idea to achieve the majority of goals in the current stage before moving onto the next stage.

Summary sheets

Summary sheets are not included in the file, but they can be downloaded from www.earlysupport.org.uk. They help you consider development in different areas side by side.
Using the Developmental profile

At the front of the Developmental journal is a single sheet, the Developmental profile. This provides a summary of all the developmental areas and all the stages of the Journal on one page to give an overall picture of progress.

It can become part of your Family file, if you use other Early Support materials and professionals may wish to take a copy.

Filling in the Developmental profile

The Developmental profile is probably best filled in whenever your child has completed one stage and is ready to go onto the next. Colour in or date a box (cell) when you have identified the majority of items (ie more than 80%) listed under developmental goals as being ‘definitely’ there.

Colour code (or date) your entries so that you can see how the pattern of development changes as time goes by.

In the example overleaf, green was completed in December 2004, red was entered in April 2005 and yellow was entered in October 2006. Only one section Play and learning has been filled in for the purpose of illustration.
### Developmental profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and emotional development</th>
<th>Stage 1a</th>
<th>Stage 1b</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication, language and meaning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and attending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding language and meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive language – talking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play and learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making connections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using hands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement and mobility</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Body awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring the environment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extending movement and co-ordination</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Towards independent self-care</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeding/eating</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dressing and nappy changing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using the toilet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washing and bathing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using the Record of developing vision

The Record of developing vision and associated cards are laid out in a similar style to the Developmental journal and Activity cards.

The Record of developing vision follows stages in the development of functional vision from awareness of light to seeing fine detail in pictures and the development of a variety of eye movements. The Developing vision activity cards give ideas to encourage both of these aspects of your baby or child’s vision development. An example of a page from the Record of developing vision is given overleaf.

Steps in the development of functional vision are listed in the left-hand column. You will find spaces in some sections to write a brief description of the object, toy or picture that your child can see or can follow.

As in the Developmental journal, the two middle columns are for you to record the date that you first or occasionally notice a particular visual behaviour, and a date when you are confident that you see it regularly.

The right-hand column gives you space to record the distance at which an object or toy was seen or tracked and, if appropriate, the speed of movement as slow, medium or fast.

We suggest that you fill in the Record of developing vision at regular intervals (4 to 6 weekly in the first year and perhaps 3 or 4 times a year after that), as this will help you and your professional advisors decide on activities to promote your baby’s or child’s vision and to choose the most appropriate visual materials to progress their general development.

Look through the Record of developing vision, if possible with your specialist teacher, starting with Record 1 to see which section you think describes your baby or child’s vision best. If your child is achieving some but not all items in the section (eg Record 2), this is the right starting point for them. If there are some items that your child has not yet started, maybe the previous section (eg Record 1) would be better.
**Example 3: Record of developing vision**

**Record 3**

Control of **visual awareness, visual interest**, gaze and eye movement for ‘people’ and large **lures** gradually extends even further – up to six metres. Gaze shifting and following also expand. Tracking along the floor can be recorded once a baby can sit supported on the floor, both across the visual field and ‘to and fro’. At the same time, **visual awareness and visual interest** for increasingly small items at tabletop distance (30 to 40cm) continue to progress. Once aware and interested in large **lures** (yourself or an object of 20 to 30cm) at two metres, babies begin to detect similar-size **lures** when popped out from behind a screen or armchair with a non-patterned cover placed at a one metre distance from them. Some children with limited vision continue to improve more and faster in near than far distance. Children need to understand the names of family, friends, pets, everyday objects and toys before you can try to complete some of the sections below.

Whenever **lures** are not specified below, list and describe them (their size and colour and whether they are light reflecting (LR) or non-light reflecting (N-LR)) in the empty spaces provided in the left-hand column. Record the distance (from **lure** to baby/child) and/or speed (slow, medium, fast) in the right-hand column.

**See Development of vision activity cards 3a and 3b**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in functional vision</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance:</strong> from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual awareness, visual interest and visual acuity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at large <strong>lures</strong> (12cm or over) that ‘move on the spot’, eg you waving, a favourite cuddly toy (jiggled) or a dangling spinning ball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at increasingly small single, stationary items on a well-contrasted table or highchair surface</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects a tennis ball size (6cm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects a wooden brick/cube (2.5cm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using the Developing vision activity cards

The Record of developing vision is presented in four parts (Record 1, Record 2, Record 3 and Record 4). The Developing vision activity cards are grouped and numbered 1–4 to correspond with these four parts. Every time you fill in the Record of developing vision, use it to guide you on which Developing vision activity card to use to help you move your child’s vision forward.

As you progress through the Developing vision activity cards you’ll notice that some of the activities require a baby or child to have reached a certain level of development in Play and learning, Communication, language and meaning or Movement and mobility before they can be used. Don’t try to record these visual stages until your baby or child has acquired the other developmental skills needed.
Using the Visual environment and visual materials cards

The Visual environment and visual materials cards give you advice on the toys and materials to use to help your child and to promote vision.

Functional vision is described using four levels (V1, V2, V3 and V4) and the cards are organised to support learning and development at each of these levels.

Use Record 1 and Record 2 of the Record of developing vision with your specialist teacher to ascertain your child’s starting visual level and then change the Visual environment and visual materials card you are using as your child progresses from one visual level to the next.

On every Activity card associated with the Developmental journal there is a reminder to refer to the Visual environment and visual materials cards when planning an activity to help your child’s development and promote vision.
General age guide

The Developmental journal is deliberately presented as a sequence of developmental stages that are not linked to age. However, expected age norms can be identified for each stage and a rough guide to the ages at which skills and goals might be achieved by a typically developing or ‘average’ child with limited vision, is given below.

It is to be expected that an ‘average’ baby and young child with limited vision will learn new things and acquire skills at a slower rate than a fully-sighted child of the same age. However, parents and professionals sometimes want to know how their child’s development compares with what fully sighted children are doing – for example, it can increase understanding of how their child is developing and how this fits in with brothers and sisters or friends.

The age norms associated with the stages in the Developmental journal set out here have been presented as overlapping, to take into account children who make faster progress and those who develop more slowly. For example, in Stage 1b, some children move on to Stage 2 at about eight months, whereas others won’t be ready until about 11 months of age or later.

Children with the most limited vision generally develop more slowly, reflecting the extra time they need to learn about their world. The rate at which some children develop is also influenced by other factors, like an additional sensory impairment or learning difficulty. It should be emphasised therefore that these age guides are approximate guidelines only. Professionals may wish to be aware they are not standard age norms (which are sometimes used in professional assessment tools).

Every child develops at a different rate and learns things in a slightly different way. Some are quicker in one area of development than another. What matters is whether a child is moving forward and on all fronts.
Uneven progress

All children develop at different rates and most will show areas of relative strength and weakness at any one moment in time. Some children, for example, learn to walk quite quickly but are much slower in learning to talk. Some start learning to talk, but are not yet walking independently.

This variation between different areas of development is particularly marked in babies and young children with limited vision. Sometimes other factors will be affecting the rate of development in particular areas, such as a motor or other sensory or learning difficulty.

This sometimes means that your child may be ready to move forward to a next stage in one area of development, but not in others.

Obviously if your child is ready to move forward in one area they should be helped to strengthen this area of ability. At the same time, you will want to support learning and give more help to those areas which are coming along more slowly.

If you find that your child is having difficulty in moving forward in one or more developmental areas or themes, the Getting Stuck? booklet may give you further ideas and suggestions. Talk through any concerns you have with your professional advisors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Approximate age guide</th>
<th>Approximate age guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(limited vision)</td>
<td>(fully sighted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1a</td>
<td>0 to 6 months</td>
<td>0 to 4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1b</td>
<td>4 to 12 months</td>
<td>4 to 7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>8 to 18 months</td>
<td>7 to 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>15 to 24 months</td>
<td>12 to 17 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>21 to 30 months</td>
<td>17 to 22 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>27 to 36 months</td>
<td>22 to 30 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Working together to support development in children

Early help for babies with visual impairment

A health-education partnership is needed to ensure that all aspects of a baby and young child’s early progress and learning are adequately supported. Help for children with visual impairment should be available locally immediately after visual impairment is identified. Health and education work closely together to provide help through local educational authority sensory impairment services and ophthalmology/eye clinics and community paediatric services. More specialist advice is available from regional and national health centres.

Promoting vision

Babies and young children with very limited vision may not achieve their visual potential because their vision is too blurred to give them meaningful information. It is therefore desirable that babies and young children with limited vision are helped to develop and achieve their full potential for vision as early as possible so that they can gain maximum developmental benefit from vision. The Developmental Vision Team at Great Ormond Street Hospital has shown that the programme to promote vision development is successful in most of the conditions that lead to visual impairment. This help should start as early as possible and continue through the early years.

The Developmental journal includes the developmental sequence of visual development and ideas developed by Dr Patricia Sonksen to help young children develop and use their vision to its full potential, presented here as the Record of developing vision.

Joint use of the Journal

Parents ‘hold’ the Developmental journal and it should be used in whatever way suits a family best. It can be used without any professional support or input, but this is not ideal. It’s best used in partnership with professional advisors, particularly key professionals that families meet regularly – for example, specialist teachers for the visually impaired.

Joint discussion of the material by families and professionals is really helpful. It allows professionals to share their impression of a child’s progress with full-time carers and gives specialist teachers for the visually impaired the opportunity to explain the significance of some of the behaviours that are listed. Filling in the Journal together and discussing it aids joint planning. We hope it will help professionals to make their expertise in helping children with limited vision, and their suggestions and advice, available to families, at the same time as helping families to share everything they know about their child.

The purpose of the Journal is to complement other professional tools. Professionals should be aware that the Journal is not a standardised assessment tool with standard age norms and therefore not designed to replace other professional materials of this type.

Moving on into Early Years settings

The Developmental journal is intended to support parents over their child’s first three years of life. During this time parents are their child’s first carer and educator and a large proportion of learning and development takes place at home. By the age of three, the majority of children will be attending or will be preparing to start pre-school, playgroups and nurseries etc. For many children there will be some aspects of the Journal that still need to be filled in as they enter nursery school and we recommend that parents take the material with them to discuss in Early Years settings, as decisions are being made about educational placements and about the additional support a child may need to thrive.
Children with additional difficulties – including older children

The Developmental journal can be used with children who are developing more slowly and/or have additional motor, sensory and learning difficulties. It may continue to be of value to the families of these children for several years until their child reaches the end of the material.

However, the Journal may need some adaptation to the needs of individual children and this is best done with the help of professional advisors that work with a child and family. The following general guidance points are all important when the material is being used with children who are developing more slowly and/or have additional motor, sensory and learning difficulties:

• Rate of learning will be very individual. It may take longer to achieve each stage of development and the general age guidelines in this booklet are likely to be less helpful or relevant than for other children.

• Suggested goals and activities may need to be broken down into smaller, structured steps to ensure children make steady progress.

• There may be greater variation in what can be achieved and when. For example, if a child has a motor difficulty, the goals for movement and mobility may need to be adapted with the help of specialist advice from professional advisors. The order in which goals can be achieved may also differ sometimes from that listed for other children.

• Some suggested goals and activities will need to be modified to suit the learning style and abilities of particular children – for example, if a child also has a hearing impairment.

Please remember that if your child has any physical or medical difficulties in addition to a visual impairment, it is vital to consult other relevant professionals who may be working with your child before carrying out activities suggested on the Activity cards – for example, your paediatrician, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, mobility officer etc.
How the material was developed

The Developmental journal has been created through a unique partnership of parents and health and education professionals working together to ensure that it meets families’ needs.

After the Early Support Monitoring protocol for deaf babies and children was published in 2004, parents of children with limited vision requested a similar set of materials. An integrated health/education approach was needed to design and deliver materials to meet the needs of children with severe visual impairment because of their specific developmental and visual patterns and needs.

The Developmental Vision Team from Great Ormond Street Hospital was invited to lead the development team, which included senior members from paediatrics and psychology and a senior specialist advisory teacher for children with visual impairment. The development process was supported by an advisory committee made up of national representatives for health, education and the voluntary sector, with specialist knowledge of visual impairment and early education.

The Journal was developed over a two-year period, beginning with a review of materials currently in use in the UK and elsewhere. The Development team reviewed checklists and assessment procedures available nationally and internationally and sought the views of services for children with visual impairment, as well as families, as to their usefulness. The team worked closely with families and professionals to seek their views as to what was needed and what was already in use.
It became clear that there were very few useful procedures available that were readily available to families and to those who work with families. Those materials that were available lacked detail on developmental growth in the first two years of life and did not take into account recent research or clinical experience of the most significant developmental processes for babies and young children with visual impairment.

Parents and professionals worked closely with the Development team in giving their views of what worked best. Over 40 families were involved in three parent focus groups to discuss the material and four additional national consultation events involving parents were held where draft materials were discussed and reviewed. Draft materials were piloted and refined over the period of a year through home visiting and use with individual families and with parents at hospital clinic visits. Consultations were made with a range of professionals at three focus groups involving specialist teachers for visual impairment and four national consultation events involving teachers and parents. Every stage of consultation influenced the design and content of the materials.

The final version of the Developmental journal draws on the scientific research, existing developmental tools and clinical experience of the Developmental Vision Team from Great Ormond Street Hospital, insights from other researchers and clinicians, and in particular, feedback from parents and professionals.
Further reading

Show me what my friends can see: a developmental guide for parents of babies with severely impaired sight and their professional advisors
P Sonksen and B Stiff

Let’s eat: feeding a child with a visual impairment
J Brody and L Webber
Blind Childrens Center, Los Angeles (1994)

Get a wiggle on
R Drouillard, S Raynor, Rev. A Story, Ed. L Alonso
The Blind Children’s Fund Publications
Michigan State University, USA (1997)

Get a move on
R Drouillard and S Raynor
The Blind Children’s Fund Publications
Michigan State University, USA (1996)

Little steps to learning: play in the home for children who are blind or visually impaired 0-3 years
I Haughton and S Mackevicius
Royal Victoria Institute for the Blind, Melbourne, Australia (2004)

I’m posting the peebles: active learning through play for children who are blind or visually impaired
I Haughton and S Mackeviciuss
Royal Victoria Institute for the Blind, Melbourne, Australia (2001)

Talk to me: a language guide for parents of blind children
L Kekelis and N Chernus-Mansfield
Blind Children’s Center, Los Angeles, California, USA (1984)
Look at it this way: toys and activities for children with a visual impairment
R Lear and Butterworth-Heinemann

Dancing cheek to cheek: nurturing beginning social, play and language interactions
L Meyers and P Lansky
Blind Childrens Center, Los Angeles, California, USA

Learning to play: common concerns for the visually impaired preschool child
S Recchia
Blind Childrens Center, Los Angeles, California, USA (1987)

Play it my way: learning through play with your visually impaired child
Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) (2001)

Reaching, crawling, walking…. let’s get moving
S Simmons and S O’Mara Maida
Blind Childrens Center, Los Angeles (1992)
Acknowledgements

The Developmental journal was devised in consultation with families of babies and young children with limited vision and the professionals who work with them from across England. Thanks are due to the many people who commented on the materials while they were in development – what they said has been essential to improving the Journal and making it fit for purpose.

Particular thanks to Hertfordshire Specialist Advisory Service for seconding Jackie Osborne and supporting the piloting of this material with families in their area and to the Advisory Committee and past and present colleagues of the Developmental Vision Team at Great Ormond Street Hospital/Institute of Child Health.

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Naomi Dale Joint Project Lead
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Valerie Tadic Psychology Researcher and Administrator for the Development Team
Patricia Sonksen Consultant to project and lead on visual materials

Alison Salt and Naomi Dale are Consultant Neurodevelopmental Paediatrician and Consultant Clinical Psychologist respectively and Joint Leads of the Developmental Vision Team, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust. They are Honorary Lecturers at the Institute of Child Health, University College London.

Jackie Osborne is a Specialist Advisory Teacher for the Visually Impaired and Co-Manager of the Visual Impairment Team of the Specialist Advisory Service to Children, Schools and Families in Hertfordshire.
Patricia Sonksen, former Director of the Developmental Vision Team and Senior Lecturer and Consultant Neurodevelopmental Paediatrician acted as consultant to the Development team. She is responsible for the Record of developing vision and associated Developing vision activity cards published here as part of the Developmental journal.

Advisory Committee
Eileen Boothroyd    Education Officer
          SENSE
Sue Buckley        Director for Research and Training, The Down Syndrome Educational Trust and Emeritus Professor of Developmental Disability, Department of Psychology, University of Portsmouth
Christine Ennals   Family support specialist and specialist advisory teacher for the visually impaired Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust
Julie Jennings     National Development Officer: Early Years Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)
Sue Lewis          Director of Educational Development and Inclusion, Mary Hare, Newbury, and lead for the development of the Early Support Monitoring protocol for deaf babies and children in 2003/4
Diana Wingfield   Head of Visual Impairment Services, Essex
Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment

Developmental Vision Team at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) and the Institute of Child Health

The Developmental Vision Team at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) has been developing materials, guidance and service delivery for babies and infants with visual loss since 1970. The team is multidisciplinary, with staff from neurodevelopmental paediatrics, psychology, nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and optometry. The Developmental Vision Clinic provides specialist assessment and management of the development and vision of children with severe and profound visual loss.

For over thirty years the Developmental Vision Team has carried out clinical work and research in designing, developing and evaluating tools and programmes to promote early development and vision for babies and young children with limited vision, with their families. For example, the Reynell Zinkin Developmental Scales, developed by previous members of the team under the direction of Joan Reynell (1970 to 1978), are one of the only semi-standardised assessment tools for babies and preschool children with visual loss in the world. Under the direction of Dr Patricia Sonksen (1978 to 2001) the team developed and evaluated an integrated scheme of assessment and management for a wide range of areas of development including visual development and functional vision. A practical book of developmental and visual guidance for parents and professional advisors was first published by Sonksen and Stiff in 1991 and is now available in five languages. It is used nationally and internationally. Tests of functional vision have been developed to measure progress in the development of vision and eye movements and to explore the baby and young child’s vision for the everyday environment and for visual materials.
Early Support

Early Support is the central government mechanism for achieving better co-ordinated, family-focused services for young disabled children and their families across England. It is developing at a time of significant change, as part of the restructuring of children’s services in response to Every Child Matters and alongside new integrated assessment, information and inspection frameworks for children’s services.

Early Support builds on good practice. It facilitates the achievement of objectives set by broader initiatives to integrate services, in partnership with families who use services and the many agencies that provide services for young children.

To find out more about the Early Support programme, visit www.earlysupport.org.uk

The Early Support Information for parents booklet on Visual impairment offers general information about visual impairment and advice for families with children under the age of five.

The Early Support Family pack contains a Family file to help families keep track of multiple contacts and co-ordinate support for their child where a number of different agencies are involved.

If you would like a copy of these publications, which are available free of charge, please ring 0845 602 2260 and ask for the following:

Information for parents booklet on Visual impairment Ref: ESPP8
Early Support Family pack Ref: ESPP1
Developmental journal
for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 1a
Babies are born ready to be sociable and from their earliest days they’re interested in people. Often one of the earliest signs for parents that their baby is not seeing is that they don’t look at their parent’s eyes. This can be a source of great worry and anxiety and often triggers medical investigations and diagnosis.

Your baby may seem passive and not interested in you in the beginning. They can’t see your facial expression of delight and respond to your smiles. It’s difficult to tell whether they want to play with you when they don’t look at you or make lively expressions. The most important priority at the beginning is to wake your baby up to the pleasure of being together. In the early days, parents start by taking the lead and babies tend to lie very still when talked to and played with. They go still because they’re listening intently.

After a little while, babies start to show they want to be with you. Each baby has their own way of doing this, but often it’s by cuddling in when held, being soothed by your voice and handling or showing pleasure when hearing their parent. This is the beginning of your baby developing the special and unique relationship with you that is called attachment.

With your encouragement, your baby will start to explore your face, grabbing and patting it. At this stage, babies often find faces more interesting than objects. Some children with developing vision will start to inspect your face visually if it’s very close by.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about self and parent and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alerting/showing awareness when talked to</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing when held</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to soothing behaviour when crying</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearing to recognise and be most responsive to parent’s voice eg smiling responsively to parent’s voice/parent’s presence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingering parent’s face</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking at parent’s face if very close</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Record of developing vision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to approach of parent eg by stilling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Showing feelings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing contentment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crying to express needs eg cries when hungry, uncomfortable or in pain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing pleasure eg smiles, stills or makes excited movements and facial expressions during interaction with parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooing and gurgling when happy and comfortable</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Becoming attached to parent/carer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopping crying when picked up</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing positive response to being lifted up</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing positive response to handling by familiar person</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You’ll start to recognise whether your baby is crying for hunger or a cuddle. You may also notice that they coo and wave their arms and legs when excited. Smiling often comes later than in babies with normal vision – smiles may not appear until about four months and even then may not come very often. Your baby can however be helped to show a lively expression when having fun with you. You can find out what makes your baby happy, secure and contented by picking up and responding to the signs they give you. Babies with limited vision sometimes startle and stiffen if they are picked up suddenly by an adult. This is because they can’t see you approaching and prepare themselves for being lifted up. Giving your baby careful forewarning of what you’re going to do will stop them getting upset and withdrawing.

During this stage, babies become more socially aware and playful. They start to enjoy simple social play like rocking, singing, and gentle ‘rough and tumble’ games. By the end of the stage, your baby may be beginning to interact with you more directly, by waving arms and legs excitedly when you play together, or making vocal sounds when you talk to them.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

### Social interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joining in social interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying cuddles from parent eg snuggling in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving arms, legs excitedly when played with</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting body to other person’s movements</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making vocal sounds during interaction eg vocalising back when talked to</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to stop interaction eg by stiffening or crying</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning

Everything is new to babies when they first come into the world. They’re specially drawn to looking at faces and listening to voices.

Your baby will respond to sounds but their listening response may be very subtle. Parents often can’t tell at the beginning whether their baby is listening or not. If you watch carefully, you’ll see when your baby is listening to your voice with interest and pleasure. They may become still and go quiet or stop crying. After a time you may begin to notice more active responses to your voice, such as smiling or your baby may move their arms and legs excitedly.

Parents talk to babies in a very special way that is different from the way they communicate with other adults. This style of talking is called child directed speech or ‘child directed language’ (it has also been called ’motherese’ or ‘baby talk’). Child directed speech uses short, lively words and phrases, lots of repetition, varying the tone of voice (often using a higher pitch voice), and lots of facial expression. This happens in every culture and this kind of speech encourages babies to listen and/or watch (if they have vision) for increasingly longer times. If you speak more than one language, it’s important that you use whichever language is most natural for you.

Babies later in this stage listen more carefully and show different reactions to different voices, tones of voice and other noises. They begin to show they recognise and take pleasure in some familiar sounds in the home – eg the sound of their music box or running bathwater.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to voice or other sounds especially when close eg baby goes still, quietens, stops crying, shows excited body movements and may turn towards speaker</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reacting differently to different voices and tones of voice eg soothing and negative tones (smiles, cries, frowns, moves limbs)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and beginning to show different response to different sounds eg alarmed by loud noise, soothed by music</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Communication, language and meaning continued

**Developmental journal · Stage 1a**

#### Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending to person more when they use lively intonation and baby talk (child directed speech) very close by</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the early days, babies have very limited ways of expressing themselves or communicating, although they can make contented snuffling sounds or cry if they’re hungry or uncomfortable. After the first weeks of life babies begin to express their needs in a wider variety of ways, using a tired cry or a more insistent hungry cry and gurgling to show pleasure. These expressions become more consistent and parents can then interpret what their baby is feeling or needing more easily. You’ll see that often your baby just wants your physical comfort and company and is starting to develop different ways of getting your attention.

As babies begin to produce a greater range of vocal sounds, parents copy these sounds, which encourages babies to make the sounds again. Babies make a cooing sound when contented – usually a short vowel-like sounds produced at the back of the mouth, eg ‘a’, ‘o’. It’s quieter and more musical than crying. When adults ‘coo back’, it encourages babies to continue and coo more.

Even in the early days, parents act as if the baby is intending to communicate – they interpret what gurgles or cries may mean. They have ‘conversations’ with their babies, leaving pauses as if it were the baby’s turn to reply. This is the earliest form of conversation and is the foundation for later turn-taking. Soon the baby will begin to use their voice to vocalise back.

**For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2**

### Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attracting attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to attract attention eg crying to attract attention and settling when picked up</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting attention in other ways eg gurgling or using other vocal sounds to get attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Expressive language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making vocal sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making some non-speech sounds eg squeals, ahh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making cooing, raspberries and gurgling sounds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocalising back when talked to</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A newborn baby may spend most of their time asleep, feeding and crying, but they can be helped to start discovering. Parents and other people are the most important source of interest and parents are the first ‘playmates’, who make discovery fun. This is especially important for babies with more limited vision who may lack any visual motivation or incentive to explore.

Learning about sound starts even before a baby is born. Babies can recognise their mother’s voice and even music while still in the womb. They develop very early recognition and memory for sounds.

Babies may turn as a reflex in the general direction of a sound. A baby with vision will then catch sight of what made the sound and start to learn where sounds come from. At this stage babies with limited vision may not be able to see where a sound is coming from and will not automatically turn to sound, but you can help your baby learn about this as they get older.

A newborn baby doesn’t know that there are ‘solid’ objects in the world. They learn about their parents and carers first (see Social and emotional development). Babies with vision start to notice contrasting and bright objects and lines and edges that are close to them and will gaze at them – they see that objects can move. Babies with limited vision start to learn about surfaces and objects as their hands or their body accidentally touch them.

**For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2**

### Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning about sound</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to learn where voice comes from eg finding face very close by</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning about objects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding that objects are there</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying on different surfaces</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming aware of and fingering objects in their daily experience eg parent’s body, mother’s bangles, milk bottle, soft rattle</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding about actions on objects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving hanging rattle or soft toy accidentally while moving arms or legs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Babies experience many new sensations through touch in their everyday life. They may snuggle into a soft rug, squirm as body cream is applied, or lie quietly when softly stroked and caressed. At this early stage your baby may start to scratch or ‘scrunch’ at your clothes or their cot covering or move their hand on the surface they’re lying on.

A newborn baby will close their fingers and grip when your finger is placed in their hand. This is a reflex response to your finger touching their palm.

The hands of babies with limited vision need to be helped to ‘come alive’, or they may stay passive. This is a very important issue as hands are going to become like ‘eyes’ for children with limited vision.

**Babies with vision** start to catch sight of their hands as they pass in front of their eyes. They begin to watch their hands towards the end of this stage and to bring their hands to their mouth to suck. As babies with limited vision do not catch sight of their hands, you need to help them to discover their hands. Their first explorations are likely to be of your hands, your face and your bangles or necklace. Once your baby is using their hands, they can start to discover the world around them, including different textures and sensations.

Babies begin to open their hands spontaneously and then learn to close their fingers deliberately around an adult’s finger. By the end of this stage they may do this with a soft small toy, like a squeaker.

*For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2*

### Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning with touch</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to different sensations/textures on body eg stills or becomes more active in response to a different sensation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scratching at and feeling clothes or surface eg scrunching own clothes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to feel different surfaces and textures</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discovering hands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sucking or mouthing hands or thumb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming aware of hands eg noticing that bells on wrist bracelet jingle when hands move or watching hands (if sufficient vision)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordinating hands and fingers – grasping finger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing fingers as reflex when palm of hand is touched</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing fingers (not as reflex) when the palmar surface of fingers is touched</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening hand when something touches the back or side of it</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing fingers on parent’s finger or soft toy using palmer grip</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Movement and mobility

Newborn babies move their arms and legs as reflex responses to their needs and environment. As they move, strength and muscle control is developed. Growing curiosity and interest in their surroundings gives babies the drive and incentive to move.

Babies who receive little information through vision tend to lie quietly or ‘still’ when listening to what’s happening around them, and may have much less experience of movement. They often dislike being laid on their chest and there is little incentive for them to lift their head up to see things. This can reduce opportunities to develop the muscles responsible for head and body control.

You can help your baby to start feeling secure in different positions by making this enjoyable, for example by stroking your baby’s body in different positions. You can also start to introduce your baby to the calming or exciting effect of body motion like rocking, swaying or being lifted up and down.

Your baby is learning their first orientation skills by adjusting to your body while being held or carried. Experiences of movement teach the baby a lot about their own body and where their body is in space. Body movements help the baby strengthen and extend muscle control and body co-ordination.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body awareness – being comfortable in different positions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying on back happily</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying on tummy happily (when supervised)</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying happily on side</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position in space – enjoying motion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying being rocked</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying being lifted up and down in space</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Exploring the environment – learning about the floor as a base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lying contented on a range of surfaces eg crib, carpet, bed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling floor/surfaces nearby when lying</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extending movement and co-ordination

#### Head control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turning head to side while lying on back</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning head to side while lying on tummy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to raise head briefly when lying on back</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to raise head briefly when lying on tummy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to lift up head and shoulders leaning on bent arms when lying on tummy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding head erect while being carried or held upright</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Trunk (body) control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waving arms and kicking legs when excited while lying on back</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting position of arms and legs while lying on tummy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care

Babies are born with a range of reflex survival skills such as sucking and swallowing.

During the first few months of life, they express their care needs by crying and are dependent on parents and carers for all their physical needs. They have no control over being fed, washed, changed etc, but can see when parents are approaching and begin to make connections, for example – Mum means breast or bottle and milk!

When visual information is missing it's more difficult for babies to know what to expect when someone approaches. Babies with limited vision often startle and stiffen when they don’t know what’s going to happen to them.

Forewarning is very important at this stage to increase your baby’s sense of security and comfort during early care experiences.

As sucking is a reflex action in a new baby, babies with limited vision often adjust to early feeding smoothly although some babies may have more difficulty.

Setting up regular routines for daily care will help your baby recognise and accept what is happening and feel secure.

**For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feeding/eating</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening mouth in anticipation for breast or bottle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placing hand on breast or bottle while feeding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dressing and nappy changing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting having nappy changed</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting being dressed</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care

Developmental goal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Washing and bathing**

- Accepting being bathed: 1/2
- Enjoying being in the bath: 1/2

**Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern**

- Accepting bedtime routines: 1/2
Developmental journal
for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 1b
Social and emotional development

Parents and familiar people in their lives are becoming very important to babies at this stage. They begin to recognise and show pleasure in the sound of their parent’s approach. They love being cuddled by parents and other familiar people. By the end of this stage, they anticipate being lifted up when they hear their parent approaching and saying ‘Up you come’, by making excited movements or even by lifting their arms and/or head.

Children who are beginning to develop vision will show great interest in your face at this stage and can learn to reach up and explore your face.

Babies show their emotions more clearly now, so you can detect more easily when your baby is enjoying a game and showing delight, or is feeling lonely, tired or hungry. Babies may chuckle and smile during social games that are fun.

During this stage babies begin to respond differently to the voices of parents and unfamiliar people because the special relationship or attachment between parent and baby is growing stronger. They start to prefer to be held by their parent, especially when distressed.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about self and parent and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to approach of parent eg showing excited body movements, lifting head</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at and responding to parent’s smile</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Check Record of developing vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating being lifted up</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing a greater range of feelings eg delight, distress, excitement</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing delight eg laughing and chuckling</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becoming attached to parent or carer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying cuddles</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiling more often for a familiar than unfamiliar person</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferring to be handled by particular people</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing pleasure, excitement or is comforted if their parent is close by eg becomes more vocal, more active or more calm</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Babies participate more actively in social games like rough and tumble, which often leads to chuckles and excited body movements. They enjoy rocking and bouncing games on the knee and start to enjoy bouncing along to a familiar rhyme or song.

Your baby may start to ‘mirror’ or tune into your body movements or vocal sounds. It may not be an exact repeat or echo, but it’s enough to show that your baby is beginning to adjust their behaviour to fit in with yours. This may take the form of swaying or bouncing, jiggling on your knee, moving arms, or making excited vocal sounds together. Moods like excitement or calmness may be ‘mirrored’ too.

By the end of this stage, babies are starting to become more active in social interaction – they begin to show when they want to stop playing and might also get you to repeat a physical action game.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

### Social interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiling to get a response</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying interaction eg waving arms and legs and chuckling during interaction</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Mirroring’ parent’s body movements eg holding hands and moving arms together</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying facial expression and mouth shapes eg sticking out tongue, opening mouth (if sufficient vision and very close)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to indicate wants action to stop eg turning body away</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to indicate wants action repeated eg bouncing or rocking to start game again</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning

Parents continue to use child-directed speech (‘baby talk’) with their children. They often talk using short, simple utterances with a singsong intonation and lots of expression, with sounds going up and down. Child-directed speech includes special ‘baby’ words like choo choo, woof woof, dada and mama.

Babies listen intently to your voice and their own. They listen to familiar songs and rhymes and begin to listen to other people talking together. They become increasingly interested in speech and sounds in the environment and start to recognise regular patterns.

Babies become more aware of the different sounds around them and may respond differently to different sounds like the vacuum hoover or clock. They begin to recognise regular household sounds and react in a more predictable way when they hear particular sounds.

You’ll probably notice that your baby’s ability to control their attention is still limited. They switch their attention to any new sound, object or toy. They begin to focus attention on one thing for longer – whether listening to something, or playing with an object – but still lose interest quickly if they’re distracted.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

### Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing prolonged interest when talked to eg is more excited or pays attention or vocalises more</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to music by swaying</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to own voice eg ‘ba’ and repeats</td>
<td>3/4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to listen to other people talking together</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to show recognition of familiar sounds eg excitement at water running in the bath or pleasure at return of brother or sister</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing eager interest in anything new – switches attention to any new distracting event/sound</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending to parents, toys etc for longer periods if not distracted by the introduction of something new</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning continued

At this stage babies are beginning to recognise what happens during everyday routines. When hearing a familiar sound or phrase or smelling a familiar smell, they recognise and anticipate what's going to happen next. For example, babies hear the bathwater running and their parent saying ‘bathtime’ and they get excited about having a bath. This is called situational understanding. Later, the baby will start to make the link between the language phrases that go with everyday routines and the routines themselves. Everyday routines are therefore very important for language learning.

All babies need to hear speech sounds and phrases over and over again in order to recognise and eventually understand them. There are many opportunities for you to say the same phrases again and again – whether you’re changing nappies, giving your baby a bath, or singing a rhyme.

Apart from phrases, the same objects are also used over and over again in everyday routines. This lets babies begin to feel and experience an object and work out what it’s used for. For example, a sponge is used for washing while a bottle is used for drinking. Direct, regular experience is especially important for babies who can’t see objects clearly or the people who are using those objects.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

Understanding language and meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to anticipate what is coming next in a familiar routine (e.g. showing excitement or pleasure) e.g. spoon stirred in feeding bowl, bib on before feed, undressing for bath, sound of bathwater</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognising what objects are for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring object during the everyday routine e.g. exploring brush, bottle</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
At this stage, babies make more deliberate attempts to attract your attention. Those with sufficient vision show more interest in their surroundings. They begin to look around and reach towards things that interest them. They will see that their parent is watching them. This is the beginning of joint attention when parents follow the baby’s focus of attention and interest.

When babies with limited vision don’t look directly, it can be harder to know what they’re attending to or interested in. You will need to watch carefully to see the more subtle signs of your baby’s interest and the ways in which they try to gain your attention. You’ll also need to bring the world more directly to your child than is normally the case to help them develop their interest in the world. You can start developing a way of showing your baby that you’re involved and attending (shared discovery). This is helpful and lays the foundations of joint attention at this stage.

Babies with limited vision sometimes try to communicate their needs in a rather individual way, for example, through a particular body movement when they don’t like something or a hand movement or vocal sound if they want something they can hear. They may make excited vocal sounds to attract your attention.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attracting attention</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberately attracting and keeping parent’s attention through vocalising, excited body movements and facial expression</td>
<td>3/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint attention (sharing experiences)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing pleasure when you join in play with a toy</td>
<td>3/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joining in familiar joint game with toy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to show interest in what you are doing eg reaches towards you and toy when you are playing with a musical toy</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating needs</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to communicate needs eg whinging and squirming when tired or hungry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicating wants activity to stop eg spits out food or pushes away</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Protesting if restrained eg makes body stiff and vocalises when protesting</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use hand movements to show wishes, eg open/shut hands (I want) and pushing objects away (I don’t want)</td>
<td>3/4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Babies at this stage experiment with more sounds and speech sounds are now getting more varied. They listen to you repeating their sounds and this encourages them to make more. After a time they’ll try to copy new sounds that you make. However, some babies with limited vision are very quiet and tend to keep their mouths closed. They may not see your eyes watching or your mouth moving or smiling – which are all incentives to vocalise more. They need to be given encouragement to make lip, tongue and chewing movements and form simple sounds.

Babies may start using sound combinations in their vocalisations when ‘talking’ to themselves and to you, ie they’ll begin to combine single consonants and vowels together to make ‘ba’, ‘bu’, ‘um’, ‘aga’. Then they’ll begin to make double sounds. These are often made at the front of the mouth and are easy to produce – for example, ‘dada’, ‘mama’, ‘baba’. Babies with limited vision need plenty of encouragement to make sounds like this, with adults copying and responding to any attempts that they make – but they also need quiet times in their cot or during play, so that they can listen to their own sounds and experiment.

Babies at this stage continue to join in early ‘conversation’ with you. The child directed speech (or baby talk) that parents naturally use has a singsong intonation and leaves pauses that will give your child clues about when it’s their turn to vocalise. Repeating the sounds a baby makes encourages turn taking.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

### Expressive language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making vocal sounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to develop some consonant sounds eg uguh/mm/hu</td>
<td>3/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocalising to self with tuneful voice for minutes at a time when lying in cot or at play and appears to be listening to own voice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producing an increasing range of consonant sounds such as b/p</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to babble in a way that is more speech – like eg ba, da, ga</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Expressive language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making ‘conversation’</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking turns in making sounds with you as if having a conversation</td>
<td>3/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copying your non-speech sounds eg cough, raspberry</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making more varied sounds or vocalises for longer when talked to by parent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Babies begin to notice the world around them and begin to reach out to it. They observe interesting objects and try and reach towards them in order to get hold of them.

Early patting and swiping at things is an important introduction to objects. This may come a little later in babies with very limited vision and you’ll need to help them to find the objects.

When babies with limited vision hear an interesting sound, it’s often difficult for them to work out the direction it’s coming from, as they don’t see the object that’s making the sound. They become very still and listen intently. They have to learn that the sound is coming from a solid object and where that object is in relation to themselves. This is called sound localisation and babies at this stage of development are learning more about this.

Babies start to take toys to their mouth to suck. They’re very interested in the taste, smell and feel of objects. They begin to grasp objects for longer and start making deliberate actions on objects. They begin to learn about simple properties of objects by shaking rattles, squeaking squeakers or pressing a soft piano.

Remember, play is a child’s way of learning and they learn through experimenting with different toys and objects.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

## Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about sound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orienting</strong> towards source of sound eg adjusting head or head/ body towards sound</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching for a sound source but not necessarily in the correct direction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching for a sound source in the correct direction in front of them at ear level</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching for a sound source in an arc between ear level</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning to parent’s voice when parent sitting near them</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning about objects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding that objects are there</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaching for and grasping object on a surface</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding about actions on objects</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using an object to produce a sound eg shaking rattle/bell deliberately or squeezing a squeaker deliberately</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using body to produce a sound eg banging on table with hands or banging feet on floor</td>
<td>3/4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Play and learning continued

As your baby’s hand skills develop they’ll begin to pat and explore different textures and objects more actively, turning them in their hand. This develops into feeling the shape and contour of objects. Babies with limited vision may rely heavily on their hands for physical learning – it helps them if they have opportunity to explore and feel different textures and shapes in their everyday life.

Babies find their hands and play with their own fingers. They may look at them, too, if they have sufficient vision. They start using two hands together to explore objects and learn to pass an object from one hand to the other. They may reach out for an object with both hands.

As babies start to use their hands more, they begin to take objects to their mouth to suck and explore. This is the beginning of co-ordination of hand and arm movements.

Learning to grasp and then reach and grasp an object is more difficult with limited vision, since there is no visual information to help you adjust your hand in response to the position of the object. Babies need to be helped to develop an ‘adaptive hand grasp’ (ie adapting to what they’re trying to grasp or pick up). The development of this skill can be guided by parents during play (shared discovery). At this stage picking up usually involves a whole hand grasp.

Learning to let go of an object (release) is another important hand skill. At this stage it’s often not done intentionally and babies tend to just relax their grip on an object without noticing after a brief interval. This also happens when they’re distracted and become interested in holding another object.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

### Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning with touch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patting and feeling textures and objects with whole hand</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using fingers to explore different textures and consistencies of everyday things</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovering hands</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing with own fingers, grasping them together and/or watching them</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discovering hands</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding and grasping feet with hands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clapping hands together</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bringing toys to mouth for exploration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring actively the shape of toys etc</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulating toys eg by banging, shaking, turning them around in their hands</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using both hands to explore object</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-ordinating hands and fingers – grasping object</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding toy in hand grasp for longer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holding a larger toy or own bottle with both hands</td>
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<td>3/4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transferring object from one hand to the other</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Picking up smaller toy with whole hand (centre of hand and fingers around it)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Putting both hands out to reach an object</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release object from grasp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letting go of object (relaxes hand passively) after a while or when distracted</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Babies gain a greater degree of control over their arms, legs and chest at this stage of development and the early reflexes that lead to early movements have gone.

Babies with sufficient sight begin to sit up with less and less support, but learning to sit independently may take more time for some babies with limited vision. They may not see the image of the room move when they’re lifted or carried around and so are not able to use vision to adjust themselves and set the world ‘straight’ again. They need help to practice how to adjust their body position to maintain and recover balance when tilted. They may not have sufficient vision to realise that the floor is a continuous solid base and may need help to learn saving responses – ie how to use their arms as props when sitting or falling.

Babies are sometimes reluctant to be put on their tummy and this is more common in babies with limited vision. If this experience is limited, it reduces opportunities to develop the upper and lower limb, trunk and head control which are all needed for rolling, crawling and shifting position from prone to upright.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body awareness – being comfortable in different positions</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Locating objects placed on body eg a soother or bottle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating objects placed alongside body eg a soother or bottle</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying sitting supported</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying sitting unsupported for a few moments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing a sense of position in space/enjoying motion</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying gentle motion in a swing (age appropriate design)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying vigorous bouncing games</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental goal</td>
<td>Card</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>What my child does and enjoys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying side-to-side rocking games eg rocking on your lap</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to straighten upright when tilted to one side</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to use arms for saving when rocked from side to side</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(puts hands out to the floor at the side)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Babies with limited vision may not be as motivated to move as other children – they may not see other people moving around or any exciting objects in the distance that they want to reach. Babies need lots of experience of body movement and motion at this stage to encourage the desire to move – more vigorous rough and tumble and games involving rocking, tilting, rolling, diving and saving are all good. As body control increases, children learn to co-ordinate the movement of their limbs and body.

They may need to be actively encouraged to roll over, bottom shuffle and venture forward by sound and other stimuli, used to awaken their curiosity. They may also need to be shown how to roll and crawl.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring the environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimenting with rolling</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling surfaces other than floor eg sides of cupboard/sofa</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling purposefully towards parent or toy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to creep forward towards parent or toy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extending movement and co-ordination</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk (body) control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting upright with full support when placed</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using hands and arms as props when sitting</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting upright with less support when placed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Extending movement and co-ordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trunk (body) control</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to sit independently for a short time when placed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling from side to back</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling from back to front</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to roll from front to back</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
As feeding and care activities become familiar daytime routines, babies begin to recognise and anticipate aspects of what’s happening. They recognise the bottle or breast as a source of food and may reach towards and hold their bottle.

Babies with limited vision generally follow the same sequence of feeding milestones as any other child and general guidelines should be followed on when to introduce pureed food and finger feeding. Nevertheless, the introduction of each new step needs to be done slowly and carefully. Babies with limited vision may take time moving from teats to spoons and from liquids to pureed and lumpier foods. As with hands, putting something like a hard cold spoon into their mouths can be unpleasant if they can’t see what’s coming. They need forewarning and gentle introduction to anything new that’s going into their mouth.

Babies are learning to co-ordinate their hands and mouth and now become able to put things into their mouth. They start holding their own bottle for drinking. Finger feeding with pieces of rusk or toast is a good way to build up confidence in new tastes and textures. Some babies enjoy biting on finger foods as their teeth begin to appear. Chewing and swallowing is easier in a sitting position and babies can join family meals sitting once they’re able to sit in a feeding chair.

Regular routines and games during care routines help babies to recognise and enjoy what’s happening and to anticipate what might happen next.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 3 and 4
Towards independent self-care continued

### Developmental Journal · Stage 1b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feeding/eating</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to finger feed – sucking on easy dissolving foods when placed in hands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to bite piece off biscuit/banana or similar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dressing and nappy changing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying being dressed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying being in dry and clean nappy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating dressing routines</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Washing and bathing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splashing with pleasure and enjoying being gently splashed</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting face/hair washing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to recognising the bedtime routine</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeping consistently for several hours during the night</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developmental goal Card Possibly Definitely What my child does and enjoys
Developmental journal
for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 2
At this stage of development children show that they want their parents’ company and actively try to attract attention. They respond when their name is called and attend to parents talking to them when they’re close by. They also start showing more interest in other people beyond their parents, such as other adults in the home and brothers and sisters. As vision improves in some young children, they may start inspecting faces at very close range and even try to copy some facial expressions like a broad smile or frown.

Children start to show strong emotions – their likes, dislikes, fears and anxieties. They may show clear displeasure and protest. They giggle and laugh at amusing social games – for example, anticipating the tickle in ‘round and round the garden’. Other people’s feelings, like a loud angry voice, begin to be noticed and may upset them. You may find they enjoy and join in family laughter, even if they don’t know what it’s about.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about self and parent and others</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking attention for self eg physical approach towards parent, ‘calling’ – shouts, listens and shouts again, tugging clothes</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising and responding to own name (eg turning towards an approaching speaker, looking up)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening to other people talking together</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising some family names eg mummy, daddy or the names of brothers and sisters</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing interest in other children eg stilling and listening, vocalising or approaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing and understanding feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Making clear protests eg making body stiff and vocalising</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughing in anticipation and during favourite games</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying facial expressions if parent is close up (less than 30 cm) eg smiling</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check Record of developing vision</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding differently to other people’s emotions eg big brother talking in cross voice, joining in family laughter</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing more feelings like fear and dislike eg grimaces when dislikes food</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children prefer to be close to their parents, especially when in unfamiliar places, and are often wary of strangers. This is a positive sign of attachment and reflects their special relationship with their parent. It also shows their understanding that adults continue to exist when away from them (person concept). During this stage it becomes much more difficult to separate children from their parents – many children get upset when a parent leaves the room or house (separation anxiety). The return of a parent is greeted with pleasure. Sometimes children get upset when a parent returns, as if showing their displeasure at having been left in the first place.

Separation anxiety can be delayed in children with limited vision and sometimes they find it more difficult to show wariness and anxiety – but don’t assume that it won’t develop later. It may seem they’re fine being left because they show little reaction, but they may not realise that you’ve left the room or home. Separation needs careful preparation so that your child learns about parents leaving and returning and doesn’t get too confused or distressed.

Children at this stage start developing clearer goals and purpose for their behaviour and begin to want to do simple things for themselves. This can lead to frustration and distress if they get stuck while trying to do something or if something they’re enjoying gets removed or lost. This can be frustrating for you too if your child wants to go on doing something that you’re trying to stop, like repeatedly banging a spoon on the table!

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing attachment to parent/carer</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferring to be with familiar people</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing wariness of strangers – eg reacts negatively to being lifted by a stranger or to stranger’s voice</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing anxiety if left alone</td>
<td></td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugging and kissing familiar people/showing affection</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reacting negatively to separation from parent or caregiver</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing attachment to parent/carer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing positive reaction to reunion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring new environment and objects if parent is nearby</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour and self-regulation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to do simple actions by self</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressing frustration and protesting if wishes are thwarted e.g. restrained from</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>banging table</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing distress at removal of something enjoyable e.g. a particular toy</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children continue to enjoy songs, rhymes and interaction games and this can include anything that is done within your family culture like rhymes, songs, prayers or other family rituals.

Children are now active play partners and can show you when they want to repeat a game and when they want to stop. They become able to join in some actions like clapping hands and singing along. They may begin a game – for example, holding out their hand for ‘Round and round the garden’. ‘Peek a boo’ can be great fun, pulling a small cloth off their head and waiting for the adult to say ‘Boo’! Children at this stage also often turn one of their new skills into a social game – throwing or casting away toys off their highchair table so that their parents have to pick them up again.

They begin to cooperate with everyday routines and learn about simple social expectations. This includes a simple social skill like waving ‘Bye bye’, which can be taught.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

### Social interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising familiar rhymes and games eg showing excitement, smiling, stilling</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating actions in a familiar rhyme game, eg tickle in ‘Round and round the garden’ and ‘This little piggie’</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Actively making movements during a familiar rhyme game</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to anticipate ‘Boo’ in ‘Peek a boo’</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting off a social game eg pulling cloth on face, holding out hand for ‘Round and round the garden’, opening/closing hands for ‘Twinkle twinkle little star’</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Copying actions eg clapping hands, stamping feet</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Social interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
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<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to join in turn-taking game with an object eg rolling ball, banging drum</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to join in ‘give and take’ games</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to imitate action with object eg banging a stick on xylophone</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing early social skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to wave bye bye when another person says ‘Bye bye’</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning

Children at this stage listen with more recognition. They begin to understand familiar sounds – for example, that the ‘ping’ of the microwave means dinner is coming. They often enjoy silly sounds and have fun exchanging raspberries and other fun vocal sounds with members of their family.

Children love social rhymes or songs with actions and are beginning to be able to let you know in different ways that they recognise a song, want to join in and sing along or join in with actions. Familiar rhyme games can provide the structured framework for your child to take their first steps in communication (see Social and emotional development).

Children now copy what they hear more and this is often the way they learn to say their first words, so frequent use of the same words, phrases and rhymes is very important and helpful.

At this stage children are beginning to be able to ignore distracting sounds if they’re attending to something else (selective listening). They’re more in control of their focus of interest and can concentrate on a chosen activity for a longer time.

Your child’s attention span may appear to be very variable because they’re becoming single channelled – that is, they can only attend to one thing at a time. If they’re looking at and playing with a toy, they often can’t listen to you at the same time. When absorbed in playing with an adult, however, they may want to play a game over and over again and you may tire before your child does!

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the meaning associated with some environmental sounds eg hears sound of key in door and looks expectant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Associating more distant sounds eg squeals when the vacuum cleaner is turned on and looks toward microwave or gets excited when the microwave pings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Puzzled expression or changes behaviour when hears something new or unexpected eg a police siren</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
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<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing rhythmically when being sung to or listening to music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying listening to the same simple story or song over and over again</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attending</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing interest and paying attention to what people have to say for a short time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Becoming absorbed in an activity and ignoring what is going on around them eg someone talking to them</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing selective listening – ignores sound/voice while concentrating on listening to something else</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Every day family and cultural routines and games are repeated. These allow your child to hear lots of familiar language many times over and this supports their emerging understanding.

Children are beginning to link familiar phrases with activities – for example, ‘Bathtime’, ‘Bedtime’, ‘going to the swings’. They’re also beginning to understand other familiar words like ‘No!’, their name and other simple phrases that they hear every day like ‘Clap your hands’, ‘Up you get’, ‘Sit down’. Children usually understand simple phrases before they can say them.

Children at this stage are also beginning to learn about familiar objects and what they’re used for (their function and purpose). Playing with everyday objects supports this learning. Later they must learn that there is a name or word label for each object. Children with vision hear you name an object as they look at it. Children with limited vision need to be touching and exploring or using the object when they hear its name being used in order to make the connection.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing understanding of link between objects and familiar routines, e.g. bib or spoon for mealtime, flannel or duck for bath time</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing excitement or anticipation when hearing a familiar phrase before a regular routine e.g. ‘bathtime’, ‘go to swings’, ‘go in the car’</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding what objects are for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making attempts to use objects on self but may not hold them correctly, e.g. brush on hair, spoon to feed, telephone to ear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing with everyday objects showing how it’s used e.g. taking empty cup to mouth</td>
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</table>
**Understanding language and meaning**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Definitely</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding ‘No’ and stopping activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognising <strong>symbolic vocalisations</strong> and relating them to appropriate animals or objects eg ‘brmm brmm’ to car, ‘eeoww’ to police siren, ‘miaow’ to cat</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding simple instruction in context eg ‘give mummy a kiss’, ‘clap hands’, ‘wave bye bye’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognising names of familiar objects eg bottle, favourite toy or teddy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children begin to attract their parent’s attention to things that interest them. If they have sufficient vision, they learn to do this using directed eye gaze, gestures (like pointing) and vocalising. Parents respond by attending to the child and to the object. This is called ‘joint attention’, since child and parent are attending to and focusing on the same object of interest.

When parents see what a child is interested in, they usually talk about it so that their topic of conversation follows their child’s interests. Joint attention and language about the same object help a child make connections between objects, events and shared meanings. This lays the foundation for shared understandings about the world and for language. (Shared discovery is also important for developing joint attention).

Achieving joint attention can be more difficult for a child with limited vision who can’t follow their parent’s eye gaze – and is not yet talking. They don’t know when an adult is watching them. Parents often say that they can’t tell what their child is interested in and attending to – for example, whether they’re listening to the bird singing outside the window or not.

Children at this stage begin to communicate their needs, preferences and wishes. They make vocal noises and use gesture to show what they want eg arms up to be lifted, hand reach to request an object. Children with vision learn to point to indicate what they want or can see. Young children with limited vision may not naturally develop gestures, but they may have their own signs to express their needs and wishes and can be helped to learn these, for example to nod or shake their head. Encourage any attempt to communicate.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint attention (sharing experiences)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letting parent join in play with toys eg shared discovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to share interest in a toy eg giving toy, showing toy, pointing at toy, playing with a toy and then touching or looking at the parent</td>
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<td>5/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to have attention directed to object by adult with voice, sound or touch or by a pointing gesture</td>
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</table>
### Communication

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joint attention (sharing experiences)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing interest in noisy tasks that adult is doing eg approaches adult to find out, reaches out when you’re playing with a musical toy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating needs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating needs and wishes through vocalisations or actions eg, wanting to be lifted up, wanting to get down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making it clear through gesture/vocalisation when they want something to happen again, eg ra game to be repeated or more to eat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using gestures eg shaking head for ‘No’, hand out to request something</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reacting negatively when toy is removed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing preferences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing definite preferences for foods, toys and activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to choose between two foods or favourite toys with adult help (reaching for or pointing)</td>
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</table>
Babble is now increasing with varied long strings of tuneful sounds such as ‘bababa’, ‘dadada’. Later these will become more complicated, with sounds changing within the vocalisation, eg ‘dadiduda’. Individual sounds may be produced clearly, but it’s sometimes difficult to know what they mean. By now children may be using longer strings of sounds, which have the sounds, rhythm and intonation of the language they hear at home. Development of the muscles for talking include those used for chewing and therefore introducing more solid food is helpful for speech production (See Towards independent self-care).

Children may start to use some sounds consistently to mean certain things that family members understand (proto-words). You may say ‘That’s his word for…’. Your child may start to vocalise to let you know that they want ‘more’ or to play a game again. Some simple vocalisations have a range of meanings eg ‘dada’ can mean ‘that’s daddy’, ‘where’s daddy?’ or ‘I want daddy’.

One or two first words may begin to emerge towards the second half of this stage. Children with limited vision usually use situational labels like ‘more’, ‘gone’ ‘up’ rather than object labels first. Parents begin to recognise variations in the rhythm, melody and tone of voice in their child’s utterances and give meaning to these utterances.

On hearing an adult say something, children may imitate words and phrases. This early repetition or echoing may go on a bit longer than normal in children with limited vision. Children show greater interest in conversation by listening, waiting their turn and responding with speech sounds.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making vocal sounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Babbling repetitively eg baba, bababa, dadada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using varied sounds eg daadee, babu or badago</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making ‘conversation’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use speech sounds in turn-taking to hold a ‘conversation’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waiting for speaker to finish before taking their turn</td>
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</table>
## Expressive language – talking

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<th>Developmental goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First words</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Making vocal sounds that are more like speech and are recognised as own ‘words’ eg ‘that’s his/her word for…’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making longer vocalisations that have recognisable words and sounds in them but whole meaning is not clear (expressive jargon) eg when playing alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making attempt at first word – recognisable, consistent attempt at word in familiar situation/routine, eg ‘no’, ‘gone’</td>
<td>5/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copying a new word or features of it eg the intonation or vowel sound after it has been used eg hello = uhoh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making clear first word eg ‘dada’ for Daddy, ‘Mumma’ or ‘Bye’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copying symbolic noises and ‘baby words’ eg ‘woof’, ‘quack’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Producing symbolic noise spontaneously eg ‘aaah’ when cuddling toy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singing part of familiar nursery rhyme tune</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use word to ask for ‘more’ or ‘again’ in appropriate situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to imitate key words or last words said to him/her eg Daddy going in car. Child says ‘car’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The ability to locate the source of a sound is very useful for a child with limited vision, since it gives them access to their surroundings in a new way. It allows more accurate reaching and searching for objects and for people. It gives incentives for discovery and for movement and mobility. Children can track sounds or voices and move towards and find what they want.

Sound localisation skills continue to develop through this stage. Children usually begin by finding the sources of sounds on either side of their body above or below ear level. Then they start to find the source of sounds above their head and in different parts of a room.

Object permanence is also developing – that is, the understanding that objects are still there when not touched, heard or seen. As with sound localisation, understanding of object permanence develops in stages. Initially, children will search briefly when an object falls out of their hand grasp. Later they begin to search more persistently across a surface for an object that they’ve dropped. This gives them more incentive to move across the floor towards things that they’ve lost.

This understanding also allows them to enjoy hiding and finding. Social games like ‘Peek a boo’ and ‘Hide and seek’ can be great fun. Playthings can also be partly hidden under a cloth and then found again.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6
### Developmental journal · Stage 2

#### Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Possibly</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning about objects</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Object permanence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing ‘Peek a boo’ with cloth with parent</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to search for an object that slips out of grasp on a surface eg favourite toy or bottle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching briefly and finding object lost from grasp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persisting in searching to find and grasp a lost object when within reach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding toy when partially hidden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding a toy when need to move or stretch to find it</td>
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</table>
Play and learning continued

Children now spend much more time exploring and learning about objects and starting to use them purposefully. **Exploratory play** is important for learning about the properties of objects and for recognising similarities. Children understand that a shaker is for shaking, a squeaker is for squeezing, a drum is for banging. They need time to play on their own and to do their own exploration, as well as playing with parents and other people.

Your child will begin to learn about cause and effect and that actions on an object have an effect. They learn to bang two things together to make a noise, such as a beater on a xylophone. They learn that pressing a button on a tape recorder starts the music. Getting a reward from action, such as a pretty tune, reinforces a child’s desire to investigate.

Children with vision work out that they can use an object as a tool eg to get an ‘out of reach’ toy on a rug by pulling the rug towards them. This is the beginning of simple problem-solving. Children with limited vision need your help to learn to use an object as a tool and to make a start with simple problem-solving.

Play with containers helps children to understand how one object relates to another. Children realise they can take a toy out of their toy box or a biscuit out of a tin. Children with limited vision may be more wary of putting their hand into smaller and more confined spaces and need time and their parent’s help to explore and to understand this concept.

Children begin to **imitate** and copy the actions that they see other people do. You may need to help your child to feel your actions or let them do them with you so they can learn to copy too.

**For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6**

### Making connections

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause and effect (understanding the effects of actions)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to understand cause and effect toys eg banging or patting keys on a piano to produce a sound</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using one object on a surface to produce a sound eg banging an object on the table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making a more deliberate action with a cause and effect toy or sound making object eg pressing a key of toy piano or musical toy</td>
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</table>
# Making connections

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause and effect (understanding the effects of actions)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing with more complex cause and effect toys: pulling a rod, turning a roller,</td>
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<tr>
<td>pressing a switch or button for a (visual) light or sound effect</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding how objects relate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Realising that one object can act as a container for another eg taking a rattle,</td>
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<tr>
<td>squeaker or string of beads out of an open tin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching inside a smaller container (eg toy saucepan) to find a toy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using one object on another eg banging a beater on drum or xylophone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing in an appropriate way with different toys (eg ball is for rolling or</td>
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<tr>
<td>throwing, a drum is for banging)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using a tool to reach an object eg use a string or rod to pull a toy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulling apart two part toys eg duplo pieces or a ring off a stack</td>
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</table>
Hand skills are becoming more refined. Children begin to use their finger tips more to explore the shape and feel of objects. Everyday routines, activities and objects offer many opportunities for experiencing different shapes, sensations and textures. The more meaningful these are, the more a child will be interested and curious about feeling and exploring them. This is an important time to increase exploration of the feel and shape of familiar objects and materials, as well as different food consistencies, to aid recognition.

Hands are becoming better co-ordinated and fingers are beginning to be used separately. Children begin to use their index finger (second finger) to poke at objects and to use the tip of their thumb and index finger to pick up small objects (pincer grip). Children with limited vision may continue to use two or three fingers together for longer and use their thumb together with whichever finger first touches the small object they are picking up. Different hand movements can be used to slide switches, turn knobs, open and close hinged lids, and turn the pages of a book.

At this stage children learn to release objects deliberately. At first, they throw or cast objects away and later they move on to handing you an object and releasing it in a ‘give and take’ game. They’ll learn to place an object on your hand or down on the table deliberately. They may begin to roll a ball to you or throw it as part of a shared game.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

### Using hands

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning with touch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using fingers individually and finger tips to feel and explore different shapes and textures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring everyday objects using hands eg cup, brush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring different food consistencies during finger feeding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using different hand movements to play with toys eg sliding a switch or turning a knob</td>
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</table>
## Using hands

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening and closing a box with attached lid (eg to produce a sound, or find an object)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing interest in handling books eg turning the pages of a cloth or board book – turns over several pages at once, feeling tactile parts of a book</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Co-ordinating hands and fingers – with toys and objects</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using both hands together eg holding a small toy/rattle in each hand or banging one toy against another</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using index finger separately eg to poke at object or finger in hole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Picking up small toy with thumb and two or three fingers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using two hands eg holding object with one hand while exploring it with the other or turning the pages of a book</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Release object from grasp</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Practising releasing by dropping or throwing object [casting]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offering an object but not succeeding in releasing it into your hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliberately putting down an object to pick up another or giving up an object in response to request or ‘give me’ gesture</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release object from grasp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letting go of object eg dropping toy into a noisy tin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling a ball as part of a game ie not ‘casting’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Releasing small item of food (eg an oat crunchie) held in fingers and thumb to mouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As your child’s experiences of movement increase they’ll begin to develop more control of their trunk and more secure saving responses. Children with limited vision may hold onto their legs and lean forward to feel safe and will only sit securely when their side saving responses are well developed. They’ll be able to sit for increasing periods of time without support and their balance and confidence will grow as they develop understanding of the floor as a base.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body awareness – developing a sense of position in space</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying forward/backwards rocking games</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilting upright if tilted suddenly to the side when sitting</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretching arms towards the floor when parachuted head first towards the floor or bed (puts hands out in front when tipping forward)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to recognise ‘body parts’ talk during movement activities, eg ‘bend your leg’, ‘push your arm’</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring the environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving around the floor to touch or locate walls/barriers</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring objects/environmental features encountered purposefully</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing interest/indicating desire to move towards interesting sounds/sights</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Extending movement and co-ordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sitting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing <strong>saving reaction</strong> when tipped from sitting position</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting independently</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining balance while reaching for toy from sitting position</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Movement and mobility continued

Children with limited vision vary greatly in when they become more mobile through bottom shuffling or crawling. Some children become much more mobile and active by this stage. For others, the motivation to move may not be as strong and body strength, coordination and control take longer to develop. With encouragement and support, children will become more active in exploring and moving.

Crawling (or creeping) helps to practise weight shifts, balance and hip movement. Crawling is sometimes perfected while children also work towards walking. They pull themselves up to standing, reach for objects and may cruise the furniture. Children who bottom shuffle or commando crawl (pulling along by arms) often start to walk later than other children.

Children with limited vision are more wary about being upright and unsupported than those who see well, but they can be helped to stand upright with trunk support and encouragement. Legs gradually become strong enough to bear weight although support is usually still required until balance improves. A few children may venture a few steps into open space at this stage, but many will keep practising for this by cruising around the furniture.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extending movement and co-ordination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom shuffling or commando crawling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting to move by any means – rolling, commando crawling, bottom shuffling</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom shuffling or commando crawling in directed locomotion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bearing weight on extended arms and knees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawling on hands and knees without stomach touching floor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Extending movement and co-ordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sitting to kneeling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from sitting to tummy or crawl position</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from sitting to kneeling by pulling on furniture/hands</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from sitting to kneeling without support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouncing on legs when held in standing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing holding on with two hands</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing holding on with one hand</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling to stand against furniture</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from standing to sitting position</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walking</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking around furniture using side step <em>(cruising)</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Parents vary a lot in how early they want their child to do more independent things like drinking from a cup or using a spoon to feed themselves – different cultures and homes have different expectations and preferences.

In this section, we cover what children are becoming capable of doing, even if it’s not yet required in their home. Children are starting to learn to take drinks in a cup. They’re trying an increasing range of foods with new tastes and textures, and attempting to eat with fingers or beginning to join in a bit when being fed with a spoon. A child with limited vision may need to feel, smell and taste new food before eating it more often than a child who is able to see it.

Children with limited vision are also sometimes reluctant to touch wet and sloppy or sticky textures. They may need a lot of help to become more comfortable with eating soft and sticky foods with their fingers (see Using hands and the Getting Stuck? booklet for ideas).

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeding/eating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising sounds/smells associated with feeding eg sound of spoon in bowl, smell of food cooking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting drink from spouted beaker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking from spouted cup with help</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking from spouted cup with two handles independently</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting new textures and tastes – lumpy food</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to chew lumpy food</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewing food with coarser textures</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biting off piece of biscuit, banana or similar</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Feeding/eating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempting to pick up and eat pieces of food</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating own bowl to finger feed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to attempt to use spoon – putting hand on parent’s hand during feeding</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At this stage, children enjoy removing some items of clothing and begin to help while dressing and bathing.

During everyday routines, help and practice is needed with physical demonstrations so that your child knows what your expectations are. Make sure that everyone who is involved does things in the same way and follows the same routines. Use simple, clear language to describe what you’re doing and when you ask your child to do something, like ‘Lift up your arm’, so that they’ll know what you want.

Children may be sleeping through the night and less during the day by the end of this stage.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holding hands and/or legs out to help with dressing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing arms, legs or feet into clothing when requested — ‘push it in’</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing loose hat</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Removing socks or unfastened shoes</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling vest off head during dressing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to recognise ‘body parts’ talk during dressing routine eg ‘where’s your foot?’ lifts foot</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operating actively when nappy being changed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to recognise words to do with toileting eg ‘wee’ ‘poo’</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Towards independent self-care continued

#### Developmental journal · Stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Washing and bathing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering or lifting arm or leg ready for washing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively participating in bathing e.g., uses sponge on legs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with range of bath toys</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping overnight consistently</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napping during the day reducing to one occasion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising bedtime routine</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting of regular bedtime</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Developmental journal
for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 3
Children become much more independent at this stage and begin to direct their own actions (they become self-directing). They’re learning that actions – including actions on other people – have consequences. They may push another child or pull their hair and make them cry. This isn’t really being unkind since they don’t yet understand about other people’s feelings – it’s part of learning about how other people react. They also know more about other people’s intentions and realise they may take their toy, so they start holding onto things and getting upset if someone tries to take them away.

Children are also finding out about how to be the centre of attention – and that there are ways of getting everyone to laugh at them, by making a silly sound or doing a ‘party piece’ that everyone likes. They begin to want to please others and enjoy everyone clapping and praising them when they’ve done something good. They may clap and praise themselves, too.

As children become more independent, they also become more aware of themselves as separate beings. This is the beginning of a sense of ‘self’ (self identity). They may become less cooperative as a result – for example, crawling or shuffling away when you try to change their nappy.

This is the beginning of children wanting to do things themselves and not always wanting to be directed or helped. They become more aware of their own goals and get frustrated and upset if they can’t achieve them.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

**Developing relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about self and parent and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding positively to praise and positive attention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming aware that actions can affect others eg pulling hair or pushing upsets another person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to be the centre of attention, eg repeating a sound or action to make adults laugh</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing and understanding feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to show defiance eg moves away when asked to ‘Come here’</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clapping hands to express delight about what they’ve done</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending own possession or toy and getting upset if someone tries to remove it</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Although growing independence is a positive step forward in personal development, it’s often challenging for parents, including those with children with limited vision (hence, the description ‘terrible twos’). It can be very difficult to guide a child physically if they’re resisting having their hands or body held or guided. Ideas that may help are given on both the Activity cards and in the Getting Stuck? booklet.

Although they’re becoming more independent, children continue to show strong attachment to their parents and carers. They may cling, especially in new surroundings or when tired or fearful. Children with limited vision may find noisy public spaces particularly unsettling. Separation from parents and being left with strangers sometimes arouses anxiety and distress.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing attachment to parent and familiar others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing happily alone but near a familiar adult</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing to show strong attachment to parent and familiar carer eg reacts to separation or clinging when tired or fearful</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing anxiety if left with strangers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour and self regulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming increasingly independent and self directed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Becoming more resistant to being guided or helped</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing tantrums if frustrated or actions are thwarted</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children are becoming more active play partners. They’re more aware of their partner’s intentions, actions and words in joint games and may imitate phrases and parts of games and actions. They can take turns in simple games like rolling a ball backwards and forwards, responding to and anticipating their partner’s actions. They continue to learn about social expectations and can be taught to imitate simple social skills, like saying ‘Thank you’ or ‘Ta’ when given food or a toy.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

### Social interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joining in social interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating actively in familiar social games eg may initiate or start repeat of game and perform some actions or phrases</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining in <em>turn-taking</em> game with object eg ball rolling game</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitating things they hear or see around them, <em>phrases</em>, parts of games and actions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting and anticipating action in games eg playing ‘ready steady go’ or tickle games or hide and seek</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing early social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waving bye bye spontaneously when adult says ‘bye’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying a greeting when another person says hello</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying ‘Thank you’ or ‘Ta’ when given a food or toy, in imitation</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning

Children at this stage are listening to language with more recognition and understanding. They learn to take part in conversation by listening and then taking their turn in speech or rhyme games. They love familiar verbal games and are ready to enjoy simple stories that use repetition and include lively elements.

They may notice small differences in their usual routines or games and you can help them with this by making deliberate mistakes or playing silly games or by pausing and leaving out a word. As speech develops, children will start to join in by filling in the missing words.

Children can now focus their attention on something for much longer. They’re more in control of their attention, which continues to be single-channelled – if engrossed in an activity they can be very difficult to distract and may ignore you if you try to attract or direct their attention. They dislike being interrupted when absorbed and can appear inflexible.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening and attending</th>
<th>Card Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying nursery rhymes and simple stories and demonstrating listening by trying to join in with actions or vocalisations</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to fill in a missing word when adult leaves a pause – especially in rhymes or familiar stories/books</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending to speech directed at them and listening with interest to general talk</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attending</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing attention strongly on a single task or activity if involved in something – may be very difficult to distract</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing longer, sustained attention in games or interaction eg listening to a familiar story</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children at this stage recognise how familiar objects are used and are beginning to know the names for things. They start to play at using some objects on themselves. This begins with a single object – for example, they brush their hair. Later they combine two objects – for example, they may stir a spoon in a cup, or brush someone else’s hair. These are important play experiences for children with limited vision, who don’t have the opportunity to see how other people use objects.

This early pretend play gives experience of actions using everyday objects. It also provides you with an opportunity to use simple language about everyday activities. Children with limited vision often need adults to start them off and to assist them with this kind of play.

Your child’s understanding of language is also moving on. They begin to follow simple instructions and to be able to choose an appropriate action in response. This is the beginning of understanding language without depending on clues from a familiar situation. It’s more difficult for children with limited vision, as they may not see the gesture (eg pointing) or facial expression that give extra clues about what you mean. Some children need other physical prompts to give them extra information at this stage.

Children learn the names of parts of their body and enjoy displaying this knowledge. Children with limited vision often find these words easier to learn than object labels, because their own body is more easily experienced directly than some other things.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

### Understanding language and meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognising what objects are for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using object on self holding it the right way, eg brushes hair, brushes teeth</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using two objects together to show how they are used, eg stirring a spoon in cup</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing some pretend actions to an adult, eg gives mum ‘tea’ to drink from an empty cup or brushes daddy’s hair</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Understanding language and meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding words</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Handing over an object when asked to ‘give me’ – prompted by an open hand gesture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Touching or showing parts of body eg ‘tummy’, ‘feet’, ‘nose’ on request</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding ‘where’s mummy?..’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Touching or showing items of clothing, eg shoes on request</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Following simple instruction, eg ‘give it to…’ . ‘put in the bin’.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing understanding of some familiar object words eg bib, shoe, favourite toy or bottle</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning continued

Children become able to follow their parent’s directions to locate objects. Children with sufficient vision can follow your gaze or pointing gesture to find interesting objects. They can look at your facial expression to see how you view the thing that interests them – is it nice, scary, funny or surprising? They’ll direct your attention to objects too, by showing you things, or by pointing and gazing at them. This joint attention to the same object is the basis for talking about the same object or event and developing shared understanding.

Parents need to watch their child carefully to see if they’re trying to share their interest in a toy. Children with limited vision may use different methods such as holding a toy out or lifting it up. You can also help foster joint attention skills through shared discovery.

This is the beginning of intentional communication – ie communicating with a purpose. Children may hand you a toy in a ‘give and take’ game or take your hand to help them open a box.

Children are now able to make their needs known more clearly and to have definite preferences. Children with limited vision may make their needs known in more subtle ways than other children, so watch out for the way your child lets you know what they want. You can help them learn to communicate what they want by providing clear choices between two things, such as toys or foods.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

### Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint attention (sharing experiences)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing with object and then touching parent to share experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to lift toys to show parents eg holds out object for parent’s attention or response</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocalising to gain attention or looking at adult (when close) to gain attention before pointing</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing interest in what adult is doing eg approaches to find out what adult is doing when they’re making a noise</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating needs</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to make needs known more specifically through sign, gesture or word eg</td>
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<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>tugs adult or pulls hand to indicate what they need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to ask if hungry or thirsty</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Showing preferences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Choosing between two items</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicating ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to show preference</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
At this stage, children continue to copy much of what they hear said. This is a child’s way of enjoying the sounds of language around them and of trying out new sounds and sound combinations. Children with limited vision often do this copying or echoing for longer than children with full sight. This is their way of keeping in touch with you and showing mastery of language expression. They enjoy the sound of particular words or phrases and may often repeat them. It’s important that you help them to link the words they use with meaning. Ideas for how you might do this are given on the Activity cards and in the Getting Stuck? booklet.

The range of sounds children use increases considerably. Some children come out with longer strings of sounds containing one or two recognisable words. This is called expressive jargon. Children often have one or two favourite words or phrases which they use often – eg ‘allgone’, ‘thatone’, ‘good girl’ or ‘wha’that?’

Your child may start to try and name one or two objects using simple language, like ‘nana’ for banana. Children with very limited vision often take much longer than other children to expand their vocabulary and need lots of help to learn that objects have names.

Parents often repeat their child’s words and then say what they think their child is trying to say in a short sentence at this stage – for example ‘Juice? You’d like some juice? This is called recasting. It helps children hear how their meaning is expressed in language by other people and helps them learn about the structure (or grammar) of more complete sentences.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

### Expressive language – talking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
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<th>Possibly</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First words</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses lots of word like babble or jargon – sounds as if speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use a familiar learned expression, like ‘allgone’, ‘good girl’, ‘oh dear’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imitating key words or last words eg ‘daddy going in the car’, child repeats ‘daddy’ or ‘car’</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using a few words consistently</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
## Expressive language – talking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First words</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using a favourite word/phrase often eg ‘allgone’ appropriately</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remembering little bits of tunes and will ‘sing’ them for self or others</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joining in nursery rhymes and songs</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Linking first words to meaning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using situational words eg ‘up’, ‘down’, ‘bye’, ‘allgone’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using word to make a request, eg ‘drink’ (may say ‘dink’ or ‘oos’ for juice)</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asking for ‘more’ or ‘again’ in appropriate situation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Answering ‘yes’ or ‘no’ when asked a question</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Making ‘conversation’</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using jargon and first words to take part in ‘conversation’ eg using some recognisable words to take turns with adult</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Naming objects</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Making word approximations eg ‘nana’ for banana, ‘ain’ for ‘train’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children are curious about new toys and keen to try out new activities. They like to repeat things over and over again as they practise what they know and enjoy doing and finding out if they can make something different happen. They’re experimenting through play. Children begin to use more than one action with a toy and begin to show short sequences of play.

Memory is also improving, both of the immediate short term and longer term. Children begin to have a better understanding of object permanence and will move to find something which has rolled away and know where to find things around the house. Your child may find an object when it’s completely hidden (if you show it to them as you hide it). Children often demonstrate that they remember a person or an activity by trying to repeat something they enjoyed with that person or expecting an object they associate with an event.

Children are learning how to manipulate toys and investigating how objects relate to each other. They become very interested in container play and like taking things out of containers or removing lids to find something inside. They take simple objects apart and later try to put things together – either on top of other things or linking them together. Some young children with limited vision take a bit longer to learn how to put something ‘inside’ a container because they need to be able to release things to be able to do this.

Children with more vision learn to stack blocks as their hand eye co-ordination skills get better. Children with limited vision are likely to learn about building more slowly and will often need your help to develop their interest in stacking toys.

**For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8**

### Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about sound</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching out to source of sound and locating in correct direction – above the head</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding parent in different parts of the room at increasing distance (3 metres or further) when called</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding parent in room next door when called</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about objects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object permanence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding objects that are completely hidden eg under a cloth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching and finding something that has rolled out of reach</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cause and effect</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Persisting with an action or remembering what to do again after a wait eg turning a roller and waiting until tune is finished before rolling again or opening the lid of a music box to start the music</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding how objects relate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Separating objects made of different parts eg taking rings off a rod or pulling connected pieces apart eg interlocking blocks – ‘duplo’ or mega blocks</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to understand about opening and closing eg box with a hinged lid or cupboard doors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding about separate lids eg taking lid with knob off container</td>
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</table>
## Making connections

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<th>Definitely</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how objects relate</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Putting object inside wide container eg biscuit tin</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Putting object inside narrow container eg beaker</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacing lid with knob on container</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoying knocking down several objects stacked on top of each other</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Putting several objects in and out of containers</td>
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</table>
Children learn to recognise different textures in a favourite ‘feely’ book or familiar object – for example, the bristles of their hairbrush. They’re also beginning to enjoy opening and closing books and helping to turn the pages. Your child may become interested in feeling parts of an object, eg moving the wheels on a toy car, or the overall shape of an object, or feeling round the basin and handle of a cup.

Children’s use of their thumb and finger is increasingly controlled and they can take small objects, like raisins, out of a small packet.

Children become better able to control the release of objects and they begin to be able to post toys, play ‘give and take’ games and place toys on top of each other.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

### Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning with touch</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to recognise different textures in ‘feely’ books and when exploring objects eg recognises ‘bear’s ears’ and ‘cat’s nose’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring different shapes – using finger tips to feel parts of smaller toys eg wheels on toy car</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crumpling and tearing different textures and materials eg playing with paper or bubble wrap</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manipulating objects with many parts eg turning pages of book or parts of activity centre</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Using hands

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordinating hands and fingers – with toys and objects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Picking up small object with thumb and finger tips</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempting to pick up smaller object between index finger tip and thumb (pincer grip) eg raisin or piece of cereal or string or getting a sweet/snack from inside packet with either hand</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dipping an object into a pot eg cracker into cream cheese</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Release object from grasp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliberately releasing an object when asked eg giving up an object when asked, putting an object in container or posting simple objects (circles and ball) into posting box</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting toys less frequent</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Movement and mobility

With continued encouragement, most children with limited vision will take their first independent steps at this stage. See the Getting Stuck? booklet for ideas about what to do if your child seems reluctant to walk. Although steps are usually cautious at first, they gradually become more confident with improved muscle strength and balance. Some children find that pushing a trolley gives them added support and confidence.

Children gradually become more confident about moving around and exploring the house in whatever way works best for them. Some children are more willing than others to shift from bottom shuffling to crawling as they become more coordinated. Children start to climb furniture and your child may begin to crawl up stairs.

Children learn to recognise the location of familiar furniture obstacles in the house and avoid bumping into them. At times they may be discouraged by bumps and falls but this will change as they get to know the safe routes around your home.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body awareness – developing a sense of position in space</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrating understanding of ‘up’ and ‘down’ by moving body or object</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to recognise height/depth of furniture/features around the house eg crawls under furniture, over obstacles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring the environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaching arms to objects/space above head</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising features in different rooms eg sound of washing machine in kitchen, smell of toiletries in bathroom, feel of carpet in living room</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Developmental Journal · Stage 3

### Exploring Rooms in Own Home Independently Moving in Any Way
- **Exploring rooms in own home independently moving in any way**
  - 8
- **Walking barefoot on a variety of surfaces in and outdoors eg carpets, tiles, grass, sand**
  - 8

### Extending Movement and Co-ordination

#### Sitting
- **Sitting on low chair without support**
  - 7

#### Walking
- **Walking with forward gait when both hands held**
  - 7
- **Walking forward when one hand held**
  - 7
- **Pushing sturdy trolley type toy while walking**
  - 7
- **Taking a few steps without support**
  - 7
- **Standing without holding on for short period of time**
  - 7
- **Beginning to walk without support**
  - 7/8
- **Moving out of small space backwards**

#### Managing Stairs
- **Crawling up stairs**
  - 7/8
- **Turning around to move down the stairs (facing stairs)**
  - 8
Towards independent self-care

Children at this stage try to master new skills and become more active in self-care. Parents vary in how early they want their child to become more independent – different cultures and homes have different views and expectations. This section covers what children are becoming capable of doing, even if it’s not yet required in their home.

Children with limited vision may seem more dependent on their parents for self-care and will need to be encouraged to take early steps in independence.

Children can learn to take drinks in a cup. They may be trying an increasing range of foods with new tastes and textures, and continuing to eat with fingers. They’re beginning to learn to take food to their mouth on a spoon but are likely to be quite messy. This can be quite a frustrating time for children, as food often falls off their spoon. Children who get less information through vision may take longer to master independent feeding skills such as finger feeding and using a spoon. They’re less able to watch or imitate other people’s movements and will need to feel or experience movements while being fed, to learn what they need to do.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeding/eating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to indicate when hungry or thirsty eg finds cup, goes to fridge or highchair</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and adopting family meal time routines eg moving towards chair or sitting at table when told ‘snack/tea time’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting new textures and tastes – larger pieces and increasing range</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempting to use spoon – can guide towards mouth, but food often falls off</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using one hand to hold and drink from spouted cup with handle</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care continued

Developmental journal · Stage 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feeding/eating</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating cup placed in front on table or tray, and replacing it after drinking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Holding open topped two handled cup to drink with some spillage</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Picking up small pieces of food to finger feed</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accepting food from a fork</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care continued

Children become able to remove simple items of clothing and may start to enjoy putting on some items like hats. They can follow simple instructions like ‘wash your tummy’ when washing and bathing. As with feeding skills, dressing and washing skills may develop more slowly in children with limited vision but you can help by using physical demonstration while your child is sitting on your knee. In this way they can experience the movement of your body, which helps them understand what to do.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 7 and 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dressing and nappy changing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Remembering where clothes are kept eg outdoor coat and shoes</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoying dressing up with large hat and shoes</td>
<td>7/8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping take off coat</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Putting feet into own open shoes</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to recognise when nappy is wet/dirty</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Washing and bathing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking part in washing eg rubbing hands with soap, putting under taps to rinse</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using washcloth/sponge to wash parts of body eg ‘wash legs’</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to brush hair</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerating use of toothbrush and paste</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care

Developmental journal · Stage 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anticipating and enjoying bedtime routines</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to take an active role in bedtime routine eg finding story book, bedtime toy or bedclothes</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Developmental journal
for babies and children
with visual impairment

Stage 4
Children are more aware of all the familiar people in their social world – they seek their attention and call grandparents and brothers and sisters by their names. Their social world is widening and they show more interest in familiar carers, relatives and other children.

As their interest and knowledge of other people grows, they begin to be more aware that other people have feelings. This may develop later and more slowly in a child with limited vision – possibly because they don’t see subtle changes in facial expression in other people. At this stage your child may start recognising strong emotions like ‘being cross’, when they hear you say ‘No!’ in a loud stern voice. They’ll also start to recognise the emotion of ‘being pleased’ when they hear you praising them in a delighted voice.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning about self and parent and others</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling family members by name eg brothers and sisters or grandparents</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>May continue to seek to be the centre of attention, eg repeating sounds, words or actions to make adults laugh</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to show interest in another child other than brother or sister</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Showing and understanding feelings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuing to be possessive about own toys and defends them</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding that carer is cross when says ‘No’ in cross voice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This is the stage when children are often very self-directing and independent. They have their own very clear ideas about what they want to do. They may become very resistant to being guided or helped and want to do everything for themselves. Being stopped from doing something or being made to do something unwelcome can lead to great frustration and temper tantrums. This can be very difficult for you, especially if it happens in the supermarket or on the bus!

It can be helpful to understand that children can’t control (regulate) their strong emotions at this stage. So once they get into a distressed state or tantrum, often nothing will calm them down until they get too tired to continue.

Children continue to show strong attachment behaviour and may become anxious when they’re separated from you and left with strangers. They may be clingy in strange surroundings. Children are often more demanding of their parent’s attention at this stage and find it difficult to share with another adult, their brothers or sisters (or with other children).

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing attachment to parent and familiar others</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuing to show anxiety at separation in strange surroundings</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching parent regularly for reassurance in strange surroundings</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching out adult when distressed</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding it difficult to share parent’s attention eg when parent is holding and talking to another child</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour and self-regulation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing to be strongly self-directed</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing to be resistant to being guided or helped</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing to show frustration and anger which can become temper tantrums – especially when thwarted or not able to communicate what they want</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children may start noticing more and joining in some of your daily activities like sweeping with a brush or wiping a table with a sponge. For children with limited vision these are most likely to be the actions that they experience directly. Children join in songs and rhyme games more and may sing along or do a short sequence of actions to nursery rhymes or songs like ‘If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands…’ Turn-taking is becoming better established and your child may do something with a toy then wait, while you take your turn. This often starts with rolling a ball but can be extended to other kinds of play.

Children begin to show that they recognise and anticipate the order of everyday routines, like finding their coat before getting in their buggy or pushchair to go to the park. This predictable and regular sort of social routine is called a social script – like a script in a play. Children (like adult actors) have to learn the scripts for everyday life so they can understand and predict what they and other people are likely to do and say during everyday activities. Without this understanding, we’d all get very confused and be in a complete muddle especially when we’re with other people!

Children may learn a few simple social skills, like saying ‘Hello’ or ‘Hi’ in greeting. At this stage, they usually need to be reminded (or prompted) to say this when they meet someone.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social interaction</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joining in social interaction</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining in actions and vocalisations in nursery rhyme game eg ‘Incey wincey spider’ or ‘Wheels on the bus’</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeming to know whose turn it is and showing excitement as their turn is coming up or waiting for adult to take turn</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing contentedly alongside other children</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to imitate everyday routines with adult help eg stirring in cooking bowl, sweeping with brush</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Social interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Showing knowledge of social scripts</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising and anticipating sequence of everyday routines, e.g., looks for coat or gets in buggy when parent is getting ready to go out</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing early social skills</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Says ‘Hello’ or ‘Hi’ in greeting when prompted</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Says ‘Please’ or ‘Ta’/‘Thank you’ when prompted</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning

Children enjoy listening to simple stories and notice when adults make a deliberate mistake or pause when telling a favourite story. They’re remembering the language of the story and using their memory to help them predict what’s going to be said next.

Children continue to be single channelled and very engrossed in attending to their own activity. They still mainly focus on one thing at a time and can’t attend to several activities at the same time. You may notice they can’t listen to your directions about something else while they’re playing. Children still find it difficult to switch attention independently to a new activity of your choosing. They want to complete their own activity first and can get very upset if it’s removed too early.

Children are beginning to be able to listen to an adult talking while they’re doing something, as long as it relates to their own activity. Their involvement with an activity goes on longer if you assist in a supportive way (as if you’re providing scaffold).

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

### Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening with interest to stories and familiar expressions that parent makes and noticing deliberate mistakes or pauses</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Beginning to look at pictures or feel tactile or object parts of story while listening to story | 10   |          |            |                               |

| Beginning to listen to repetitive stories with different voice intonations | 10   |          |            |                               |

| Waiting when told ‘just a minute’ | 10   |          |            |                               |
Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing to attend strongly to a single task or activity; may need more adult persistence to attract or direct attention</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending for longer period if an adult is talking to and interacting with them</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning continued

Children are now developing a better understanding of the names of familiar objects and how they’re used in everyday life and in pretend play. They can find the correct object in a familiar place when you name it. They become able to find the right object when there are a number of objects in front of them to choose from. Children are moving beyond situational understanding and beginning to recognise simple instructions, object names, and questions outside their familiar setting and without action prompts. This tells you that your child really understands words rather than the clues that sometimes go with words.

Children can follow simple instructions and respond to ‘action’ words like ‘sit down’, ‘stand up’, ‘stop doing that’.

They’re building more complex understanding of how objects are used and practice this in pretend play. They use everyday actions and objects with other people. There are longer sequences of play. Dolls can be introduced and children learn that they represent a real baby. This understanding often takes longer to develop in children with limited vision than other children who can easily see that a doll looks like a child.

As play becomes more symbolic, children start to use objects or actions to represent real-life objects and actions – for example, an empty cup will have pretend ‘juice’ in it, which can be ‘drunk’ with pretend drinking noises. Pretend games are an important foundation for language development since they involve the early use of symbols to represent objects and actions. They pave the way for using words as symbols.

By the end of this stage, children are ready to join in real life activities like simple household tasks. These provide many opportunities for them to listen to, talk about and share tasks and at the same time, to attend to the detail of what’s happening.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

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### Understanding language and meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognising what objects are for</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitating everyday actions in pretend play with large doll – brushes doll’s hair, feeds doll</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repeating some pretend actions to more than one person eg ‘gives mum and grandma tea’ to drink from an empty cup</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>
## Understanding language and meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding words</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoying familiar stories read to them eg has favourite stories and characters</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Choosing a familiar everyday object when named eg picks up a cup from a group of objects</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding familiar action words eg ‘sit down’, ‘come here’ and ‘stop that’, ‘walk’, ‘dance’</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding simple requests with the words alone eg ‘fetch your shoes’</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to follow simple requests to find something in another room</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Communicating, language and meaning continued

Sharing interest in toys and events is now more developed and your child will be able to let you know what they’re interested in and when they want you to play or need your help. Children with some vision learn to use their vision to let you know what they’re interested in, but you may need to be quite close for them to know you’re following their look or gaze. They may also point to things of interest that are very nearby.

Children with very limited vision will start to show you objects of interest and bring them to you. It’s difficult for them to draw your attention to more distant things such as an unusual noise outside the window before they have the language to talk about it. Going still and listening intently continues to be one of the ways that you can pick up what your child is attending to, but at this stage, they may start to be able to talk to you about things that are farther away.

Children are also now more able to let you know about their needs and wishes, either with newly developing words or through actions and gestures.

Children are learning to take part in conversations by listening and recognising when it’s their turn to speak. They may begin to comment on things other people have said, or simply repeat parts of what they have heard.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

### Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint attention</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing interest in toy with adult eg bringing, showing or pointing at a toy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handing a toy to an adult for assistance eg when unable to get it to work and sees adult as someone who can help</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing awareness of being watched – looking at object and then back to adult when adult is very close by</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to draw adult’s attention to something in the distance</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicating needs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to make needs known clearly through words eg asks for biscuit, juice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressing intentions in words or gestures – eg wanting to go in the garden or choosing which game they would like to play</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Making conversation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to make two-way conversation using speech eg listening to parent’s comment and then responding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Language development at this stage is very variable for all children but especially for children with limited vision. Some children will be developing quite a large vocabulary by now. Others, especially those with more limited vision may be using only a small number of words. Much of what children say is still likely to be difficult for people who don’t know them to understand.

Copying what adults say is one way of practicing and improving sound (phonological) skills. It’s important that you help your child to link words that are repeated to real meaning, either by linking what they’ve said to a real experience or responding more to your child’s words or phrases when they’re about real things and events in the ‘here and now’.

Once children have acquired a word, they may use it in their own way. For example, they may use ‘juice’ to mean all drinks. This is called over generalisation and it’s a normal part of learning. Usually it’s adult feedback that helps children learn to use the words correctly. You may say ‘Brush, yes, it’s a toothbrush’. Children with limited vision may not see the details of different brushes and will take time to learn about these distinctions. They need the opportunity to feel and experience them. They may also ‘under generalise’ because they can’t see the basic features that are part of all objects of the same category – for example, a child may believe that only brushes with soft bristles are brushes... ie when they’re like their own brush.

Your child may begin to vary their intonation patterns to express communication intention more clearly. For example, they may say ‘biscuit’ in a particular tone to make a request, or ‘biscuit’ to name the biscuit lying on the table, or ‘biscuit?’ with a questioning intonation to ask if the rough flat thing on the floor is a biscuit. You can help by listening out for these communication attempts and interpreting and replying to them appropriately.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

### Expressive language – talking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying words that are overheard</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a small growing vocabulary of single words to comment, name or request</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using short phrases ‘go home’ ‘get down’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singing short songs or nursery rhymes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Expressive language – talking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Naming objects</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Naming familiar objects eg cup, spoon, shoe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to name unfamiliar objects of a familiar category</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linking words to meaning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using a phrase or word to make a request eg biscuit (request intonation)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use words and expressions to comment about what is happening now eg ‘daddy work’, ‘go out’ ‘sit down’</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use words to answer questions eg ‘where’s dolly?’ ‘bed’</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Play and learning

Children become more able to use a more systematic approach to search for something near them. Children with limited vision begin to use a basic search strategy, such as moving their hand back and forth across the table or floor surface. Their memory span is increasing and they’re more able to find their toys if they’re stored in the usual location.

They quickly learn how to operate a new toy that has a clear cause and effect. They can post one shape into a posting toy or put one inset piece into a form board. The earliest shapes they can manage are usually circles. They begin to relate three objects to one another – for example, getting the lid off a container to find a small object inside. They begin to learn about emptying a jug or bucket, especially with water in the bath or taking a number of bricks out of a bucket. These are the very first steps in learning about quantity and volume.

Children enjoy pulling connecting bricks apart and putting them back together and are beginning to build or stack (although a child with limited vision may need your help to find this an interesting task). They now have a strong and growing sense of the order in which things are done. This is an important part of a young child’s learning – it helps them to recall and organise the sequence of an activity and underlies knowing how to put things into groups or categories. Your child will start to match familiar objects or toys together and can identify them as being the same kind of thing.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

### Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about objects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object permanence</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching across surface until an object is found eg (V1,2) moving hand back and forth or (V3,4) looking</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Going to find a particular toy to play with from a known place</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cause and effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performing a more complex action to get an effect eg turning a handle of a music box to get the music, or turning the handle of a ‘jack in the box’ until ‘jack’ pops out</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding how objects relate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning about emptying</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>– taking a number of bricks out of a bucket</td>
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<tr>
<td>– tipping liquid or small objects out of a jug</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to stack one toy on another</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing how to fit two shapes together eg posting one shape into a posting box or replacing simple shape (eg circle or square) in a formboard puzzle</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing constructively with three objects together eg getting a small object out of a container with lid</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to match two objects that are of the same category eg shoes, spoons, brushes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hand skills and the coordinated use of individual fingers continue to develop. Children with very limited vision can more easily recognise what an object is through touching it. Tactile or touching skills are becoming more systematic and objects are carefully explored by finger tips. The pincer grip is now well coordinated and it’s precise enough to pick up small items, like a raisin.

Children are able to manipulate two objects together – for example, banging a stick on a peg, and they can use more precise finger movements to manipulate small objects or the individual keys of a keyboard.

They can use a rotating movement to try to get posting shapes into the correct hole in a posting toy although they often don’t fully succeed without some adult support at this stage.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

### Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
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<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning with touch</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying some familiar objects by touch (V1,2) eg demonstrating use or naming</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-ordinating hands and fingers – with toys and objects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using thumb and first finger tip to pick up a small object (delicate pincer grip) eg small piece of food off a table</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use a rotating movement to turn knobs and remove screw lid or shape</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using finger tips of both hands to do an activity eg removing wrapping from a parcel or turning pages of cardboard book one at a time</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using some single finger movements (one or two fingers) to play with toys, eg poking keys of keyboard</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
There is a wide variation in ‘athletic’ ability at this stage, but many children are now using walking as their preferred way of getting around. As children become more independent, they improve their balance and speed. They can walk while holding a toy and start to run when holding someone’s hand or (sometimes) in a familiar open space.

Navigating around obstacles and people in motion is difficult for a child with limited vision. If they can’t recognise landmarks using vision alone, they need to learn about them using their other senses. Children gradually learn their way around all parts of their home. Some children will be getting to know their way around playground equipment in the park or garden, although more confident ones will need help when they over reach themselves.

Jumping, throwing, catching and kicking skills may all now be attempted and children can usually now climb up steps with one foot on each step.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognising different rooms in house according to sounds, smell, relative location position or visual information</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using sound clues to aid navigation eg voice of parent in adjoining room</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding way around rooms in own home independently</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing awareness of spatial boundaries ie walls in familiar environment</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to show understanding of simple positional words eg ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘under’</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Exploring the environment – orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding the door of a room</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showing understanding of the use of furniture eg finding and getting into a chair to sit</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring new environment with support eg friend’s sitting room</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stopping or slowing down when approaching obstacle in familiar environment</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travelling around or over obstacles encountered</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Extending movement and co-ordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using walking as the preferred form of mobility</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking independently with feet closer together and with good balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking while holding a toy eg pulling a pull along toy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Squatting to pick from floor, uses hands or support to return to standing</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking a step or two backwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to walk cautiously on uneven ground</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Extending movement and co-ordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walking</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Changing direction while walking eg as approaches person or obstacle</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking fast and beginning to run</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Managing stairs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Going up stairs or steps without assistance – any method</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement in play</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jumping with two feet on the spot eg bouncing on the bed or safe bouncy surface when hands held</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riding on car or bike that is pushed along by child’s feet</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children have improved co-ordination at this stage and may be beginning to manage a wider range of eating utensils, if these are used in their home. Eating can continue to be quite messy for some time as children may continue to spill food from their spoon when feeding themselves.

Some children want to do everything for themselves and become frustrated when they can’t. Undressing skills will be progressing well and some children will be attempting to put simple garments on as well. Lots of experience is needed in unfastening zips and press-studs at this stage.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feeding/eating</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching for food eg biscuit jar, yoghurts in fridge</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing/requesting favourite foods</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Participating in feeding</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempting to stab food with fork</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating individual pieces of food from tub or box with lid eg raisins, cereals etc</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use a straw to drink</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using spoon with some spillage</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trying out and accepting new textures and tastes – chews small pieces of firmer textured food</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pouring and using a utensil in play eg cup, bucket, spoon</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Towards independent self-care continued

#### Developmental journal · Stage 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dressing</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Removing coat or simple garment when unfastened</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulling trousers down with assistance</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening some fasteners eg zips, velcro, press-studs (snap fastener)</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulling down part-closed zipper</td>
<td>9/10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Many children are becoming increasingly aware of discomfort when their nappy is wet or dirty and may be starting to know about the toilet or potty. Toilet use often emerges later in children with limited vision, possibly because they don’t have the incentive of seeing other children using the potty.

Some children are agile enough to climb out of their cots and may be ready to start sleeping in a bed. Planning for safety should be considered well in advance in preparation for moving your child from a cot to bed.

Co-ordinating movement is more challenging when vision is restricted, so children with limited vision may need a lot more time to learn all these early self care skills than other children do. Praise for achieving small steps is important. You can help by giving careful support and help to prevent frustration from failure and to help your child experience the pleasure of success.

For activities and ideas, see Cards 9 and 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using the toilet</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating awareness when nappy is wet/dirty</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerating sitting on potty or toilet</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using potty or toilet occasionally</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Washing and bathing</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping to wash body when in bath</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Washing hair with support</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping to dry self after hand washing or bathing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to turn cold tap on hand basin on and off</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operating when cleaning teeth</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking bedtime toy or book</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping in own bed</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing to sleep consistently through the night – up to 10 to 12 hours</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Developmental journal
for babies and children with visual impairment

Stage 5
Interest and awareness of other people is growing steadily. This learning may need to be carefully supported and guided by parents and adults because children with limited vision are often less aware of others in the early years. They don’t see (or don’t see clearly) the behaviour and intentions of other people.

Learning in this area can be facilitated by encouraging children to do things with other people – for example sharing food with their parent or another child. They should be positively encouraged to join in routine family activities, like tidying up toys in the toy box with their brothers and sisters.

This is the stage when you can help your child start learning about other members of the family through language. This includes learning about their possessions – for example, ‘Daddy’s shoes’, ‘Aunty’s dog’, ‘Ali’s bike’. Other people’s feelings and emotions can be talked about as well as your child’s own experiences and feelings. It helps to say things like ‘You’re cross’, ‘Baby’s sad’, ‘Felix is tired’.

Children can also be helped to understand how what they do affects others – for example, cuddling or comforting the baby makes them feel happier, pushing another child makes that child feel sad.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning about self and parent and others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to share food eg bag of crisps, when prompted by adult</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referring to self by name or ‘I’</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoying dressing up, eg putting on hats, daddy’s shoes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to know that people have possessions eg ‘daddy’s shoes’, ‘mummy’s keys’, ‘brother’s toy’</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to talk about the behaviour and intentions of others</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Developing relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing and understanding feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to understand their actions affect others eg may cuddle or comfort child (with adult prompting) if they know that they have upset them</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to use ‘mental state’ words to communicate about feelings eg ‘happy’, ‘sad’, ‘cross’, ‘hurt’</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoying being praised</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>
It’s quite a big step forwards when a child becomes accepting of parents or adults joining or guiding them again. This is especially true for children who have gone through a period of being very self-directed. Understanding and using language more is one of the factors that helps with this.

Children may now be able to say what they want to do – and what they want others to do. You can use basic language to help your child develop more control over their behaviour and emotions. Frustration is easier to handle if a child understands that stopping play with their favourite game to put on their coat is because ‘We’re going to the park’. The earliest negotiations begin now – for example, ‘Wait a minute – I’m putting washing in the machine – then we’ll have story time’.

Tantrums usually become less often or intense by this stage. If it doesn’t seem to be getting any better or they’re getting worse, look at the Getting Stuck? booklet for further advice.

Children may accept separation from their parent more easily now if the preparation steps have been gone through initially. This tends to coincide with a more ‘secure’ concept of the parent as someone who goes away and returns later. Children are developing wider emotional relationships with other significant people in their life including other caregivers – a nursery key worker, brothers and sisters and other, familiar children.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

**Developing relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing attachment to parent and familiar others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuing to need reassurance and staged separation to settle into new environment</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a secure relationship with another caregiver eg familiar nursery key worker, childminder</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to show affection and concern for other children and younger brothers and sisters when prompted</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Social and emotional development

**Developmental journal · Stage 5**

**Developing relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour and self regulation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Becoming more able to express their wishes and intentions through language eg ‘nowant bath’ ‘nogo bed’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Becoming more amenable to adult participation and direction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming more compliant with adult requests and amenable to family rules (fewer tantrums)</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Joint play and social interaction is becoming more extended and involved. By now children can enjoy sharing a book with their parent or carer or listening to a short story if the book has tactile feely pieces or large bright pictures. Joint games and activities begin to involve more objects – for example, cooking activities, pretend game and posting games.

This is the time to encourage your child to imitate your actions more. This takes some support, because a child with limited vision isn’t helped by incidental learning from watching what adults do. You can introduce your child to new actions or unfamiliar behaviours through language and shared discovery.

Older brothers and sisters and other children can help as well, by drawing a child into games of play fighting, rough and tumble, running and chasing or hiding. Fun that’s shared brings shrieks of excited laughter. Your child may also now be content to play near other children when playing with toys, but at this stage it usually continues as separate, parallel play – though there may be some talking aloud.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

### Social interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joining in social interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing book with an adult and making comments about it</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaging in more extended joint play with parent involving turn taking and objects</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imitating a new action or unfamiliar behaviour introduced during play or everyday routine</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaging in simple interactive play (eg rough and tumble, running and chasing, singing) with familiar child eg sibling</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing alongside other children</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking aloud when playing with others</td>
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</table>
Children at this stage are continuing to learn the social scripts for daily home routines and tasks. They’re more interested in everything that you do together at home (or outside) so introduce them to how you do things – whether it’s pouring cereal into the bowl at breakfast, cleaning the floor or putting washing into the washing machine. Show your child how they can join in and encourage them to help you. This is also a good time to demonstrate that tasks have an organised sequence – first we find the bowl and spoon, then pour in the cereal and then pour in the milk.

As knowledge of scripts and social expectations grows, your child will become more cooperative (when they’re in the mood!) and also begin to remember simple social skills, like saying ‘Bye’ when someone leaves or ‘Please’ when they want a biscuit or juice.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

### Social interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actively helping adult in every day tasks eg dusting and sweeping, tidying up</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing a sequence of everyday routine eg pouring cereal bag into bowl for breakfast, squeezing toothpaste onto toothbrush</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing early social skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May say ‘Hi/Hello’, ‘Bye’, ‘Please’ or ‘Thank you/Ta’ unprompted</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding has to say ‘Please’ before being given object</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication, language and meaning

Children at this stage attend to comments about what they’re doing and are interested in. They have extended their listening skills and spend a lot more time listening to other people’s conversations. It’s surprising how much they can recall afterwards! However, at other times don’t be surprised if they’re too busy playing to pay attention to what you’re saying.

Children enjoy having familiar books read to them again and again. They’re now able to follow very short stories containing two or three main events and enjoy having a parent act out the different characters in a story using different voices.

As their memory develops, they’re able to draw on organised learned information and apply it to what they think and say. Children may, for example, correct parents or carers if they mention animals in a story in the wrong order. In relation to hearing and listening, this is called ‘auditory sequencing’ and children use it when retelling stories and rhymes, or when remembering the order that we ask them to do things in. This is an important developing skill that they’ll use later in their learning at school as well as at home. You can support it by telling and re-telling stories with your child, explaining how to do things or by doing things in a particular order, such as baking a cake or bathing a baby doll and talking about it as you do it.

Children continue to be strongly focused on their own interests but they’re becoming more flexible about shifting attention – for example, they may stop their activity to listen to you and follow your direction if you have gained their attention first.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Noticing a deliberate mistake in story telling or a rhyme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remembering phrases from stories and rhymes and uses them appropriately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognising the tunes of familiar songs and rhymes and joins in eg ‘Happy birthday’ and ‘Baa baa black sheep’</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Waiting for a little longer when told – ‘just a minute’</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Listening and attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening carefully to the other speakers before joining in with conversation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attending</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuing to be strongly focused on their own interests but more flexible in shifting attention eg may stop activity to listen to you</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting direction more easily when attention is not so intently focused</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children understand more complex instructions with two and sometimes three information-carrying parts by the end of this stage. They listen carefully to what people are saying and can answer some simple questions.

They’re beginning to understand the use of pronouns (I, me, you) but it may take them longer than other children to grasp that ‘me’ and ‘you’ reverse depending on who is the speaker and the listener. Limited vision may make this ‘perspective taking’ more difficult to understand and you may need to do a lot of modelling of this.

Children with limited vision also need greater help in understanding prepositions, like ‘under’, ‘on top of’, ‘behind’, and you may need to give them plenty of active opportunity to understand different spatial positions and relationships.

Pretend play is becoming more elaborate and children may practice longer sequences of everyday activities in their play. This may need quite a bit of help from adults. You can help by setting up a short pretend game using everyday replica objects, like pretending to have a tea party or bathing a baby doll. Children can be encouraged to plan and organise what objects they’ll need for the pretend game. By the end of this stage children may be starting to use one object to represent another in their sequences – for example, pretending a rod is a toothbrush or a potato chip.

By the end of this stage children like to join in simple real life activities like washing up, making sandwiches, helping to mend things and so on. These all provide many opportunities for them to listen, to talk about and share tasks and attend to the detail of what is happening.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

### Understanding language and meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
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<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selecting a number of objects from a small group when named</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Following an instruction with two information carrying words, eg ‘Get your shoes and your coat’</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answering simple questions such as ‘Where’s the…? ‘What is it?’</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to understand ‘under’, ‘on top’, ‘behind’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Understanding language and meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding words</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding some descriptions such as wet, cold, dirty</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to understand some pronouns eg I, me, you</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pretend play</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Making a pretend sequence eg pouring tea and then drinking, washing then drying doll</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gathering together toys they wish to play with eg getting a doll and tea set, before they start to play tea-parties</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using one object to represent another in pretend play eg uses a lid as a cup, puts brick on a plate as if it is food</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying dressing up eg as real person in their life or story character</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
At this stage of development, children begin to use their growing language skills to draw your attention to more distant events, by referring to the rain on the windowpane or to the ice cream van outside. They also draw your attention to objects nearby. They’re becoming more interested in what you’re doing and may ask you about it. They’re now able to use language to let you know about their everyday needs.

They take part in simple conversation, taking turns to comment or answer your questions. Children may use intonation (of their voice) and/or facial expression to make their meaning clearer – for example, to ask a question – ‘Nanna gone?’ rather than just to make a comment like ‘Nanna gone’.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

### Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint attention</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing interest in distant event through speech eg sound of fire engine, bird song, cat meow</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing parent’s attention to specific object through language and gestures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to show increased interest in the adult’s focus of attention eg ‘What doing?’, ‘What’s that?’</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to understand simple phrases of ‘joint attending’</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicating needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to communicate needs through language eg ‘want biscuit’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to make a two way conversation taking three turns eg 'Child says 'drink', parent says 'Do you want juice?' and child says 'juice'</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use appropriate intonation to make a request, ask a question or make a comment</td>
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</table>
Vocabulary is now increasing steadily in many children although children with the most limited vision may develop more slowly. As vocabulary increases, children begin to join single words together to produce word combinations and short sentences. These usually start as two word combinations with a noun and a noun or a noun and a verb, eg ‘mummy hat’, or ‘doggie gone’. Children may start to use their own name saying things like ‘Sherri do’.

During this stage children begin to produce longer, three word sentences and start to experiment with grammar. Initial phrases may be learned as a single unit eg ‘wanna juice’, ‘allgone now’. Then the child starts to spontaneously put two or more words together. Some of the structures or grammar will be correct, but usually parts of grammar are missing or are used incorrectly eg ‘baby sit down – table’. This is a normal part of early language development. Children need time to work out the complex rules of grammar for themselves through using language to talk about their experiences and talking to adult partners who can model appropriate grammatical sequences by ‘recasting’. The grammar usually becomes more correct as sentence length increases.

Children now use their language in their play and can practise their developing language skills when they’re alone. They’re interested in the world around them and may start to ask ‘What?’ questions.

By the end of this stage some children will have a large vocabulary and be producing simple sentences. They’re able to hold a simple conversation and chat to family members. Their sentences are much clearer and they can usually be understood by people who don’t know them well.

However, some children, especially those with the most limited vision, may be somewhat repetitive, repeating back what’s said to them or saying the same thing frequently. They may also talk about things that aren’t relevant to what’s going on at the time. They may need extra help to learn how to make their talk more spontaneous, meaningful and relevant. See the section on repetitive speech and echolalia in the Getting Stuck? booklet for more ideas.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11
## Expressive language – talking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First words and naming objects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naming a variety of everyday objects</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding <strong>vocabulary</strong> eg using 50 words or more</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regularly using two word combinations eg to request ‘biscuit please’ or to comment on activity eg ‘eat biscuit’</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using words other than nouns eg verbs – gone, come</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to ask questions eg whassat?</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use sentences of three or more words</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to use <strong>pronouns</strong> (me, you, I)</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to use <strong>prepositions</strong> (on, in, under)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Controlling voice volume eg whispers or uses loud voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using appropriate <strong>intonation</strong> to get across different communicative meanings</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Play and learning

Children are now ready to sit at a small table and concentrate on play with one or two toys for a short, sustained time. They may be able to concentrate for longer if an adult gives gentle support and guidance as scaffold. At this stage children will have favourite toys that they return to again and again, on which they try out lots of different activities.

Their sense of curiosity leads children to investigate things. This experimenting is an important part of learning as a ‘little scientist’.

Children can relate three objects together, such as replacing a toy in a container and then putting on its lid. They can manipulate a number of objects at once eg several containers and getting correct lids on.

Now is the time to introduce your child to building games and children develop an interest in construction toys that are large and easy to fit together, like large connecting building blocks.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for pre-school learning</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to sit at small table and concentrate on independent task for a few minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being able to sit at small table and engage in adult led activity for 5 – 10 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning about objects</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Object permanence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>During play searching for a toy which has moved some distance away</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding fixed objects in the home or familiar environment eg knows where the fridge is or where the books are kept</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning a more systematic search across objects in a line on table</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cause effect</strong></td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<td>![ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing a two part sequence to get an effect</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<td>![ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding how objects relate</strong></td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<td>![ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating three objects eg replacing a toy in a container and replacing the lid</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding that lids fit in different ways eg taking lid off and on screw – capped bottle</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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<td>![ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stacking several objects on each other</td>
<td>![ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing that objects can be built of several parts eg playing with construction toys like duplo or megablocks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Play and learning continued

Children are now beginning to recognize simple size and shape differences, such as big and small or round or square. You can help by introducing these differences so that your child can experience them by touch.

Children are also ready to learn about early differences in quantity – with concepts such as ‘empty’, ‘full up’, ‘lots inside’.

Your child will be adding to their knowledge of shapes, sizes and textures and colours. If they have sufficient vision, they may be able to match objects that are the ‘same’, and maybe match objects to pictures and pictures to pictures.

Once the idea of contrast has been learned, they’re ready to begin to sort and categorise according to concepts. They can learn about comparisons and contrasts like ‘wet’ and ‘dry’, ‘soft’ and ‘scratchy’ or ‘rough’, ‘hot’ and ‘cold’. They can sort objects according to everyday categories – all the shoes together, all the spoons together. You can help them by sorting objects according to shape, size, texture or colour with them.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding size – large and small</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying large and small everyday objects eg big shoe/little shoe, big spoon/little spoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding how different sized objects fit together eg different size (round shape) in two piece form board/puzzle</td>
<td>n</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding shape – round and square</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying round and square objects eg round ball and square cube</td>
<td>n</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early understanding of quantity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying early difference in contents of container – ‘empty’, ‘full up’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Making connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early sorting and categorizing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matching objects that are the same shape, size or colour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to match object to picture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Check Record of developing vision</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matching two pictures that are the same</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to sort everyday objects according to one characteristic eg all spoons together/all brushes together</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to sort objects according to two characteristics eg separating shoes from brushes (real objects), big and small, round and square, yellow and red</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children’s hand skills continue to develop and they’re getting better at opening and closing containers and handling quite small objects. They learn to use their hands for screwing and unscrewing. They can now identify more objects by touch and match objects by texture or shape.

Children with more vision like to make marks on paper with pencils, crayons, chalks and paints. Children with more limited vision may also enjoy the experience of using fingers or markers and then feeling the result afterwards to make the task more motivating.

Children with better vision may be able to copy simple shapes such as straight lines and circular scribble and may begin to hold a pencil with thumb and fingers (tripod). Children with limited vision also enjoy drawing shapes in clay or with finger paints. They’ll develop more delicate hand co-ordination such as simple threading, although these tasks are much more difficult for them than for others and these skills usually take longer to develop.

Plenty of opportunity for functional play with the kind of toy material suggested at Stage 5 will assist development of hand skills, coordination and strength.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning with touch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying a greater range of familiar objects by touch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to extend or generalise recognition of unfamiliar objects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matching differing textures by touch eg furry, smooth, prickly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying different textures by touch eg hard/soft, smooth/rough, warm/cold,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiating simple shapes by touch or touch/vision eg round ball/square brick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to enjoy ‘messy’ play</td>
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</table>
Using hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
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<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordinating hands and fingers – with toys and objects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening snack tub with simple tight fitting lid eg crisp tub or sweet tube</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taking a small lid off a screw top jar to get a sweet or snack</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using two hands together to assemble toys eg preschool construction toy or toy train driver in his cab</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using more precise placement to fit object in a hole eg large pegs in a pegboard, threading large beads onto stick or rigid lace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scribbling with crayon or in clay or dough</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing control of a marker (pencil, crayon or marker)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imitating circular scribbles or imitating vertical and horizontal strokes on paper or in dough or clay</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Movement and mobility

Now that walking skills are well developed, children with limited vision begin to extend their movement skills to bending, jumping, climbing, kicking etc although they may need repeated physical guidance and lots of practice to get them going. They’re ready to learn skills such as pedalling a tricycle once the movements required are physically demonstrated to them. They use all their senses to understand what’s happening around them and may be cautious in new environments. Many will be very careful about running around with other children or in busy places, but some show no fear – although some children are beginning to be aware of hazards in the environment, many children with limited vision are not aware of them at this stage. Extra care is therefore needed to ensure that if your child is active, they don’t over reach themselves and do something dangerous.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body awareness – developing a sense of position in space</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moving body in rhythm of motion in swing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to know left and right hand</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exploring the environment – orientation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fetching item from familiar location eg biscuit from cupboard</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring new environments with less direct support (eg pre-school or nursery)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extending movement and co-ordination</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking and running</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bending to pick up objects from floor and returning to standing without support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Running with hand held</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Extending movement and co-ordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walking and running</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Running co-ordinating arm and leg movements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking more confidently over different surfaces eg uneven ground</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to walk backwards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stopping and starting abruptly while maintaining balance when running</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changing direction to avoid obstacles while running</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Check Record of developing vision</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking on tiptoe</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Managing stairs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Going downstairs (any method) without adult help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Going downstairs looking forward holding hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking up stairs alternating feet holding rail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking down stairs alternating feet holding rail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standing on one foot momentarily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental goal</td>
<td>Card</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Extending movement and co-ordination</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Movement in play</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jumping from low object with both feet together (single step) hand held</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping from low object with both feet together (single step) without holding hand</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climbing up and down on furniture</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climbing up ladders on play equipment</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sliding down toddler slide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standing kicking a ball</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedalling toddler bike</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care

With practice children with limited vision will continue to improve their physical self-care skills and be ready to play a greater part in eating, dressing and bathing.

During this stage children learn new self-care skills and become more independent. They’re interested in a wider range of foods and can enjoy being involved in simple food/mealtime preparation like putting banana pieces in yoghurt, spreading jam on toast, putting bowls and cutlery on the table. They’re ready to learn about pouring liquids from a jug into a container though this will be rather messy at this stage.

At home they may be less aware of household tasks such as food preparation, washing and cleaning than other children, but can be encouraged to learn more through participation and play.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
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<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feeding/eating</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning to join in setting the table for family meals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrying bowl, cup, plate or cutlery with help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drinking from an open topped cup with support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pouring liquid from jug into container with some spillage</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating with spoon with minimal spillage</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using spoon to transfer food from one container to another</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting food from screw top jar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempting to use a knife for spreading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempting to use a knife for cutting (eg dough or cake)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrying bowl/plate with sandwich for a few steps without dropping</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care continued

Children who are beginning to attend playgroups or pre-schools may need to be taught a range of specific strategies to make it possible for them to manage self-care tasks with greater independence in these settings. These might include how to find their coat hook at playgroup and how to find the table and chair for snack time.

They may also be expected to take an increasing role in washing and drying their hands and beginning to help to put on and take off outdoor clothing.

At home the stage at which families expect children to use the toilet or potty depends on family preferences. Daytime naps have usually become shorter and generally now take place in the afternoon only.

Children with limited vision need more time, patience and experience to master these skills.

For activities and ideas, see Card 11

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dressing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Putting arms in open-fronted coat or shirt when held</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulling pants/trousers up and down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening different kinds of fasteners eg large buttons, snap belts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulling up part closed zipper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulling on socks</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanging up coat</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding items of clothing in bedroom</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Using the toilet</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of need to empty bladder or bowel</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating when about/need to empty bladder or bowel</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Towards independent self-care continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental goal</th>
<th>Card</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>What my child does and enjoys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using the toilet</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling down elasticized trousers independently</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using potty/toilet regularly with support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Becoming dry/clean during the day</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flushing toilet with support</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting to be wiped after using potty/nappy</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wiping self with support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting to ask to use the toilet when needed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Washing and bathing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning taps off and on</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing and drying hands with minimal assistance</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a tooth brush with support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping predominantly at night with decreasing need for day time naps</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeping in own bed through the night (10 to 12 hours)</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>
Child’s name: ________________________________

Date of birth: ____________
## Developmental profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and emotional development</th>
<th>Stage 1a</th>
<th>Stage 1b</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication, language and meaning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening and attending</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding language and meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressive language – talking</td>
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<td><strong>Play and learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Making connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using hands</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Movement and mobility</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Body awareness</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring the environment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extending movement and co-ordination</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Towards independent self-care</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding/eating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dressing and nappy changing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using the toilet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washing and bathing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bedtime routine and sleeping pattern</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Developmental journal
for babies and children
with visual impairment

Record of developing vision
Some definitions

Visual lures or targets are the objects used to attract your baby’s visual attention and interest and to encourage them to look more closely or shift their gaze. These could be faces, people, everyday objects, toys, lights etc.

Visual awareness, visual interest and visual acuity
- Visual awareness – alerting to/detecting the presence of a visual stimulus.
- Visual interest – looking at a visual lure to learn about it.
- Visual acuity is a measure of how well a child sees detail of standard black and white materials at different distances, eg letter charts and acuity cards (stripes) used by eye specialists.

Functional vision and visual function
- Functional vision is a measure of how well a child sees the visual lures important for their current developmental needs and of their level of control of eye movements and gaze at various distances. The Record of developing vision measures your baby’s functional vision and is the basis of the activities on the Developing vision activity cards – the activities that make up your child’s individual programme to promote development of vision.
- Visual function is how a child functions visually within the everyday environment.

Eye movements
- Directing gaze – turning eyes to look at someone or something to which one has been alerted in near and far distance.
- Following – movement of the eyes as they keep a moving object in focus.
- Tracking – movement of the eyes as they keep an object in focus as it rolls along a surface or along a track.
- Convergence – inward movement of the eyes towards the nose in order to focus on very near objects.
- Scanning – movements of the eyes searching to find something, eg one’s shoe in a room or the red flower in a complex picture.

This booklet is published as part of the Early Support Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment.
**Development of vision – general points**

- This booklet is designed to help you improve your child’s vision as fast as possible as this will benefit overall development and ensure your child achieves their full potential for vision.

- Vision normally improves from birth through early childhood as babies learn to control their eye movements and to focus their gaze on near and far objects.

- The vision of children who have difficulties with seeing (visual impairment) usually develops more slowly than the vision of other children.

- In most of the eye conditions that lead to visual impairment in childhood, vision tends to improve throughout the early years. How much a baby’s vision will be able to develop depends on the nature and severity of their visual problem. The potential for visual progress and actual rate of progress differ considerably from baby to baby – in some children there is quite a lot of development and it’s quite fast and in others there is only very little development and it comes slowly. A very few eye conditions preclude development of vision, e.g. anophthalmia (where children are born without eyes). You might want to talk about this with your specialist professional.

Sometimes the development of vision in babies with visual impairment is slower than need be and children have been shown to benefit from a programme to promote vision.¹ **Active encouragement** improves the rate of visual progress in most babies.

- The **Record of developing vision** is made up of a series of **Record charts** that you can use with your specialist professional to note down your baby’s visual progress. Each chart has an accompanying **Activity card** for you to work through.

- The **Record of developing vision** and suggested activities follow the steps, pattern and sequence seen in children with full sight but they cannot be linked to specific stages of the **Developmental journal**, because the level of vision of one baby may be much better than that of another, although developmentally they are both at the same stage.

- As you progress through the **Development of vision activity cards**, you will notice that some of the activities require your baby/child to be at a certain level of development in relation to Play and learning, Communication, language and meaning or Movement and mobility so you shouldn’t try to record these visual stages until your baby has these developmental skills.

- Check the **Record of developing vision** regularly with your specialist professional and decide together on the best visual lures, speeds of movement and distances to help your child.

- **Visual lures** should not make a sound if they are being used to fill in the record.

- Activities that promote development of vision will be hard work for your baby or child, as this is an area that is difficult for them, so you need to use all your ingenuity to keep their interest and show pleasure in their success.

---

¹ Sonksen P M, Petrie A and Drew K J
Promotion of visual development of severely visually impaired babies: evaluation of a developmentally based programme
The early stages of visual development involve awareness and subsequent interest in looking at faces, people, diffuse light, light reflections and gently oscillating objects in the near environment. Newborn babies move their eyes to each side and up and down. Movements are often jerky and the two eyes may not move perfectly together – most cannot converge. Gradually movements become smoother, quicker and more in unison.

At the same time babies begin to learn to direct their gaze and to follow near faces, people and objects. A baby/child with visual impairment may show their first visual response to a glowing light source in a dark room. If you find it difficult to tell what your baby/child is able to see, talk about this with someone with specialist knowledge.

Whenever lures are not specified below, list and describe them (their size and colour and whether they are light reflecting (LR) or non-light reflecting (N-LR)) in the empty spaces provided in the left-hand column. Record the distance (from lure to baby/child) and/or speed (slow, medium, fast) in the right-hand column.

See Development of vision activity card 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in functional vision</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual awareness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alerting (eye widening, alert expression, or change in body tone)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aware of overhead lights being switched on/off</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Distance: within 1/3 metre</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aware of a glowing light in a dark room, eg ‘oogly’ on a pen torch</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of a glowing light in a day lit room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aware of a smiling expressive face</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of a spinning light reflecting ball, eg tinsel (12cm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of a spinning colourful woolly pom-pom ball (12cm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps in functional vision</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual interest or looking at</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– a glowing/light-producing toy in dark room, eg ‘oogly’ on a pen torch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– a glowing light in day lit room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– a smiling expressive face</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– a spinning light reflecting balls, eg tinsel (12cm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– a spinning colourful woolly pom-pom ball (12cm)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (describe)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements (near distance) – directing gaze</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects and shifts gaze to a lure, eg towards light when you draw back the curtains or towards your face when you lean over your child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements (near distance) – following</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows lure when it is moved slowly from side to side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Record of developing vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in functional vision</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements (near distance) – following</strong> continued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows lure when it is moved slowly up and down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements (near distance) – convergence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes converge (look in towards nose) when lure is moved slowly towards nose</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Visual interest and the control of gaze and eye movements for ‘people’ and large lures gradually extend to greater distances (up to three metres). Gaze shifting and following also expand and become smoother and quicker. Babies detecting lures of 12 to 25 cm begin to track them if rolled slowly across a table surface. At the same time, visual awareness and interest gradually develop for increasingly small items at table top distance (30 to 40 cm).

Whenever lures are not specified below, list and describe them (their size and colour and whether they are light reflecting (LR) or non-light reflecting (N-LR)) in the empty spaces provided in the left-hand column. Record the distance (from lure to baby/child) and/or speed (slow, medium, fast) in the right-hand column.

See Development of vision activity cards 2a and 2b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in functional vision</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual awareness and visual interest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at large lures (12 cm or over) that ‘move on the spot’ eg dangling spinning ball, favourite cuddly toy (jiggled) or you waving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at increasingly small single, stationary items on a well-contrasted table/highchair surface</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at a young child’s football (12 cm)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at a tennis ball (6 cm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at a toy brick/cube (2.5 cm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at a raisin or cheerio (1 cm)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at a hundred and thousand (HTs) – sugar cake decoration (1 to 1.2 mm)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Record of developing vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in functional vision</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual awareness and visual interest</strong> continued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (describe)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance: from within 1⁄3 metre to 3 metres</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements – directing gaze at increasing distances</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects and shifts gaze to large <strong>lure(s)</strong> (you, toy more than 25cm) to each side.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects and shifts gaze from one large <strong>lure</strong> (you, toy more than 25cm) to another one at the same distance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps in functional vision</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements – following</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following a person moving across a room at increasing distances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following large <strong>lures</strong> (12 to 25cm) at increasing distances when moved across visual field from R to L or L to R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following large <strong>lures</strong> (12 to 25cm) at increasing distances when moved up and down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements – convergence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained and nearer to nose than before for a <strong>lure</strong> (8 to 10cm) moved slowly towards nose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps in functional vision</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements – tracking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks a <strong>lure</strong> (25cm and 12cm) rolled from R to L and L to R across a table top</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks a <strong>lure</strong> (25 and 12 cm) rolled ‘to’ and ‘fro’ along a table top</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Control of visual awareness, visual interest, gaze and eye movement for ‘people’ and large lures gradually extends even further – up to six metres. Gaze shifting and following also expand. Tracking along the floor can be recorded once a baby can sit supported on the floor, both across the visual field and ‘to and fro’. At the same time, visual awareness and visual interest for increasingly small items at tabletop distance (30 to 40cm) continue to progress. Once aware and interested in large lures (yourself or an object of 20 to 30cm) at two metres, babies begin to detect similar-size lures when popped out from behind a screen or armchair with a non-patterned cover placed at a one metre distance from them. Some children with limited vision continue to improve more and faster in near than far distance. Children need to understand the names of family, friends, pets, everyday objects and toys before you can try to complete some of the sections below.

Whenever lures are not specified below, list and describe them (their size and colour and whether they are light reflecting (LR) or non-light reflecting (N-LR)) in the empty spaces provided in the left-hand column. Record the distance (from lure to baby/child) and/or speed (slow, medium, fast) in the right-hand column.

**See Development of vision activity cards 3a and 3b**

### Steps in functional vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance: from within ⅓ metre to 6 metres</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual awareness, visual interest and visual acuity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at large lures (12cm or over) that ‘move on the spot’, eg you waving, a favourite cuddly toy (jiggled) or a dangling spinning ball</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at increasingly small single, stationary items on a well-contrasted table or highchair surface</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects a tennis ball size (6cm)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects a wooden brick/cube (2.5cm)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Visual awareness, visual interest and visual acuity

**Dx:** possible, definite, distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in functional vision</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detects a raisin or cheerio (1 cm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detects/looks at a hundred and thousand (HTs) – sugar cake decoration (1 to 1.2 mm)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Looks actively or scans room, visually finds and indicates recognition by looking and smiling at, pointing to or saying ‘there’ for the following</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>– a familiar person or pet when asked, eg ‘where’s daddy?’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– a familiar object or toy when asked, eg ‘where’s teddy/your beaker?’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Record of developing vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in functional vision</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
<th>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Looks actively or scans room, visually finds and indicates recognition by looking and smiling at, pointing to or saying ‘there’ for the following</strong> continued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>– an object of a familiar type, eg beaker or brush, but different in colour from their own</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Distance:** from within $\frac{1}{3}$ metre to 6 metres

**Eye movements – directing gaze at increasing distances**

Detects and shifts gaze from one large **lure** (12 to 25cm) to another

Detects and shifts gaze when large **lure**, eg your face or favourite cuddly toy, pops out from behind a screen/armchair – see introduction to Record 3 on page 12
### Record of developing vision

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements – following at increasing distances</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Follows person moving across a room at increasing distances</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows large <strong>lure</strong> (12 to 25cm) when moved from side to side</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows large <strong>lure</strong> (12 to 25cm) when moved up and down</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements – tracking at increasing speeds and distances</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracks ball rolled across their visual field and towards and away from them along the floor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracks a large plastic football (about 25cm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracks a small child’s football – about 12cm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracks a tennis ball size – 6cm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Continue to use Record 3 to record near and distant awareness/interest items and eye movement items until you reach their limits in terms of size, speed and distance. There are additional spaces to record steps in scanning and tracking. This section focuses mainly on recording further development of functional acuity through looking for detail in people, objects, pictures and photographs.

People and objects are three-dimensional and are easier to see than pictures or photographs, which are two-dimensional. If you have a digital camera, you can take and print off photographs of family faces against a plain background. Matt photographs are easier to see than gloss. Television programmes are on the whole like constantly changing photographs and it’s difficult for a child with limited vision to work out what’s happening. Vision for television is not included in the record as it is difficult to be sure what aspects are seen sufficiently well for understanding. Discuss TV programmes with your specialist teacher.

Understanding the names of family/friends/pets/everyday objects/toys/items in pictures is needed before you can try to complete this section. Some parts require the child to indicate what they see by naming, making a meaningful noise, eg ‘brmm – brmm’ or making a gesture, eg ‘of drinking’.

People who are lures should not speak and objects should be silent, until your child has indicated their choice. Objects can be on a table if near or on the floor if further away. Describe the lure briefly in the left-hand column, eg for a photograph, the overall size, the content and the background – 16cm by 20cm grandpa’s face, kitchen wall (cream emulsion). In pictures note size of picture and item and give brief description – 8cm yellow duck on green grass with tree to left – all separate and bold with clear outlines. Record the viewing distance in the right-hand column.

See Development of vision activity cards 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acuity/visual interest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance: from within ½ metre to 6 metres</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking actively at people and able to distinguish between</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– two familiar people of different body shape/height or wearing clothes the child has seen them in before when asked ‘Where’s …….?’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Record of Developing Vision

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</table>

**Acuity/Visual Interest**

**Distance: from within ¼ metre to 6 metres continued**

- Two familiar people dressed in similar colours and of similar body shape and height etc when asked ‘Where’s .......?’

**Looking actively at objects or scanning** and able to distinguish between two objects or toys that do not make a sound, when named

- Two objects of similar size but different shape and colour

- Two objects of similar size, colour and overall shape
### Steps in functional vision

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acuity/visual interest</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance: from within ( \frac{1}{3} ) metre to 6 metres</strong> continued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– several objects in a cluster or group of objects in a basket/pile of the same type but different sizes and colours, eg family beakers/shoes in a basket, in response to ‘Where are Susan’s shoes?’ or ‘Find Susan’s shoes.’</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>– several objects in a cluster/group of objects in a basket/pile of the same type and colour but different in size, eg family trainers in a basket, in response to ‘Where are Susan’s trainers?’ or ‘Find Susan’s trainers.’</td>
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### Steps in functional vision

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**Distance: from within \( \frac{1}{3} \) metre to 6 metres continued**

- Looking actively and identifying pictures – your child says, makes a meaningful noise or gestures the names of items in ‘new’ pictures – that they have not previously seen, in response to the question ‘What’s/Who’s that?’ (within \( \frac{1}{3} \) metre)

- an item of familiar type, e.g. beaker or bath duck. Picture of a single item (life size) in bold colours, clear outline, plain background and good contrast to background

- item(s) of the same type as above but embedded in a simple scene. Items in the scene should not overlap each other and be in bold colours, clear outline, plain background and good contrast to background
### Acuity/visual interest

**Distance: from within \( \frac{1}{3} \)metre to 6 metres continued**

- item(s) but smaller and embedded in coloured picture of a natural scene – like a printed photograph

- very small items in a visually complex coloured picture of everyday scene

**Looking actively at photographs** – your child says, makes a meaningful noise or gestures the names of items in ‘new’ photographs – that they have not previously seen, in response to the question ‘What’s/Who’s that? (within \( \frac{1}{3} \)metre)

A photograph of a single familiar face against a plain, well-contrasted background
## Record of developing vision

### Steps in functional vision

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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance: from within ½ metre to 6 metres</strong> continued</td>
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<tr>
<td>A photograph of two familiar faces against a plain, well-contrasted background</td>
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<tr>
<td>A photograph of a familiar person (full length) against a plain, well-contrasted background</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A photograph of two familiar people (full length) against a plain, well-contrasted background</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A photograph of a single familiar face in a natural indoor or outdoor setting</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Record of developing vision

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<td><strong>Acuity/visual interest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance: from within (\frac{1}{2}) metre to 6 metres</strong> continued</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A photograph of two familiar faces in a natural indoor or outdoor setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>A photograph of two familiar people (full length) in a natural indoor or outdoor setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>A photograph of two familiar people in a natural indoor or outdoor setting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A photograph of a family occasion (birthday tea or picnic) in a natural indoor or outdoor setting</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps in functional vision</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
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<td>Distance (cm) and speed of movement (slow, medium, fast)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements – scanning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to scanning along a line of objects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to five familiar toys/objects in row – child follows your finger along the row in either direction in search of the requested item</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Five familiar objects in a row – child follows your finger from L to R in search of the one requested</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye movements – tracking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracking moving objects along an irregular pathway, eg train going around a winding track or a streamer in your hand</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Developmental journal
for babies and children
with visual impairment
• adapted hand grasp – adjusting the opening of fingers and position of the hand to fit the object when beginning to pick it up or grasp it

• alerting – becoming aware and attentive to an object or event

• anticipation – the feeling of looking forward or expecting that something is going to happen

• anticipation games – short sequence games that are played so frequently that a child begins to know what to expect next in the routine, often drawn from daily activities or nursery rhymes, eg ‘Peek-a-boo’ or ‘Round and round the garden’

• attachment – a bond or relationship developed between parents and carers and their child

• attend – paying attention to someone or something so that one might detect an auditory, visual or tactile stimuli

• auditory sensitivity – discomfort or distress in response to loud noises or particular sounds

• aversive – a strong dislike and avoidance

• babble – repetitive sequences of consonant-vowel syllable-like vocalisations, eg ‘dadada’

• backwards or reverse chaining – a technique for learning, where the last step of a task is learnt first and subsequent steps are learnt in reverse order, eg step 4, 3, 2, 1

• biological clock – internal brain process that helps establish and maintain sleeping and waking patterns in a 24-hour cycle

• bond – a unique, strong relationship between a parent or main carer and a child

• bottom shuffling – moving around the floor on one’s bottom when in a sitting up position

• casting – learning to let go of objects leading to throwing away game played by children

• cause-effect – knowledge that a certain action makes certain things happen, eg moving a hand holding a rattle and the rattle making a sound

• child directed speech (also known as ‘child directed language’, ‘baby talk’ or ‘motherese’) – the kind of speech/sounds adults make when communicating with babies and small children, eg using a higher pitch of voice; using more varied intonation and facial expression; using short, repetitive sentences; using simpler and repetitive words and phrases

• cognitive development – the processes involved in thinking, reasoning, learning, processing and remembering information

• communication – the way we tell someone what we mean using language, our voice, our face and our body

• commando crawling – lying prone and pulling oneself along the floor by one’s arms

• concept – an idea or understanding associated with a person, object, event etc

• consonant sounds – a speech sound formed by restricting, channelling, or directing air flow with the tongue, teeth, and/or lips, eg th, s, f, g, t, p, m etc

• construction toys – building toys such as bricks, blocks, many/several part models, railway or road layouts

• convergence – inward movement of the eyes towards the nose in order to focus on very near objects

• cruising – moving along against a piece of furniture – lifting one foot to move sideways while holding on

• developmental setback – slowing down in rate of learning or ‘long plateau’ in one or more areas of development

• directing gaze – turning eyes to look at someone or something to which one has been alerted in near and far distance
Glossary continued

- echoing or echolalia – repetition of words or phrases said by another
- emotions – feelings such as happiness and anger
- engagement – a close, emotional form of reciprocal interaction between babies and their caregivers when the baby is interested, alert and participating in interaction
- exploratory play – spontaneous and repeated actions that lead to discovery
- expressive language – words that are combined into phrases or sentences that are used by the child
- expressive vocabulary – single words that are used in the production of language
- eye contact – when two people look into each other’s eyes
- eye-hand co-ordination – ability to see a desired object, and then reach out for it and do something with the object in a co-ordinated (organized) way
- eye poking – poking or pressing the eye repeatedly with a finger as a form of self-stimulation
- facial expression – the changes we make to our faces by widening the eyes, opening the mouth, smiling etc
- fading – shifting attention to a new toy or activity before removing an existing toy or activity
- forward chaining – a technique for learning, where the steps are taught in sequence starting with the first step, ie step 1, 2, 3, 4
- following – movement of the eyes as they keep a moving object in focus
- forewarning – using simple physical or visual cues, sounds and words to let a child know what is about to happen
- formboard – simple form of wooden puzzle toy with inset pieces that can be removed from the wooden tray
- functional vision or visual function – a measure of how well a child sees the visual lures important for their current developmental needs and of their level of control of eye movements and of gaze at various distances
- gesture – motions of the hands, head or body to communicate
- guiding hands – putting your hand gently on your child’s upper arm, elbow, lower arm or wrist to help guide them to explore and play and to develop ‘joint attention’
- hand over hand – putting your hand gently over your child’s hand (or their hand over yours) to help guide them to explore and play and to develop ‘joint attention’
- high sensitivity surfaces – textures and materials that appear to arouse a stronger sensory reaction when touching them, eg sticky, fluffy or grainy surfaces
- hypersensitivity or hyperawareness – extreme sensitivity to certain sounds or textures
- imaginative play – where the child creates their own world or game, alone or with others, using new and familiar objects, actions and roles
- imitation – when children copy the actions of other people
- incidental learning – learning resulting from listening to or observing the actions of others
- information carrying words – words or phrases that communicate a main idea or bit of information to the listener. When a speaker says ‘put teddy (1) in the box (2)’, this can be viewed as two information carrying phrases
- intelligible – able to be understood
- interact – to be involved in communication or social activity with somebody else
- interaction – the behaviour which takes place between two people – for example, between a parent and a child
- intonation – variations in pitch patterns (melody/rhythm) and emphasis of spoken language that provide important cues for drawing attention to salient words or syllables
• **jargon** – sounds made by a child that have similar characteristics to spoken language, but that are not understood by other people

• **joint attention or referencing** – where two people both share a focus of attention to the same object or event or topic of conversation

• **light band** – stick-like toy with a battery or fluorescent light that shines

• **lure** – an object used to attract visual attention or interest

• **memory** – the ability of the brain to store past knowledge of sounds, words, language, people and events etc

• **midline** – the middle of the body, as if a vertical line is running from top of the head down to the feet

• **mirroring** – copying or elaborating and tuning in to another person’s actions, the sounds they make and their feelings

• **modelling** – providing an example for others to copy

• **mobile**
  (a) a toy with objects/parts attached on string/elastic or similar to a frame and suspended above a cot etc
  (b) able to move around

• **mobility** – the ability to make planned movements through the environment

• **mobility officer** – a professional trained to teach individuals how to move within the environment in a safe and planned manner

• **motor skills**
  gross motor skills – ability to use the body to move around, first by turning, then crawling or rolling, then walking and so on
  fine motor skills – ability to use the body for small, more precise movements, particularly hand movements

• **mouthing** – exploration of objects using the mouth

• **non-speech sounds** – any vocal sounds that are not speech sounds such as humming, musical sounds or making animal noises

• **navigate** – to find your way around

• **non-visual characteristics** – features of objects, people, places etc perceived through touch, sound, taste, smell etc

• **noun** – naming words for objects, places, people etc, eg ‘bag’, ‘Mummy’, ‘banana’

• **objects of reference** – use of an object to link with (or represent) a familiar routine or activity – eg a spoon to represent ‘dinner time’

• **object permanence** – knowing that an object still exists even when a person is no longer in physical contact with the object or when it is out of sight

• **oogly** – a small translucent rubber/plastic toy character which can fit on the top of a pen torch and diffuses light

• **orientation**
  (a) direction in which an object or person is facing
  (b) using information in the environment to work out where you are, where you are going and how to get there

• **over-generalisation** – inaccurate use of a word or concept to refer to a classification of an object or event, eg ‘dog’ for all animals

• **paediatrician** – a specialist children’s doctor

• **palmar grasp** – using the whole hand to hold objects

• **parallel play** – playing alongside and/or with similar materials as an adult or another child, but without a sharing of toys or ideas

• **phrase** – a group of words

• **pincer grasp** – picking up small objects between index (second) finger and thumb
Glossary continued

- **PMO** – paediatric mobility officer
- **play sequence** – when a child does one action to one person and then does it again to another, or does consecutive actions in their play, eg pouring pretend tea for a doll and then drinking it
- **plural** – expressing more than one person, thing or item
- **possessives** – showing ownership in grammatical terms, eg the boy’s teddy, Mummy’s cup
- **posting** – putting objects into holes
- **postural control** – control of muscles to maintain postures or body positions, eg to stay upright when tilted to one side
- **prepositions** – set of words usually used with nouns or pronouns to show their relation to some other part of the clause, eg in, over, behind, under, beside
- **pretend play** – behaviours such as acting out simple familiar daily routines with a make-believe element, often involving an adult partner and toys, eg pretending to drink from a toy cup
- **pronoun** – word which stands in place of a person or object, eg I/he/she/it
- **prone** – lying on your tummy
- **proto-words** – use of a particular sound combination consistently with meaning before using the real word
- **psychologist** – professional working in both health and educational settings who is trained to promote psychological wellbeing and reduce psychological and learning difficulties
- **raspberries** – sounds made by blowing through closed lips
- **recasting** – repeating a child’s word and then saying what you think the child is trying to say in a short sentence – ‘Juice? You’d like some juice?’
- **receptive language** – words that are combined into phrases or sentences that are understood by the child
- **reflex actions** – range of instinctive actions babies are born with
- **reinforcement** – something that motivates a child to do a specific behaviour or action and immediately follows the behaviour or action – often like a reward
- **release** – controlled, purposeful relaxation of grasp to let go of an object
- **repetitive behaviour** – behaviour that gets repeated for self-stimulation and not for any other apparent purpose
- **reverse or backwards chaining** – a technique for learning where the last step of a task is learnt first and subsequent steps are learnt in reverse order, eg step 4, 3, 2, 1
- **rhythm** – the pattern formed by stressed and unstressed syllables
- **routine** – the usual way tasks or activities are done in everyday life
- **saving response** – putting hand out to the front or side towards the floor if starting to lose balance or fall
- **sensory feedback** – doing something and receiving information back through the senses such as touch, hearing, body positioning or vision
- **reorientating** – to change direction, eg of gaze or movement
- **scaffolding** – providing adult verbal or physical support to assist learning in a manner that gives a framework and guidance, but without taking over control
- **scanning** – movements of the eyes searching to find something, eg one’s shoe in a room or the red flower in a complex picture
- **secure separation** – when a child may show brief distress on separation from a parent or carer, but then copes with the separation period knowing that the parent will return later. The return of the parent is often greeted very positively
Glossary continued

- selective listening – attending to one source of sound to the exclusion of all others
- self-concept/identity – a feeling of individuality and recognition of own characteristics and preferences
- self-corrects – when a child realises they have made the wrong choice during an activity and changes to the right solution independently, without adult prompting
- self-directing – independently choosing own activities and actions
- self-regulating – ability to control strong emotions
- sensory – to do with the senses of touch, smell, taste, sight, hearing, movement and balance
- separation anxiety – behaviour seen in babies and young children when they’re anxious about being separated from their parents or carers and may become distressed when left in the care of others
- sequence – a number of things, actions, object or pictures that are arranged in a particular order
- shared discovery – how to explore and play with your child with limited vision including how to guide your child’s hands to explore and to develop ‘joint attention’
- sibling – brother or sister
- single channelled – attending to only one source of interest at a time
- situational cues – things in the environment or behaviour of others that help a child to understand what to expect, eg if Mum puts the child’s coat on, gets the car keys and walks to the door, the child will understand that they’re going out in the car
- situational understanding – shows understanding based on situational cues
- sociable – being willing and happy to interact with others
- social-emotional development – how children learn who they are, what feelings they have and how to behave. Learning about what other people are like and how they behave and interact with others, learning to develop relationships
- social referencing – watching or referring to other people’s behaviour such as looking, pointing, talking, to find out what they are attending to and how they are feeling or thinking about something
- social scripts – learnt knowledge of how to behave in social situations
- sound localisation – the ability to work out where sounds are coming from
- spatial boundaries – environmental features such as walls that enclose or mark the outer extremes of specific spaces
- specialist teacher for visual impairment – a teacher with specialist qualification for teaching children with visual impairment
- speech sounds – the vowels and consonants of a language which make up the phonemes or sounds of words
- startling – sudden physical reaction to unexpected event, eg loud noise
- still or stilling – to become totally motionless while concentrating on collecting sensory information, eg while listening
- supine – lying on your back
- sustained interest – attention to a toy or activity for long(er) periods of time
- syllable – a unit of spoken language such as a vowel and consonant combination, eg ‘biscuit’ (bis/cuit) has two syllables
• symbolic play – make believe use of an object to represent a real life object, eg push a brick along saying ‘brmm, brmm’ (car)
• symbolic vocalisations – noises/sounds used to represent an object, person or place which is not the name of the object, person or place, eg ‘choo-choo’ for train, ‘brmm brmm’ for car
• tactile avoidance – refusal to touch certain textures
• tactile sensations – the sense experience of touching textures, materials or objects
• tactile sensitivity – distress or discomfort resulting from touching certain textures. Hands are often withdrawn
• tracking – movement of the eyes as they keep an object in focus as it rolls along a surface or along a track
• three-dimensional – object or space with height, width and depth
• touch clues – bits of information about something that is gained through touching it and helps one identify what it is
• trunk – the part of the body between the shoulders and hips
• turn-taking – where one person in a conversation talks and the other listens, then they exchange roles so that the listener becomes the speaker. Or in turn-taking games, where each partner in the interaction has a turn (eg rolling a ball back and forth)
• undergeneralisation – use of words or concepts limited to familiar objects or situations only, eg says ‘cup’ only for own cup and not for other unfamiliar cups
• unintelligible – unable to be understood
• verb – an action word, eg ‘jump’, ‘look’, ‘sleep’
• vision level
  V1 – no vision or light perception only
  V2 – able to see light reflecting objects
  V3 – able to see large bright objects (12 cm)
  V4 – able to see smaller bright objects (2.25 cm)
• visual acuity – a measure of how well a child sees the detail of standard black and white materials at different distances, eg letter charts and acuity cards (stripes) used by eye specialists
• visual awareness – alerting to or detecting the presence of a visual stimulus
• visual fields – the span or arc of vision including peripheral vision (vision at the outer edges) when the child’s gaze is forward. This includes horizontal and vertical fields and also nasal field (field across the nose)
• visual function – how a child functions visually or uses their vision within the everyday environment
• visual interest – looking with interest at a visual lure to learn about it
• visual lures or targets – the objects used to attract your child’s visual attention and interest and to encourage her/him to look more closely or shift her/his gaze. These could be faces, people, everyday objects, toys, lights etc
• vocabulary – all of the words a child knows
• vocalisation/vocalises – the production of sounds using our voice
• vowel sounds – the sounds in speech represented by the five vowels of the written English alphabet – a, e, i, o, u
General overview of development
This booklet is published as part of the Early Support Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment.

It gives a general overview of development in young children. The different areas and themes of development in the Developmental journal and Activity cards are described. Advice on toys and materials and strategies for ways of helping your child to learn are also included.

The final section is for professionals and parents who wish to do further reading on the development of young children with limited vision. It explains the theoretical ideas underlying the content of the Journal and processes of development that are more vulnerable and have been given special emphasis.

Where words appear in blue, like this, they appear in the Glossary.

Where colour is used to identify different aspects of development, the colour coding follows the coding used by the Development journal.
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Development in young children with limited vision

Vision is the primary ‘co-ordinating’ sense for early learning. It integrates information from the other senses of hearing, touching, smelling, tasting and from muscles about position and movement. This co-ordinated sensory experience provides the basis for infant learning and the beginning of making sense of the social and physical world.

When a baby is born they have relatively poor vision, but enough to make out the image of the parent’s face. This is often their first visual experience. Vision rapidly improves over the next weeks and months. Often the first thing that parents notice when their baby has difficulty with vision is that the baby doesn’t look at their face and doesn’t return their loving look. Parents say how hard it is when they realise that their baby does not see and that they need help as soon as possible.

The amount of visual difficulty depends on the eye condition, so some babies and children have more difficulty than others. Most babies with limited vision tend to see very little in the early months, though the vision of most will improve. The rate and degree of improvement of vision varies in each child. In a very few eye conditions it is known from early on that the child will not develop any more vision. For most children with limited vision, there is uncertainty and it is important with these children to help them develop their vision to its maximum potential.

Babies and young children have an amazing capacity to learn. Those with limited vision will need to take in information through their other senses. They’ll need more help with learning than those with good vision, because they miss out on the incidental learning that comes through looking and watching.

Learning new skills is often more challenging when vision is limited. For example, being motivated and learning to walk is more difficult when you don’t see other people walking or the exciting things all around you. Babies and young children need to draw on different abilities to learn particular
skills and find other routes for reaching particular goals. For example, they may need to rely on memory more and build up ‘maps’ of space in their minds to recall the layout of rooms in their home. Although there can be big variation between individual babies and young children with limited vision, on average they tend to acquire new skills more slowly than typical sighted children in the first years of life. The rate of learning is usually affected by the child’s level of vision – children with the most limited vision tend to acquire skills at the slowest rate. There is therefore quite a strong relationship between use of vision and developmental progress and it’s important to help the child use any vision available as much as possible.

In all children, development tends to progress through apparent spurts of fast change and periods of slower learning, when current skills are refined and consolidated. The child may need further maturation and growth before they’re ready to move on. This uneven pattern of development may be more noticeable in children who make slower progress, including many children with limited vision. In some, the periods of apparently slower change can be quite extended and the child appears to be on a ‘plateau’ in their learning.

Many babies and young children with limited vision have a remarkable and creative ability to work round their vision loss and make progress and learn in all areas of development. However, there are special challenges for learning in all areas of development. These include the areas of social and emotional development, communication and language, play and learning, movement and co-ordination, and independent self-care. In light of this, all these areas of development are included in the Journal.

Early intervention and help makes a difference to how quickly babies with limited vision learn. Many of the natural ways that parents respond to their baby and young child will help their development. The Developmental journal and Activity cards are designed to help parents show their baby how the world around them works and to ensure that their development is as ‘smooth’ as possible.
Introduction to key areas of development

The following introductions outline the developmental processes that are covered in the developmental areas and themes of the Journal. Where vision is important in helping the growth of the developmental process in the normally sighted child, ideas are given in the Journal and associated Activity cards to help the development of the process through other routes.

Social and emotional development

Babies are born into a social world. They have to learn what other people are like and how they behave so that they can interact and develop relationships. Through interacting with others, they learn about who they are, about their own feelings and how to behave. As they grow, they learn more about other people’s feelings and points of view. This is called social-emotional development. It lays the foundation for developing relationships and also for learning to communicate and later use of language.

The developmental themes in this area are:

Developing relationships
Learning about self and parent/others

Babies’ first experiences are with their parents. Through these early interactions, they start learning about how and why to behave and who they are (the beginning of self-concept). They begin to understand about other people and how they behave. They learn that other people have points of view and this helps them to interact better with people. They gradually learn about other people – brothers and sisters, grandparents, other carers and children. The concept of self and others begins in the first two years of life and continues to develop into early adulthood.
Showing and understanding feelings
The first feelings babies show are those of how they feel physically, eg tiredness, hunger or contentment. Parents respond to their baby’s different cries and babies learn that they can get help or comfort. Later they develop other feelings such as happiness and anger. These feelings are called emotions. As the child gets older they can express more emotions and start to understand the feelings of others.

Showing attachment to parent and familiar others
Through the early, shared experience of caring routines and play, babies and parents develop an emotional bond. This is called attachment and gives the child a secure base for finding out about the wider world. This relationship helps children to understand more about themselves and others, develop confidence and self-esteem and be prepared for developing relationships with other people besides their parents.

Behaviour and self-regulation
In the early months babies are very dependent on parents and carers to meet all their needs. As they become more active and explorative, they become more aware of what they can achieve. By the second year of life children begin to follow their own intentions and wishes. Although this is a positive growth in independence it can lead to frustration and temper tantrums when the child can’t have their own way. In the early years children find it difficult to regulate their emotions and may find it difficult to calm down if upset or excited.

Social interaction
Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)
First social contact is about being comforted and enjoying cuddles with parents. Babies realise how much fun it is to interact and play with their parents. This is first through physical or vocal games where the parent and baby adapt to and ‘mirror’ each other. Later the baby enjoys social games that have a familiar pattern, such as simple rhyme games. They come to recognise the game and do the actions or say the words that go with the game. Young children begin to learn the basic ‘rules’ of social interaction such as turn-taking and sharing.
Developing early social skills

Everyday life is organised around social scripts, which are like the scripts of a play. These help us know how to behave in everyday situations like mealtimes or when meeting new people. They help us predict how others will behave in the same situation. Young children start learning about social scripts from the first year of life. Gradually they use their knowledge to behave appropriately in social situations, e.g., greeting someone when they arrive, thanking someone when given something. This is the basis for developing the social skills that are important for later social relationships.

Communication, language and meaning

The foundation of communication starts in the earliest days, when babies express their feelings and parents respond to their cries or vocal sounds. This helps babies learn to influence their parents and to attract their attention. During the first year they become more purposeful in communicating their wishes and needs. This is done through vocal and emotional expressions, eye contact and/or body movements. In the second year, children start using language to communicate their wishes and needs, to request and refer to things and to draw attention to events of interest.

The foundation of language development starts in the earliest days when babies listen to their parent’s voice. During the first year they begin to experiment in making and copying sounds. They hear familiar words and phrases during everyday routines and events and begin to understand what they refer to. This bringing together of language and understandings is the foundation of meaningful language, which becomes more complex and extended as the child grows through the pre-school years.
The developmental themes in this area are:

**Listening and attending**
Learning to listen selectively is important in a world full of different sounds. Early responses are listening to the parent’s voice, which gradually extends to listening for longer and to other voices, other sounds and especially to language. This leads to pleasure in listening to nursery rhymes and familiar stories. Initially control of attention is poor and children are easily distracted, but as they develop they become able to focus and sustain attention for longer periods.

**Understanding language and meaning**

- **Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations**
The regular patterns of daily routines, with their familiar sounds, smells, objects, actions and words, help babies learn about everyday life. The predictable routines of feeding, bath time, play and bedtime all help babies’ growing understanding. The earliest understanding of language is often during these familiar routines.

- **Recognising what objects are for**
Words are symbols that ‘refer’ to something. Babies and young children have first to learn about the object or thing that is being referred to – what it is, what it’s used for, etc before they can make the link between the object and the word. So recognising and understanding what you do with a brush, cup, spoon (that is, the concept knowledge about objects) is important for learning meaningful language.

- **Understanding words**
In the first year of life babies hear familiar language during everyday routines and begin to make connections between these expressions and predictable routines, actions and use of objects. This early understanding of language is called situational understanding, because the familiar situation helps the child understand the words. Gradually children learn to understand words and expressions without this extra support. Joint attention is important in helping children attend to and talk about the same thing as parents and make the link between the words they hear and the objects or events that are being referred to.

Read more about this on page 7
Pretend play
The earliest pretend play of a child involves trying out everyday actions and objects on themselves. Then they start doing the same actions on other people. As young children develop, they show more make-believe behaviour and pretend that objects ‘represent’ something else – for example, that a doll is a baby, a cube is a potato. Later children take on ‘roles’ and pretend to be other people, often doing this with other children. Pretend play is included in this section as it involves using ‘symbols’ and may support the learning of language. Playing with others also increases understanding of social interaction and communication.

Communication
Attracting attention
First attempts at gaining attention are gazing at the parent or showing distress. Later, babies vocalise or move excitedly or grab their parent’s clothes. Gaining their parent’s attention is one of the first steps in communication. Babies may try to attract their attention to communicate their feelings or needs, or for company and play.

Joint attention (sharing experiences)
Towards the end of the first year, babies start to show parents things or attract their attention to something that interests them. Sharing attention to something of mutual interest is called joint attention. Joining in with a baby’s play will help them to share experiences and develop joint attention skills. These skills are important for developing communication and ‘shared understanding’ about the world.

Communicating needs
From the earliest days, babies show distress, discomfort and pleasure. They learn to show whether they want to play with their parent or to stop playing. They learn to show whether they want something or not. Through actions and later through gestures or language, they learn to communicate their wishes and their needs. These are important first steps in communication.
Expressing preferences
Even before language develops, babies can tell their parent if they’re enjoying a game and if they want it repeated. They can show if they like a particular toy, food or activity. They later learn to make definite choices between two things, which gives them experience in communicating their preferences.

Expressive language – talking
Making vocal sounds
Speech begins with experimenting with sounds. These start with vocal sounds, like cooing, and then open vowel sounds like ‘aah’ ‘uh’ and squealing and blowing raspberries. This matures to consonant-vowel sounds like ‘ba’ and ‘da’ and joining these up into strings like ‘aga’, ‘dada’.

First words, linking first words to meaning and naming objects
Babies experiment with making vocal sounds during the first year of life. Later they begin to understand some words or phrases that refer to a particular action, object or event. They begin to use one or two of these words in the appropriate situation. First words are often ‘mama’, ‘daddy’, action words like ‘up’, ‘no’, and one or two object labels. There can be quite a long period after saying a few first words before a child says more words meaningfully. Later, vocabulary may increase quicker and children start using more and more words and making word combinations.

Making conversation
In the first months babies vocalise and if the parent vocalises back, they pause and listen. This is the beginning of the earliest ‘conversation’ with a baby. After a time, babies start to take turns in vocalising and then to copy their parent’s sounds. This is the start of learning the ‘rules’ of conversation. When a child starts to use words and phrases, they will need to learn how to use them as a speaker or as a listener in a spoken conversation. This includes taking turns and changing intonation and language style for different communication purposes, eg making a request, giving a command, asking a question.
Play and learning

Play is one of young children’s main ways of learning about the world. Babies learn through repeated experiences and learn about their senses, their own bodies, other people and objects in their immediate world. They start to explore and experiment with objects and toys by looking, listening, feeling and tasting. They try out actions on objects and learn from feedback of their own experiments. Play is especially motivating because it’s spontaneous, creative and fun. Play is also the way a child shows their understanding of the world through their interaction with their parent, with toys and everyday objects and playmates.

The developmental themes in this area are:

Making connections

Learning about sound
Babies with good vision see the parent’s face when they talk and keys when they are shaken and they see that sounds come from a solid object. This is called a ‘sound-object concept’. They see that different sounds come from different sources and can relate each sound to its source – for example, Mum’s voice to Mum. They also see where the sound source is in relation to themself and gradually learn to find a sound source that they can’t see (sound localisation).

Learning about objects
Object permanence: understanding that objects are still there when not touched or seen
Babies with good vision see the people and objects of their environment and know that objects are solid and can move. They see that the ground is a continuous base and that objects drop to the ground. Gradually babies begin to learn that when objects disappear from touch or sight they are still there. This understanding is called object permanence. Later children develop organised search strategies to help them find objects.
Cause and effect
During their early experiments, babies begin to notice what happens when they do different things with objects, eg they find out that a rattle makes a rattling sound when shaken. Through observing and experimenting, they learn that their own actions have consequences – for example, pulling the string makes the sound of the musical toy. As cause-effect play develops, children learn more about objects and their physical properties. They start using simple problem-solving techniques to work out more complex cause-effect sequences.

Understanding how objects relate
As young children grow older, they begin to relate one or more objects with another. This allows them to start learning relationships between objects, such as inside/outside (in container play) and stacking and building. They learn other ways of relating objects together such as matching similar objects and later sorting into categories of size, shape or function. Learning to relate things to one another and to identify connections and relationships helps develop important concepts that are needed to move onto more complex thinking.

Using hands
Babies with good sight watch how their parent uses their hands, then they look at their own and realise that their hands bring the world to them. They learn to co-ordinate their eyes and hands to touch and reach out accurately. Babies explore the texture and shape of objects and reach out and grasp objects. They use their hands for balance when sitting or to pull themselves up for crawling or standing. Hands are used as tools to manipulate objects and toys and to help with feeding or dressing tasks.

Learning with touch
Babies and young children learn a great deal about the world through touch. Their experience of touch is linked with input from the other senses so that it becomes integrated. Textures and substances of everyday routines, objects and experiences become recognised and meaningful. Earliest touch exploration tends to be of the parent and their face, hands and clothes.
Discovering hands
A baby first learns that they have hands through catching sight of them and they begin to watch their hands and understand that they belong to them. Once the hands have been discovered, babies use them to explore the world and find out how it works.

Co-ordinating hands and fingers
Babies in the first weeks grasp a finger pressed into the palm as a reflex. They soon start to close their fingers over their parent’s finger when it touches theirs. Then they start to open their hands and grasp an object on purpose. Gradually fine finger and thumb movements develop and they use their fingers to feel and explore and to pick up small objects between their finger and thumb. This leads on to using their fingers for more complex movements, like taking a lid off a box, screwing and unscrewing and turning knobs. They learn to draw and use their fingers to feel and recognise different shapes and textures.

Releasing objects
In the early months babies let go of objects as their hand relaxes and interest is lost. Active release of objects develops after learning to grasp and is first seen as a cast of objects. This leads to practising their release by casting. Deliberately placing a toy down or releasing it on demand is a useful developmental step forward as it helps children’s manipulation and experimentation with more complex toys. They learn how to carefully release toys in and out of a container or a posting box and how to place toys or blocks on top of each other to build them up.
Movement and mobility

This section looks at the skills involved in the development of movement, physical co-ordination and mobility. It focuses on how a child becomes independent through movement, exploration, and an understanding of the environment. Most of the major steps in developing skills for movement take place in the first few years of life when babies begin to control and co-ordinate their body movements and develop and discover their physical abilities.

The early reflex actions which babies are born with are replaced in the early months by purposeful and controlled movement. Children are motivated to make voluntary movements when they are interested in things beyond their own body and when they understand that they can reach and obtain these things even when they’re not in direct contact with them. Motivation and growing interest in and understanding of things in the environment and regular practice is vital to help the child control the movements they make and become more independent in sitting.

The developmental themes in this area are:

Body awareness

Body awareness is part of learning to develop voluntary movement and this can be increased through experiencing movement (kinaesthetic sense), the sensory experience of the skin (touch, texture, temperature) and the touch experience of the hands, as well as through vision.

Position in space

Orientation is about understanding the three-dimensional area of space, through which we move, including the impact of gravity. Whenever a baby moves, is lifted, carried or played with, they receive messages from balance sensors in their ears (vestibular information) and from their muscles and tendons (proprioception). At the same time they see the effect of the change in their position on the environment. They naturally try to stay upright and vision helps them to make sense of the messages from their balance sensors and muscles.
Exploring the environment
A baby’s first experience of exploring the world is of the surface on which they are laid. As they gain control of posture, mobility develops in a sequence of rolling, creeping, crawling and then walking. Gradually, confidence in their ability to move extends to other rooms in the house and garden, the homes of grandparents and friends, outdoor spaces such as parks and play areas and shops, and later to playgroup or nursery.

Extending movement and co-ordination
Parental play (eg bouncing on the parent’s lap) is a natural way to give babies experience of movement and to practise postural control and co-ordination. During the early years of life, babies learn to roll over, sit up, creep and crawl or bottom shuffle and then walk independently and develop more advanced mobility skills.

Towards independent self-care
A child starts the long journey towards independent self-care as soon as they’re born and the first steps are related to feeding. They learn about feeding, dressing, toileting, bathing and bedtime routines through daily, repeated routines and gradually participate more actively in all these areas. Learning to care for yourself develops through direct experience and also through observing or knowing that others are doing the same things.

The developmental themes in this area are:

Feeding/eating
Learning to eat and feed oneself is a complex process starting with the sucking reflex of a newborn baby and moving on to weaning from milk to eating solids from a spoon, drinking from a cup and then learning to feed using fingers and later cutlery.

Dressing
Babies have daily experience of having their clothes put on and taken off and can be gradually encouraged to become more active in helping. They will usually attempt to remove a few simple clothes before they start trying to put on clothes.
Using the toilet
Young children begin to develop greater control over their bodily functions and begin to anticipate the need to urinate or defecate during the second to third year of life. When they begin to show signs of readiness for using the potty or toilet, they can be helped to establish toileting routines.

Washing and bathing
Babies usually enjoy having a bath and it offers opportunities for learning about their body and developing washing and hygiene skills. Young children also learn to wash their hands and begin to use a toothbrush.

Bedtime
Newborn babies have short sleep/wake cycles, which are affected by their feeding needs. By the second part of the first year they’re sleeping for longer periods and can be helped to develop a settled sleeping pattern through good bedtime routines. By the end of the first year of life they may be sleeping mainly through the night.

Approaches and strategies to support learning
The following are strategies that are particularly useful for supporting the learning of new skills and behaviours and by young children with limited vision. You may want to read through the following advice and draw on it when using suggestions from the Activity cards or when trying to help your child to reach a next developmental goal in the Developmental journal.

Shared discovery
Shared discovery is helping your child to discover toys with an adult and to develop joint attention – that is sharing attention and interest in a toy or activity. This is important for learning together and is a foundation for social development, play and learning and communication and language. It can start from a very young age before the child is talking. Ideas for developing this can be found in the Activity cards (under Play and learning or Language, communication and meaning).
**Scaffolding**

This is giving sufficient support (scaffold) to help a child achieve something successfully, without taking over control. It involves letting children take the lead in trying to do something and giving sufficient and sensitive help when needed. The aim is to provide sufficient help to enable the child to succeed and not get frustrated while not taking over control. The child is helped to achieve success and act as independently as possible.

**Breaking into small steps**

This is breaking down a task or activity into smaller steps for learning, especially tasks which involve a sequence of actions. If the child finds learning one of these steps too much, the step can be broken down further into smaller steps. The steps need to be the right size for the child, so that it doesn’t take too long to learn and success and mastery are achieved. **Backward** and **forward chaining** are methods for doing this:

- **Backward chaining**
  
  Break the task down into smaller steps. Then start with assisting the last step to complete the task (1. Put spoon into mouth). Then work backwards, assisting learning step by step (2. Lift spoon up towards mouth, 3. Scoop up food in the bowl). Start a next step only when the previous one has been achieved. This is often successful for learning a skill as it provides a motivating end – the child gets a reward from the beginning.

- **Forward chaining**
  
  Break the task down into smaller steps. Then start with assisting the first step in the sequence to complete the task. For example, if helping the child learn how to put a ball in a posting box, start with 1. Put the ball on the lid, 2. Find the hole, 3. Push the ball through and 4. Take the lid off and find the ball inside. This is a useful way of learning a more complex sequence, starting with the first step and adding each one only after the previous one has been achieved.
Reinforcement or reward technique

Children are more motivated to learn if they find the activity rewarding. Often the pleasure and mastery of learning a new skill is sufficient reward. If a child seems less motivated or interested, motivation can be increased by making the task more interesting – for example, by adding a sound cue to the activity. Following the task immediately with something that the child especially enjoys is also motivating. This is called reinforcement, since it increases the child’s motivation to do the action or activity again – it reinforces the action. Reinforcement can be anything that the child especially enjoys – a favourite food, a toy, music from a favourite CD, and praise and a cuddle.

Praise positive behaviour, don’t ‘reinforce’ inappropriate behaviour

Adult attention is so important to young children that sometimes inappropriate behaviour is encouraged without this being intended. Even getting the attention of an angry parent who is trying to stop them doing something is sometimes ‘reinforcing’ to a child. Plenty of attention and praise to all appropriate, positive behaviours is important. If your child is doing something you don’t want to encourage, calmly stop the behaviour and move them on to something more appropriate. Ignoring may also be important if the child appears to be doing something to get attention. As children get older, a firm ‘no’ and simple explanation lets them know what is acceptable and what is not.

Key messages for helping your child learn

The following are strategies and techniques that are useful for supporting the learning of new skills and behaviours by young children. You may want to read through the following advice and draw on it when using suggestions from the Activity cards or when trying to support your child to reach a next developmental goal in the Developmental journal.

• Be spontaneous and flexible.
• Keep appropriate play items nearby and equipment for daily routines set up and ready to use.
General overview of development

- Think about the activity from the child’s point of view to understand how to help them. For example, what might a hairbrush on the head feel like if you didn’t know what it is?

- Reduce distractions and noise from TV, music and busy environments when doing an activity.

- Let your child experiment with a new toy and be ready to help them discover how it works.

- Think about different positions. For self-care activities, it may be easier for you to assist your child from behind. However, you may want to be in front or alongside for social interaction, communication and most other play.

- Give guiding support through guiding hands or sharing discovery together (see Activity cards). This follows the child’s lead or gives gentle guidance, without taking over.

- Show your child how to do it by taking them through the action, when this is appropriate.

- Break down a task into smaller steps to help support learning in manageable chunks.

- Give your child enough time to try and do the activity for themselves, before giving your assistance.

- Give enough support to prevent frustration.

- Gradually reduce the help that you give.

- Give feedback through language when your child can understand what you’re saying.

- Show that you’re interested through joint attention (see Activity cards).

- Try and ensure that both you and other carers are consistent in the way that you introduce and assist activities.

- Praise your child and show pleasure in achievements.

- Give your child the opportunity to use new skills regularly.
Advice about toys and materials

The following gives general advice for parents about toys and materials and safety considerations when playing with your child. More detailed advice on suitable toys and materials to use for your child’s vision level can be found on the Visual environment and visual materials cards.

- You don’t need any specialist or expensive toys to help your child.
- All toys and materials mentioned in the Developmental journal can be found at home, can be home-made or can be bought from ordinary toy shops, eg children love to play in cupboards with pots and pans and plastic tubs and containers.
- Brightly coloured toys and toys where the different parts have strong colour contrasts will ensure your child will be able to make the most of their vision and learn from their play. The Visual environment and visual materials cards give ideas about what sort of toys to use depending on your child’s level of vision.
- Choose sound-making toys with a variety of different sounds, such as a bell, rattle, squeaker, xylophone, drum, music box, keyboard or electronic music toy. Variety is important to encourage listening to different sounds and enjoying sound-making.
- Toys that are silent where the challenge is in what you can do with the toy or materials and there is no distraction from sounds and music will also help your child learn.
- It’s a good idea to keep toys in a familiar place, like a toy box or toy corner, so that your child knows where to find them.
- Putting toys away at the end of playtime will not only help your child learn about where to find them the next time but will also ensure that your child doesn’t trip over them later when they start walking.
Safety issues

• Before purchasing any toy for your child, check that it reaches European standards for safety and also that it’s suitable for your child’s age, according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.

• Any paints, crayons, pens, bubbles used with children should be non-toxic and suitable for them.

• If using everyday objects in play, check that they’re safe and don’t have sharp points or edges or loose parts that can come away.

• Objects with long handles and sticks, like wooden spoons, drum beaters, should not be left with the child when they are playing alone, in case they are poked into the mouth, eyes or ears.

• Young children often put things in their mouth and they should not be left alone with small parts, like beads, small bricks, which they could choke on.

• Ensure that all rooms used by your child are safe from hazards.

• In addition to precautions recommended for all children, check that furniture and other edges have corner or edge protectors on and monitor each room for hazards as your child grows in height. Tables and chairs that were too high at one age, become accessible or hazardous as children grow. If furniture is moved or new items are added, make sure your child is shown and told about it, and given a chance to explore it thoroughly.

• Children of this age should always be supervised in the kitchen and bathroom.
Development of babies and young children with limited vision for professionals and parents

This section outlines the theoretical ideas that underpin the design of the Journal. It may be helpful for professionals supporting young children and for parents who wish to do further reading.

These theoretical ideas draw on the clinical and research experience of researchers over the last 30 years and in particular, on the work of the Developmental Vision Team (Great Ormond Street Hospital). This team has shown that there may be challenges in all areas of development for babies and young children with limited vision. There is still a great deal to be learned about the development of these babies and young children, so the following ideas are within the limits of current knowledge.

The theoretical ideas used in the Journal relate both to general development and specifically to babies and young children with limited vision:

**General development**

**Development is continuous**

- It is a continually unfolding process from birth to adulthood and beyond.

- It is cumulative or like ‘building blocks’, with each skill or ability building on those acquired earlier.

**Development is holistic**

- It is a whole process with each area of development progressing at the same time as other areas and with complex relationships between them.
Development is dynamic and two-way
- It is a dynamic two-way process between the child’s maturation and environmental influences. Parents and carers help shape children’s experiences and also respond to children and so have a direct impact on the learning environment.

Development is the framework for learning
- Developing new abilities can only be done when a child is developmentally ready. Moving forward is made possible by being developmentally ready, having appropriate opportunities for learning and engaging in and interacting with learning opportunities.

Development in babies and young children with limited vision
Development is potentially constrained
- Development in all areas is potentially constrained, particularly in children with more limited vision. Early assistance is needed to help overcome these potential constraints.

Rate of learning varies
- This varies widely in individual children, from those who develop quickly and achieve at a roughly similar level to fully sighted children to those who develop slowly. There is no middle cluster of children with limited vision that we can call ‘average’ or ‘typical’.

- Most children acquire skills at a slower rate than children who are fully sighted.

- In general, children with more profound levels of limited vision tend to acquire skills more slowly.

- Rate of learning is influenced by the child’s maturation, level of vision, general abilities and learning experiences, and also whether a child has additional learning, motor or other sensory difficulties.
Different areas of development often progress at different rates in individual children, leading to an uneven profile of development.

**Development has specific patterns and needs**
- Development follows roughly the same sequence as in fully sighted children.
- However, children may use alternative pathways and follow specific developmental patterns in order to achieve certain endpoints.
- Certain patterns require specific kinds of support to assist their progress.
- Some behaviours differ from, but appear to be ‘functionally equivalent’ to other behaviours in fully sighted children.

**Development is vulnerable**
- Some developmental processes are especially vulnerable and are more prone to getting ‘stuck’ than others.

**Vulnerable processes**
The following developmental processes have been found to be particularly vulnerable in children with the most limited vision. They have therefore been given special emphasis in the Journal:

- **Integrating the senses in the first year of life**
  If vision is not available to co-ordinate the different senses, the sensory information from touch, sound, and the other senses can remain separate, as if compartmentalised in different boxes. Fragments of sensory experience do not allow a baby to make sense of what they’re hearing, feeling or tasting. It’s vitally important that a baby is helped to integrate their different sensory experiences from as early as possible, in order to make their experiences informative and meaningful.
• Becoming social and communicative
  Much of early social behaviour and communication is achieved through behaviours that depend on vision, like eye contact. If vision is not available, babies and parents may find it difficult to relate to each other and to find ways of communicating. Alternative means of relating to one another are needed to establish an effective way of communicating.

• Becoming aware of their movement potential
  Babies move for the purpose of reaching something or someone that interests them. Without vision, babies may not know that there is something to reach or how to reach it. They tend to lie passively, unaware of their potential for movement. They need to be helped to realise that things are there and that they can reach for them and so discover their movement potential.

• Sharing attention (joint attention)
  Babies see that their parent is looking at them and is interested in what they’re doing. As they develop, they share their interests and point out or show things to their parent. This sharing of attention related to something of mutual interest is called joint attention. Babies with limited vision may be unaware of their parent’s regard and interest in what they’re doing. They’re less likely to try and attract their parent’s attention to something that interests them. This risks the development of a ‘shared understanding’ of the world, which is the foundation for communication and meaningful language. Tactile and verbal means of achieving joint attention are important to compensate for the lack of shared visual attention.
Making their world meaningful
Much early learning about the social and physical world moves forward through incidental learning when children look at people and things. Without vision, babies and young children may not have access to the immediate world or understand how it’s organised. This is a particular risk for pre-verbal children, because they can’t yet understand verbal explanations. Bringing experiences to the child and making them meaningful is very important for helping the young child build up appropriate concepts of the social and physical world.

Linking language to meaning
Children see what adults are referring to when they’re talking and this helps them understand the concept of the spoken word. Children with limited vision may not make this association and words become ‘empty’ sound concepts. A child may use language to imitate others, even when they don’t understand what the words mean. From the first year of life it’s important to embed language in the child’s direct experiences and familiar routines, actions and objects so that they learn to link language to its meaning.

Understanding the significance of these processes for children with limited vision and giving appropriate early developmental assistance is critical to overcoming the challenges. Help is needed from the earliest days and throughout the early years. Since these processes are more vulnerable in children with the most limited vision, promotion of vision is also important, since any useful vision could be beneficial.

Practical guidance and advice is given in the Activity cards which go with the Developmental journal and in the Development of vision activity cards which go with the Record of developing vision. The Getting Stuck? booklet provides further suggestions and advice if children are having difficulty making progress in any of these areas.
Focusing on the whole of development

Theoretical ideas stress the importance of thinking about babies and children’s development as a whole process.

Development described in the different ‘areas’ of the Journal often overlaps and is related. Developmental goals listed in one area could be listed in another area but they are not written again to avoid repetition. This is especially the case in the first year of life, but also later. For example, playing social rhyme games draws on skills in social and emotional development, language and communication, play and even motor co-ordination.

Achieving a particular developmental goal often depends on building up underlying skills in different developmental areas. For example, beginning to walk independently requires motivation to reach people (social and emotional development), skill in sound localisation (play and learning), spatial awareness and postural control and co-ordination (movement and mobility).

The Journal has been divided into the manageable chunks of ‘developmental areas’ and ‘stages’ for practical reasons. Each ‘developmental area’ includes processes and abilities that appear closely related for achieving particular developmental goals. Each ‘stage’ includes goals that are likely to be achieved within a particular age period.
References and sources

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Further reading for professionals


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A Manual for Parents of Preschool Visually Impaired and Blind Children M Brennan
American Foundation for the Blind (1983)

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Children with Visual Impairments: Parents guide M C Holbrook, ed
Woodbine House, Inc (1996)

Functional skills: assessment and reassessment L Neilson
Sikon, Copenhagen (2000)

Can’t your Child See? A guide for parents and professionals about children who are visually impaired
E P Scott, E J James and R D Freeman
PRO-ED, Austin Texas
Getting Stuck?
More ideas for you and your child
About this booklet

Helping your child to learn can be a daunting task for parents – particularly when your child has limited vision.

Parents often feel unsure about how to help their child move forward. Some skills seem to take a long time to learn, while other behaviours persist and don’t appear to change at all. Some things that young children do are unexpected – they fall outside typical patterns of development – and this is confusing and sometimes challenging for families.

These are the ‘sticky areas’ discussed in this booklet. Some are issues for all young children and some are more likely to be found in young children with limited vision.

This booklet:

• explains about these ‘sticky areas’
• gives some practical ideas for moving forward
• makes suggestions for where to look for extra help if you need it.

It aims to give parents more confidence in handling areas that seem to be difficult and a clearer idea about when additional help might be needed.

It is published as part of the Early Support Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment. Whenever the text talks about ‘stages’, it means the stages of development defined by the Developmental journal.

Where words are printed in blue, like this, they appear in the Glossary.
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Introduction

All parents can find children’s behaviour difficult, puzzling or challenging. Many worry at some point about their young child’s development. They wonder whether it’s ‘normal’ and what particular behaviours mean. They ask ‘Is my child learning things at the right age?’ ‘Why do they do this so much (or so little)?’ and most importantly, ‘What can I do to help them move on?’

It’s reassuring to realise that some behaviours are part of normal development in young children and that they may have an important function to play at a particular stage. These sorts of behaviour change naturally as children become more mature. The Developmental journal can help you decide whether the skill level or behaviour you’re concerned about is appropriate to your child’s general stage of development. If it’s what you would expect to see, given your child’s other skills, it’s probably developing appropriately, in line with their general rate of learning.

However some behaviours and skills can seem to be out of step with other aspects of a child’s development – your child may seem to be rather behind in particular areas or what they do doesn’t seem to ‘fit’ with anything described in the Developmental journal.

Your child has become ‘stuck’ if their behaviour doesn’t seem to be developing and maturing as you would expect, or has become very persistent at a particular level. Some behaviours are more prone to ‘getting stuck’ in young children with limited vision, though the reasons for this are not fully understood. A few behaviours, such as eye poking, are distinctive to young children with certain visual disorders and limited vision.
Making a start

Take time to reflect on what your child is currently doing.

You may find it useful to talk about your concerns with your professional advisor and to plan ways of helping your child together with them.

First of all, think about the behaviour or skill area that’s worrying you and consider the following questions:

• Is it appropriate for my child’s level of development? If so, it will probably develop and change as other skills and areas of development move forward.

• How frequently does my child do it?

• Does it get in the way of other behaviours that are developing or in the way of other learning?

• Is it very persistent and does it cause distress for my child, or to other people?

• Am I or my child able to control or shape the behaviour and turn it into something more appropriate?

• How long has this behaviour been going on?

The ideas in this booklet may be helpful if the answer to the question How long has it been going on? is:

• more than six months, if your child is under 15 months

• more than 8–12 months or roughly the period of one stage in the Developmental journal, if your child is older than 12–15 months.

It’s most helpful to ask these questions when you have already used the Developmental journal and tried some or all of the ideas on the relevant Activity cards.
Your answers to these questions may indicate that the behaviour you’re thinking about doesn’t seem to have changed for quite a long time. It may have become persistent and difficult for your child or your family and be interfering with play, and other learning and everyday experiences.

If you’re convinced your child is ‘stuck’, then it’s time to consider some further ideas for helping them to move on.

Talk to your professional advisor about your concerns and look together at relevant sections of this booklet. They should be able to advise you if any further help is required.

The sections called Moving on provide practical ideas for things you can do to help.

The sections called Signposts to extra help tell you who to contact to get further specialist advice.

**Touch or tactile sensitivity**

Babies and young children learn a great deal about touch in the first years of life as their hands start to explore the world. Limited vision reduces the motivation to explore and a baby’s hands may stay passive in the early months. This can limit access to a wider range of sensory experiences. Babies may not be able to predict or work out what they’re about to touch and this may make them more wary of touching new things. They may find it difficult to recognise or interpret what’s being touched. Objects put suddenly into the child’s hands can be especially unpleasant, since the child does not have time to prepare for the tactile experience.

Young children with limited vision rely on their hands (and feet) to interpret the world more than children who see what they’re about to touch. This may make their hands, finger tips and feet particularly sensitive and aware of tactile sensory experiences. Hyper-awareness or sensitivity is called tactile sensitivity. Different textures and materials may become experienced as positive and pleasant or negative and aversive.
Getting Stuck?

If the tactile experience is unexpected, confusing or overwhelming, young children may start becoming reluctant to touch or hold objects and materials. This is called tactile avoidance. It’s not uncommon that a young child with limited vision develops a persistent refusal to touch certain textures or substances.

Smooth firm textures with a uniform surface and neutral temperature are often the most readily accepted – for example, wood, metal, plastic, cotton. Other substances, such as fluffy, soft materials (like a fluffy ball) or sticky, wet, gooey substances (like wet cereal, banana, sticky playdough, finger paints or glue) are experienced as more unpleasant. Prickly materials like the bristles of a brush may also be initially disliked. Grainy and shifting materials, like sand or grass, may be experienced as unpleasant – whether underfoot or in the hands. Some children get very upset or agitated if made to touch any substances that they dislike.

If your child is showing persistent dislike and avoidance of touching certain things, then some of the following ideas may help.

**Check first**
- Look at the ideas under Play and learning and Using hands: Learning with touch and Response to different textures on the Activity cards.
- Go back to the ideas of the previous stage if your child seems to have got stuck at a particular stage. They may just need more opportunity and experience at the previous level.
- Give plenty of opportunity for feeling and exploring textures and materials at every stage of development.

**Moving on**
- Always use a forewarning approach if you’re handing your child any object or textural substance. This may be through touch alone – taking it over the back of the fingers and finger tips and letting your child take time to open their fingers, rotate their wrist and take the object into their palm. Forewarning can also be done by making a sound with the object, talking about it, letting the child smell or (if sufficient vision) see it first.
• If your child is showing dislike of a particular texture, present it first on less sensitive parts of the body such as the tummy or leg (rather than the hand, which is most sensitive). Gradually work towards the hand or foot by moving the texture slowly along the arm from the elbow to the wrist or from the knee along the lower part of the leg. Do it with a medium, even (but not hard) pressure because if it’s too light this can be even more stimulating. Once it is tolerated on the arm or leg, use a forewarning approach to take it over the back of the hand.

• It’s important not to put your child’s hands (or feet) directly into or on substances that they find unpleasant and aversive. Don’t put objects directly into their hands either. Children feel most secure when they have control over incoming sensations, so let them choose whether to feel or hold it.

• You can use a shared discovery approach (touching their forearm or elbow) to show your child that you’re interested and involved when they explore a particular texture.

• Gradually introduce new textures and toys that are similar to but slightly different from the ones that your child is comfortable with and that are closer to those that are a problem. This can be done in gradual steps, with the texture or toys becoming increasingly similar to the ‘unwelcome’ ones, eg attach a new material that is a little different and closer to the sensation that they find uncomfortable in a crinkly book that your child already likes playing with. For example, if fur is a problem, add a small piece of suede.

• If wet messy play is a problem, try playing with food – begin with dry cereal in a bowl and give your child time to touch, taste, smell and play with this alone. When this is tolerated, gradually introduce something a bit ‘gooier’ or softer, especially if it’s a food they enjoy, like mashed potato.
• When your child is starting to learn about words, use words to describe the textures and objects that they’re about to feel, eg ‘rough’, ‘fluffy’, ‘soft’, ‘smooth’, ‘cold’, ‘hot’. For example, you might say ‘Here comes a very pricky hedgehog’. This helps children to predict and understand what they’re about to feel and may lessen their anxiety.

In the end, it doesn’t matter if your child never gets to like ‘playdough’ or certain substances, but what does matter is how they use tactile exploration in new situations. The aim is to get them exploring and touching new materials and objects confidently.

Signposts to extra help
If your child continues to experience excessive sensitivity or avoidance of certain textures and this interferes with everyday routines and their exploration and learning, further advice can be sought from your specialist teacher for visually impaired children or from an occupational therapist.

Sound or auditory sensitivity
Young children with limited vision are very aware of sounds in general and some may develop a particular awareness of certain sounds. This is called auditory sensitivity. They may show a preference for some sounds and a strong dislike of others.

As with touch, unfamiliar or sudden or disturbing sounds, like a hoover or a hairdryer, may cause anxiety and agitation. Public areas with loud, unpredictable and echoing sounds, like swimming pools, supermarkets or stations, may also cause distress. In some cases, children may develop an aversion and avoidance of a particular sound – for example, hand clapping, the doorbell or the lawn-mower. A particular toy, eg a noisy music box or an ‘exciting’ and noisy electronic game, may overwhelm the child. As with touch, it’s helpful to think about how sounds in the environment can appear disconnected and disturbing if you can’t see and understand the source of a sound and so you don’t know where it’s coming from.
Some sounds, especially those that are tuneful, melodic and familiar, may be experienced as especially pleasant and positive – for example, music, songs, familiar themes on TV or tapes, and language. A young child may seek out pleasant sound experiences and strongly avoid those that they dislike.

Young children with limited vision rely on sound to make sense of the environment and may therefore find the auditory or sound environment much more tiring and perplexing than a sighted child who can screen out (not listen to) unwanted auditory distractions.

If your child is showing persistent rejection or fear of particular sounds, then the following ideas may be of help.

**Check first**
- Look at the ideas under Play and learning and Using hands: Learning about sound and Communication, language and meaning: Listening on the Activity cards. These will lead to better understanding of sound experiences and help your child feel secure in the world of sound.

- Go back to the ideas of the previous stage if your child seems to have got stuck at a particular stage. They may just need some more opportunity and experience at that previous level.

- Start with quieter sounds and then gradually introduce more noisy or disturbing sounds as your child becomes more confident about the sounds in their environment.

**Moving on**
- Always prepare your child for noises that may frighten or be overwhelming. Say ‘I’m just going to put on the noisy hoover. Vroom vroom!’ before you switch it on. Also prepare your child for where the noisy object is going to go – and reassure them about their own safety – ‘I’m going to hoover the sitting room but I’m not coming into the dining room’. If possible, introduce a scary noise from a distance – such as the next room or the other end of the garden.

- Your child may be scared to approach an object that makes the noise they don’t like, but you can then help them to approach and feel it, once the noise has been turned off.
• As your child’s language understanding increases, you can explain what the object does (and show them) – ‘That noisy hoover is making the carpet nice and clean’, ‘The lawnmower’s cutting the grass’.

• Sudden loud noises in the street, eg an ambulance siren, need calm reassurance and explaining.

• Your child may be frightened of loud, noisy and echoing public places, such as the supermarket, the swimming pool, their nursery school or parties. Introduce them in stages to these environments – for example, only taking them to quieter shops at first, or to the pool when it’s quiet, or to a tea-party if there are only a few children. Once confident in these environments, you can gradually introduce your child to louder settings. Children with limited vision need explanations of where they are, what’s going on, and what all the sounds they can hear are.

• If your child initially rejects a particular sound and shows agitation, introduce it again for shorter periods at a quieter volume or a greater distance, or use a similar or less intrusive sound. Also explain what the sound is and prepare your child before introducing it or mimic the sound before making it. Offer opportunity and encouragement to listen to the sound and praise them for listening to it calmly. Don’t introduce the sound for too long. Children gain trust and confidence as experiences become more predictable. Then you can gradually increase the volume or reduce the distance from the child as they become more tolerant and confident about the sound.

**Signposts to extra help**

If your child continues to experience excessive sensitivity or avoidance of certain sounds and this interferes with everyday routines and exploration and learning, it would be advisable to seek further advice from a **speech and language therapist** who can advise on auditory skills or a **developmental paediatrician** or **psychologist** who can give advice on how to desensitise your child to the sound.
Practical everyday activities

Difficulties with movement and mobility

There is great variation in the rate of motor development in all children. Some walk independently at nine months, others don’t do this until 18 months. In general, movement skills develop more slowly in children with limited vision and especially those with the most limited vision.

Babies and children with limited vision can get stuck at different stages. Movement and mobility require not only the development of co-ordination and control of body movements but also an understanding of what movement can achieve. This understanding is needed to motivate moving when vision is very limited.

Learning to sit requires the development of postural control (development of muscles of the trunk to develop a straight back), balance and saving reactions (learning to put their hands out to the floor or to the side to balance when they tip over). This includes understanding and anticipating the floor as a solid base.

Learning to move around requires more complex co-ordination of movement and the motivation to move, provided, for example, by wanting to reach a sound-making toy. Sound localisation skills, ie knowing where a sound is coming from, are important for this. Children with limited vision are more likely to move along on their bottom (bottom shuffle) rather than crawl. This may be because they can keep their head up and use any vision they have to navigate. Bottom shuffling also keeps hands free for reaching out, navigating and exploring.

Learning to stand requires the development of postural control, strength in their legs, balance and the motivation and confidence to reach to pull yourself up. Once standing, independent walking requires the use of these skills to walk upright and the motivation and confidence to walk without support and navigation and spatial understandings to avoid obstacles and take routes.
Check first

• The developmental processes in learning to sit, to move, to stand and gain skilled mobility are covered in the Movement and mobility sections of the Developmental journal.

• Ideas and suggestions about how to help to develop these skills are given in the Activity cards at the appropriate stages.

• It’s a good idea to work across all the developmental areas of the Developmental journal at each stage. Achieving goals in other areas of development, like learning about sound and sound localisation or developing an attachment to the parent, helps develop the motivation to move.

• Your child will not be ready to move on to another level until they’ve reached the appropriate maturity for developing the next step.

Moving on

• If your child is still not moving on, try going back to the previous stage and ensure your child has established earlier skills.

• Encourage plenty of opportunities for movement and mobility appropriate for the child’s current level of development.

• Then return to the present stage and try breaking the developmental goals down into smaller steps.

Signposts to extra help

If your child continues to experience difficulty moving on to the next stage of mobility it would be advisable to seek further advice from a paediatrician who may refer you to a physiotherapist or to an occupational therapist.
Eating and feeding difficulties

Many families experience feeding difficulties with children under three years of age. There are a variety of reasons why these occur in children. All babies are different – some eat what they’re given without protesting, while others are fussy or not interested. Eating and feeding is also a developmental process with new skills and abilities that have to be learned at each stage. Parents are naturally and always very concerned if their child is having difficulty eating, feeding or drinking.

It’s useful to know that eating habits and appetite need not be affected by limited vision. Many children with limited vision learn eating and feeding skills with no difficulty. However some children do experience difficulties at different stages.

Your baby’s reactions to feeding depends on a range of factors including their temperament, their taste preferences and how well they use their other senses. Your attitude and reactions may play a role as well, as might your home circumstances around meal times. It will help if you can try to be relaxed around feeding time, as babies and young children can pick up your anxiety.

Sometimes, however, difficulties during feeding are linked to physical and medical difficulties, including delayed motor development or other medical problems. It’s a good idea to have these checked out first to ensure that there are no medical reasons for a feeding difficulty.

Some children have more difficulty accepting lumpy food when it’s first introduced or later (around Stages 2–3) when they may start to reject many foods which they enjoyed when they were younger. They express their preferences more clearly and start exerting more control over their environment by choosing what they want to eat. This tends to occur at the stage when children are becoming more independent and self-directed. This can be a very challenging time for parents who are trying to maintain a sufficiently healthy and varied diet.

If you and your child get ‘stuck’ with feeding behaviour, then the following ideas may be helpful.

Read more about this in the section on Resistance to adult direction on page 21
Getting Stuck?

Check first

• Turn to the Towards independent self-care: Feeding and eating sections of the Developmental journal for information about typical patterns of development for feeding and eating skills.

• Your child will not be ready to move on to another level until they’ve reached the appropriate maturity for developing the next step. The accompanying Activity cards give suggestions on practical ways to help at each step of development.

• If your child is having difficulty moving on, then you may find it helps to go back to the earlier cards and ensure their skills are well established at this stage.

Moving on

Accepting new foods – tastes and textures

• If you’re having difficulties introducing blended or pureed foods and weaning off milk, then think about whether your baby is ready. This will usually be during Stage 1b (in the Developmental journal). The Activity cards for Stage 1b give ideas and suggestions about introducing pureed foods and weaning.

• The introduction of new tastes and textures takes time, so persevere. However, we all dislike some foods, so if your baby constantly rejects one food while accepting others, then respect their wishes and maybe try it again in a few weeks or months’ time.

• If your child is still rejecting food at Stage 2 or 3 or even later, it’s important to keep gentle control but not to turn meal time into a battleground.

A good idea is to continue with a set routine of dishes (eg a savoury or vegetable course followed by a fruit or sweet course) every day so that your child knows what the expected order of flavours and foods is going to be. If they don’t eat everything, take away uneaten food without coaxing or making a fuss and reintroduce it patiently in a few days’ time. The aim is to keep the food routine going and to give your child the opportunity to try rejected foods again, later on, but without making a battle of this.
• It’s not advisable to keep switching and changing foods to follow the child’s whims, since this can put young children in charge of their feeding regime and they may become very restricted in what they choose.

• If eating habits are not as healthy as you wish, be patient and persevere. Try mixing nutritious food with favourite foods.

• At this stage having a family meal time is especially important, so that your child can hear and see others eating in a relaxed atmosphere. Let your child have some of their favourite foods and some foods that they’re less fond of.

• Don’t ‘degrade’ certain foods by saying ‘You can have some lovely ...(liked food) if you eat your... (disliked food) first’. Children quickly pick up on this attitude about some foods being less desirable.

• Later, as the child develops more language and awareness of what other people are doing, you can talk about how they are enjoying the food your child doesn’t like so much. It’s advisable however not to give any attention to or talk about the child’s dislike of certain foods since this tends to reinforce these feeding habits. Without pressure you may find they will eventually give rejected foods a try.

• Give your child smaller portions of foods that they have a preference for so that they don’t fill up with the things they most like eating and therefore have no appetite for other foods.

Some children become very fixed on a limited range of foods, despite parents following all the advice given above. They may also show other difficult and restricted behaviours and be making limited developmental progress.

Finger feeding and tactile sensitivity

• Some children with limited vision are reluctant to touch unfamiliar things and are very uncomfortable with wet or cold textures. This can delay finger feeding and the development of hand skills in general.

Find out more about this in the section on Resistance to change on page 24

Find out more about this in the Touch or tactile sensitivity section on page 4
Using a spoon or fork independently

- Understanding about a spoon or fork as a ‘tool for eating’, the ‘loading’ of a spoon, and learning to stop food falling off a spoon (gravity) are all difficult concepts for a young child with limited vision. Even babies with full sight naturally turn a spoon over as it approaches their mouth.

- The stages of development of these skills are given in the Eating and feeding sections of Towards independent self-care in the Developmental journal. See the Activity cards that are linked to these sections, too. Young children with limited vision will need patient teaching of these skills at the appropriate time in development.

- It’s likely to be very messy and frustrating for the child in the early days, but it is important for your child to practise. This will support growth in skills in using a spoon (and later a fork). Give enough support to prevent your child getting too frustrated, but reduce this steadily as they get more successful.

**Signposts to extra help**
If your child continues to show specific difficulties in feeding and eating you need to consult your specialist health visitor, GP or paediatrician, who can advise on further assistance.

**Sleeping difficulties**

Bedtime can be a very challenging time of the day for parents. It’s estimated that about one in five children have difficulty settling to sleep or don’t sleep through the night until they are over three years of age. If you and your child are sleep deprived you can’t function properly and quality of life can be seriously affected. Tired babies are often unhappy and do not learn as well as contented, rested children.

In all children the development of a settled sleep pattern is a developmental process with biological and social aspects to the development. Babies have an internal biological clock which helps establish regular patterns of waking and sleeping. At first these patterns are very much dictated by the baby’s own internal waking, sleeping and
feeding needs. In the first few months of life, babies tend to have frequent periods of waking and sleeping, which are relatively brief, often lasting 1–3 hours of sleep or waking at a time. Frequent waking coincides with frequent feeding needs.

Early sleeping habits are assisted by parents who gradually bring their baby’s natural sleeping patterns round to fit in more with their day and night-time routines. In the first year of life most babies move from having several periods of wakefulness followed by sleep over the course of the day and night, to having three regular sleep periods (the longest overnight with a morning and afternoon nap). The morning nap is often dropped shortly after the first birthday and the afternoon nap around the age of three.

Sleep and night-time behaviours have a cultural base too and the habits and preferences vary in individual families and different cultural and social groups. For example, some groups expect their baby to sleep in a separate room at a much later age than other groups.

Some specific sleep problems have however been observed to occur in a small proportion of children who do not have light perception or have retinal problems. Either as babies or during their second year (ie at one to two years of age) they may reverse day and night, sleeping only two or three hours overnight and having periods of sleep and wakefulness throughout the day. The reason for this change at this particular age is not yet understood, but most children do eventually re-establish a more acceptable day and night routine.

Limited visual stimulation sometimes means babies are less active during the day and are not ready for sleep at bedtime. This may be of particular relevance between the ages of one and two years when children usually become mobile and very active. Children are equipped with lots of mental and physical energy to enable them to move around and learn about their world. If their movement is restricted (for example by visual difficulties) this excess of energy may prevent sleep at bedtime and result in tiredness and napping during the day.
The human body is designed to be awake during daylight and to sleep when it’s dark. Children with limited light perception may have difficulty distinguishing night from day and in adjusting their body clock to day and night patterns. Anyone who has travelled across time zones and has experienced ‘jet lag’ understands how the body gradually adjusts to new day and night patterns over a number of days. This is partly a matter of adopting new daily routines but also of the body adjusting its chemical messages, produced in response to daylight, about when you should be awake or asleep.

Melatonin is a hormone produced in the pineal gland. It responds to dark and light as a result of retinal stimulation. It’s produced in the hours of darkness, has a mild sedative effect and lowers the body’s temperature while asleep. It’s responsible for setting the ‘body clock’ and without it, a twenty-five hour cycle is sometimes adopted. Melatonin is available as a medication on special prescription, but there are only limited studies about its use in children.

In some studies melatonin has been found to be effective in helping to establish a day and night sleep pattern, but this is not yet fully established scientifically. More studies are being done to find out about how useful and effective it is in different children and any possible side effects.

Moving on

- The Developmental journal (Towards independent self-care: Establishing a bedtime routine and sleeping pattern) shows what may be developmentally possible at each stage, even though expectations and requirements may vary in different families. The Activity cards (Towards independent self-care) give suggestions for setting up positive sleep routines.

Signposts to extra help

If having tried the strategies suggested on the Activity cards, your child continues to have night-time waking and persistent sleep problems, consult your GP or paediatrician for advice. This is also advisable if your child cannot distinguish day from night because they have no light perception. As well as medical help, you may need advice on behaviour modification and sleep techniques from a health sleep advisor or a clinical child psychologist.
Language issues

Echoing (Echolalia)

Repeating or echoing what other people say is a stage of development that all young children go through. It’s a way of practising speech and learning about language and communication. It is often prominent in children with limited vision and in some children may persist as the main speech pattern well beyond 18 months. This is particularly the case in children with the most limited vision.

All babies and toddlers practise speech sounds by copying what others say. This may be single sounds or sound combinations, single words, or whole phrases. Often intonation or tone patterns are copied, too.

Children may also repeat what adults say to stay in touch and take their turn in the conversation and this is more common in children with very limited vision. Repetition may be used to mark the beginning of a conversation or to keep the conversation going. As the child starts to have some understanding of words and phrases, they may still rely on repetition to help get their message across in early verbal communication. For example, they may repeat a single word ‘drink’ or a phrase like ‘want a drink?’ – if trying to communicate that they want a drink.

Some children with limited vision get rather ‘stuck’ in the echoing stage. Frequent echoing of immediate phrases or delayed language (that is, snatches of conversation heard previously or language from TV, the radio etc) continues longer than would be expected in typical development. This is called echolalia. If this is persistent, you may want to try some of the following ideas.
Check first

- The first stage of repeating sounds, words or phrases usually appears by Stage 2 in the Developmental journal.

- Ideas are given on the Activity cards under Communication, language and meaning to help the development of wider language and communication skills.

- If your child is having difficulty moving on, then you may find it helps to go back to earlier cards and ensure that previous skills are well established.

Moving on

- Simplify your language input to your child. They may be having difficulty understanding your words and phrases. Use shorter sentences and clear, simple language, like ‘Sit down’, ‘It’s bathtime’, ‘Shoes – on’.

- Give only one idea at a time – ‘ball’ or ‘push’.

- Offer choices, so that your child has to make a definite response.

- When you talk to your child, be very careful to link each word or phrase to a specific object, routine or activity, so that it has clear meaning.

- Make concepts concrete, so that whatever is talked about is specifically linked to the actual object, event or person in the ‘here and now’.

- Talk about and explain what’s happening to your child, being careful to link this language to what they’re experiencing.

- Use ideas for shared discovery and joint attention, eg guiding hands to help your child understand that you are sharing the same focus of attention. This is important for achieving a shared understanding and meaning of language.
• Help your child to communicate with purpose. Respond if they try to indicate something that they want or need – through action, gesture or language.

• Don’t encourage your child to express repetitive ‘party pieces’ which get encouragement and attention from other people, such as counting numbers, saying letters of the alphabet, singing nursery rhymes to visitors. These all encourage imitation of language, relying on learned and memorised expressions, and the use of language without any clear purpose.

• If the above ideas do not seem to help your child, you may need to go back to the earlier stages of social interaction and social development and language and communication. Your child may need more time to lay the foundations of social interaction and communication. See Social and emotional development and Communication, language and meaning in the Developmental journal (especially Stage 1b and then Stage 2) and all the associated Activity cards.

**Signposts to extra help**

In some children, echolalia continues to be persistent and frequent and more meaningful language does not develop or is infrequent. This may indicate that your child is developing language more slowly or is having difficulty in developing communication skills. It would be advisable to consult a speech and language therapist who can give you specialist help, if this is the case.
Behaviour issues

Resistance to adult direction

Many young children go through a stage of being resistant to adult direction and guidance. This is what parents sometimes talk about as the ‘terrible twos’ though it can start before or after the age of two and may go on long after the two-year-old period. Though difficult for parents, it’s generally a positive sign that a young child is beginning to be more independent and self-directed. They’re beginning to have strong wishes and intentions and will take action to achieve their goals.

With their growing awareness of what they want to do or have, children can become highly frustrated if their wishes or intentions are thwarted. They may also get very frustrated if they can’t communicate what they want. This can quickly lead to crying, screaming and kicking or struggling and may erupt into a tantrum. A young child cannot easily regulate their emotional state and once upset they may be very difficult to calm down and console.

Although young children begin to show some independence, they still need to feel that their parent is in control. They need to know the limits of behaviour, routines and activities – and where the ‘boundaries’ of acceptable behaviour are. Without strong parental input and limits, the young child will feel ‘out of control’ and insecure.

Young children with limited vision also go through this stage of increasing independence and self-direction. The period may last longer or the tantrums may be more intense. This may be because children with limited vision find it harder to communicate their wishes and therefore feel greater frustration. It can also be more difficult to help a child regulate their emotions and to calm them once very upset. This period can be difficult for parents because they feel cut out of the child’s world. They can’t show their child how to do things or what is expected when their child is resisting all adult guidance and direction.
If your child is very independent and self-directed or having frequent tantrums, you may find the following ideas useful:

**Check first**
- Consider appropriate behaviour expectations for your child’s level of development and understanding (see Social and emotional development: Behaviour and self regulation) and look at advice on the linked Activity cards.
- Look at further ideas in Communication, language and meaning: Joint attention to toys/objects, especially at Stage 2. These give ways of helping you and your child do things jointly, while helping your child lead and share their focus of attention. This is a valuable foundation for communication of wishes and intentions, especially before language has taken off.

**Moving on**
- Keep everyday routines and activities as regular and consistent as possible, so that your child can anticipate what’s going to happen next, how and when. This helps children feel secure and in control and to predict the pattern and changes of the day.
- Make routines and activities pleasurable and fun so that your child enjoys participating in them. It helps to make joint games out of everyday activities.
- If your child is very resistant to being directed, find an activity they really enjoy and use this to motivate joint play. Play near your child, so they know you’re there. Use a guiding hand, shared discovery and/or a joint attention approach. This helps you to be involved without your child feeling that you’re taking over. They may then gradually let you join in more actively.
- Try to keep firm instructions and handling to the minimum so that you’re not setting up a conflict situation.
• However, maintain definite boundaries and limits within what is appropriate for your child’s level of development and understanding. Communicate them clearly and try to stick to them consistently.

• Try to anticipate if your child is getting tired, frustrated and irritable and change the situation before your child starts getting distressed or angry. For example, they may need a ‘quiet time’ or rest time or a relaxing activity like listening to music tapes.

• Give your child enough time and space to explore and develop greater independence and exploration. Encourage them to show more independence and self-help during everyday activities like feeding, dressing, bathing.

• Avoid shouting and don’t smack or hit. Try not to get angry with your child, but stay calm and firm if they start building up for a tantrum.

• If your child starts having a tantrum, calmly move them away from the source of frustration. They may calm down gradually as they’re moved away from this area or activity.

• If they start kicking, screaming and hitting, keep them safe from hurting themselves or other people. It can be helpful to put them in a quiet, safe environment and to give them time and space to calm down gradually. It’s advisable to stay close by for safety reasons, but avoid giving positive attention until they’ve calmed down. Some children are calmed by being held, some are not.

• Give plenty of praise to appropriate and positive behaviours.

• Show your child calmly what are unacceptable or negative behaviours – eg first, a firm ‘No’, then a simple explanation, then removal from the situation. Distraction to something more interesting is also useful for avoiding a build up of conflict.
**Signposts to extra help**

Some children continue to be resistant to adult direction and tantrums may continue at a frequent level. It can feel very difficult to steer your child into different activities. If this is the case, it would be advisable to seek the advice of a paediatrician or clinical psychologist who can advise on behaviour problems.

**Resistance to change**

Most young children have difficulty moving from one activity to another during some of the early developmental stages. This is part of normal attention development, when they learn to control their attention and fix on one focus of interest (single-channelled attention), but find it difficult to attend to more than one thing at a time or to shift attention from one focus to another.

If they’re engrossed in doing an activity, they may find it difficult to listen to a parent talking to them or to respond when a parent tries to introduce a new activity. This period of attention control also tends to coincide with the stage when children are becoming more independent and self-directed. They may not have the communication and language skills to express that they want to continue with what they’re doing. They can get very frustrated if someone tries to shift their attention to another object or activity.

Young children with limited vision tend to be more resistant to change than fully-sighted children. This may be something to do with the role of vision in attention shifting and going from the known to the unknown. Children with limited vision don’t have added visual clues to see what’s coming next and motivate them to start the new activity. They also don’t have the visual stimulus of the new activity to help them release and shift attention and move on to the next thing.
Check first

- Look at the Developmental journal and Activity cards on Communication, language and meaning: Listening and Attending, for ideas on how to help your child’s use of attention at their current level of development.

- It is a good idea to also refresh your knowledge of the ideas on the Activity cards for Behaviour and self-regulation (under Social and emotional development).

Moving on

The following gives ideas for helping your child make transitions more easily:

- Keep everyday activities and routines in a consistent pattern or order so that your child can predict and anticipate what’s going to happen next when they finish each daytime routine.

- Prepare your child for change. Give them a warning about change by saying things like ‘When the song finishes we will...’ For the child who does not yet understand language, this can be through an object which indicates what’s going to happen next (eg give a bib to indicate dinner time is coming, or put outdoor shoes on for going out).

- For the child who doesn’t yet understand language, keep a consistent object or activity to mark the beginning of the next activity. Objects like this are called objects of reference. For example, a bib or spoon for meal time, a plug and chain for bath time, a ball to indicate going to the playground. Choose an object that refers to or represents the particular activity. Give the object of reference to your child to hold, just before you start the appropriate activity. This gives them some preparation and helps them anticipate what’s going to happen next. Encourage your child to hold the object of reference and take it to the start of the new activity.
• You can help your child find the object of reference – for example, to go to collect the spoon for meal time. Keep objects of reference in one box in a set location so that your child knows where to find it each day. This helps them feel more in control of the transition from one activity to the next.

• Keep the transition time short so that your child doesn’t have to wait long before the next activity begins.

• If your child is upset about leaving an enjoyable activity, make it clear where you’ve put the activity that they’re leaving (eg put a toy in toy box) and that they can come back to the activity at a later time (‘after lunch’ or ‘When we come home again’).

• Use concrete language to explain – eg ‘When we get home’, rather than the vague term of ‘later’. Using a timer may be helpful. Say ‘When the bell goes, then it’s time to go to the shops and finish playing with the keyboard’.

• Introduce something interesting that will attract your child, before you remove something else, so that they’re motivated to move on to the new activity. This is called fading out a previous activity.

• Give your child something favourite to take with them when they go out or go on a car ride – for example, a special toy or tape. It’s quite a good idea to vary the toys or objects so they don’t get fixed on one object that always has to be with them.

Signposts to extra help
If your child continues to be very resistant to transitions and the above suggestions have not led to an improvement, it would be advisable to seek specialised help, such as that of a paediatrician or a clinical child psychologist who can advise on behaviour problems.
Repeated or repetitive behaviours

Children with limited vision may develop repeated or repetitive behaviours, such as regular body rocking, waving their hands in front of their eyes, flapping hands or swaying their head or body. They may bang an object on the table over and over again, or keep on opening and closing a door, or flick a string of beads repeatedly.

Some children repeatedly poke or press their eyes (eye poking is especially common in children with eye conditions affecting the retina). It’s thought to lead to pleasant visual sensations.

These behaviours have been referred to as ‘self-stimulation’ because they don’t seem to have any other purpose than self-comfort or pleasure or simple brain stimulation. All children and adults without any visual difficulties show examples of self-stimulation behaviours, such as hair twirling or flicking, humming, tapping a foot, drumming their fingers, or doodling with pen and paper. People participate in these activities because they find them pleasurable and comforting. They’re thought to occur more when people are bored or lacking in purposeful activity. They are also believed to be calming, especially if a person is anxious or stressed.

These behaviours may seem socially unacceptable, because of their inward or introverted quality and they can become a habit that is difficult to change, like thumb sucking or nail biting. They may also get in the way of children having more appropriate interactions with objects and people.
Why are these behaviours common?
The reasons for their frequency in young children with limited vision are not definitely known, but the following possible reasons have been suggested:

- young children with limited vision are less mobile and may resort to these behaviours to expend energy
- they may not have sufficient experience of movement and of feeling their bodies in different positions in space
- they may feel more anxious and become over-aroused
- young sighted children can see things to do when they need a change of activity or stimulation and can move on to another activity. Children with limited vision do not easily see what else there is to do and may lack stimulation and be bored
- repetitive behaviours are also found in children with learning difficulties and some children with limited vision have additional learning difficulties
- children with sufficient vision are able to see themselves or others doing these behaviours and can learn whether the behaviours are socially acceptable or not, but a child with limited vision may not understand whether they’re socially acceptable or not.

Children usually grow out of many of these behaviours naturally as they mature and learn to interact with toys and people in more satisfying and stimulating ways. Understanding what stage your child is at (using the Developmental journal) will help you to know what activities could be introduced to help your child move on. Nevertheless, there are useful ways of helping to reduce these behaviours, which may help stop them becoming habits.
Moving on

• Gentle correction. Gently touch your child to stop them rocking or remove the hand that is eye poking and give them something else to do. Try and do this consistently, whenever you see the behaviour.

• Don’t keep telling off and nagging. Try not to bring too much attention to these behaviours, as your attention might positively reinforce and increase the behaviour.

• Never get cross or smack your child. They can’t help doing these things and are not being intentionally naughty. Your attention to their behaviour may reinforce it. Also, you may make your child more upset and anxious, which tends to increase repetitive behaviours.

• Remember to give attention and positive reinforcement (like praise, a cuddle, a reward) when your child is engaged in more purposeful play activities. These are the behaviours and activities you want to encourage.

• Think about what sensory information your child is seeking or craves and offer this through alternative and more acceptable means. For example, if they like to rock and spin, they may enjoy playing on a swing, spinning in a tyre or rocking equipment. Keep these activities short and join in with the activity, to make it social – for example, singing an appropriate song while they rock or swing.

• Give alternatives. Channel activities into something more productive – for example, banging a stick repetitively on a table could be turned into banging on a drum.

• Join in and make the play less isolated. In a child who enjoys flicking or banging objects repetitively, join in play with the object, recognising that it’s fun for them. You could then modify the way that the object is used to try to extend the activity into something more meaningful for learning, like taking turns to bang, and then taking turns to make a tune on the xylophone.

• Change the surroundings in which the behaviour occurs, so that it opens up new experiences.
Give your child constructive toys which they can manipulate in the same way as their repetitive behaviour or at the same developmental level. For example, a child who repeatedly opens and closes doors can be helped to open and close a music box with a hinged door, with the cause-effect learning of making music. Keep the play activity short so that it doesn’t become another repetitive behaviour.

Shift attention to some other activity. Give your child an alternative toy to keep their hands or body occupied.

Maintain a daily routine of activities and experiences so that your child is not lonely or bored.

Check when your child is playing alone. If your child is doing the same thing over and over again, show them another thing that they can do when they’re playing on their own, eg if spinning wheels of a truck, fill it with crisps or savoury snacks – something that they enjoy eating, and show them how to dump them out of the truck.

Passive activities such as watching or listening to TV or videos and music tapes may lead to your child engaging in a repetitive habit. Try asking questions about what they’re watching after a time, or join in singing to the tape and encourage your child to sing with you. Make sure that your child is not spending too long with these passive activities on their own.

Leave a consistent quiet time in the day when your child is given the opportunity for calming behaviours, such as rest time after lunch. This helps children start to learn that there are acceptable times for private self-stimulatory behaviours. Later you can introduce a fiddle ball or other more appropriate behaviours.

Signposts to extra help
If these behaviours are very persistent and do not get less over time and are interfering with your child’s learning and exploration of their surroundings, then you would be advised to seek further help from a specialist teacher for children with visual impairment or an occupational therapist. Advice from a paediatrician or clinical child psychologist may also be helpful.
Learning, social and communicative difficulties

All children develop at different rates with some children developing slower or quicker than others. The rate of development is also often uneven, with some areas of development moving along faster than others. In any area of development, the rate of learning can be uneven with development moving along in sudden spurts and plateaux rather than at a steady rate all the time.

This varied rate of development is even more marked in children with limited vision, with considerable variation between different children. In general, the children with the more profound levels of vision loss also develop most slowly, although there are individual children with profound vision loss who develop quickly. Likewise, there are children with severe vision loss who develop more slowly, even though their visual development is moving along quite well.

Developmental setback

The work of the Developmental Vision Team (Great Ormond Street Hospital) and other groups has found that some children who have limited vision get into difficulty in their general development in their second to third year of life. They do not appear to make the expected developmental progress and may not move forward over 6 to 12 months or longer. This may affect some or all areas of their development. Sometimes they appear to go a little backwards – for example, they stop speaking any words after initially having a few words or some basic language. The Developmental Vision Team refers to this apparent slowing down or going into a long plateau as a developmental setback.

There are quite a few signs of possible developmental setback. All these behaviours are part of normal development, but if they continue and don’t change over a year or longer, they can be signs that the child is having some developmental difficulty. These can include temper tantrums and unwillingness to be guided by the parent or adult. Other signs may include becoming very self-directed and avoiding social contact. The
child may have difficulty communicating and using language, and if they speak, it may often be echoing or repeating things that they’ve heard earlier in the day or previously. Play may become rather repetitive, eg always playing with the same toy in the same way, or using objects in non-functional ways such as banging it on the table or fiddling with a part of the object such as a chain. The child may become very involved in self-stimulatory actions, like frequent rocking or head-banging or eye poking. They may be hypersensitive and/or avoid certain sounds or textures and become agitated if brought into contact with them.

**Signposts to extra help**

Any of the behaviours described here may occur during normal development and the previous sections give ideas for helping your child move on with any of these ‘sticky’ areas.

However, if they persist over a long period and continue to be intense, then your child may be experiencing a setback in their development. It may also indicate that your child has possible learning or social communication difficulties that need to be investigated.

It’s very important that you get further specialist help as soon as possible and at your earliest concern. Your GP or consultant paediatrician or ophthalmologist can refer you to a health team, which specialises in child development and visual impairment and can help with diagnosis and intervention. It is helpful if the team includes a developmental paediatrician, a clinical or neuro-psychologist, a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist. Some specialist teams also have a specialist teacher for visually impaired children involved. Extra specialist help can be set up to help you and your child.
Developing relationships

Learning about parents

• Sing or talk quietly to your baby while holding them in your arms.

• Watch your baby when talking quietly to them. You’ll see they become still and quiet as they listen and they’re most responsive to your voice.

• Stroke and cuddle your baby and see how they relax in your arms and are soothed by your voice when upset.

Showing feelings

• Look out to see how your baby shows what they’re feeling – during feeding, bathing and nappy changing. Notice when your baby seems most content and happy or uncomfortable and how they show this. They may show a little smile or grimace, or make a vocal sound, or make excited or squirming body movements.

• Tickle your baby’s body when they’re lying down without clothes on. Kiss or blow on their tummy (raspberries!) to make them smile.

Becoming attached to parent or carer

• When your baby cries, lift them up and reassure them.

• If your baby is very quiet, talk to them and stroke or play with them to let them know that you’re nearby.
Social interaction

Joining in social interaction

• When you hold your baby, feel them snuggle in and adjust their posture to your own.

• When your baby lies on a comfy mat, wave their arms and legs for them and make play noises. Then pause and wait to see if your baby waves their limbs spontaneously.

• Rock them from side to side or up and down and make play noises while you do this.

• Place your baby on your body or lap and move gently so that they can adjust to your movements.
Stage 1a · Activity card

Card 2 · Social and emotional development

Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent

• Talk to your baby as you approach them and watch their reaction. Babies sometimes go very still and quiet, smile, wriggle their fingers, wave their arms or legs or gurgle.

• Go close to your baby when talking. Encourage them to feel (fingerling at this stage) and/or look at your face. Let them feel your lips when you’re talking or making play noises. They’ll find your face very interesting.

• Notice how your baby seems to respond more to your voice.

• Before you pick up your baby, call their name and then touch them gently. This gives your baby forewarning that they’re going to be picked up. Touch your baby gently (holding them around the trunk) as you talk to them before you start to lift or move them.

• Notice if your baby starts to smile in response to cuddling and when you’re talking to them. If they smile, give them a special kiss or cuddle.

Showing and understanding feelings

• Do things which get your baby to smile or chuckle. Tickle them when they’re lying down without clothes on. Lift them up and down playfully.

• See how your baby shows pleasure – excited finger movements, arm or leg waving or waiting for something to happen again. This is a first sign of your baby showing their feelings. Respond to your baby with playful sounds and engage in joint physical play, eg waving your baby’s arms, or rocking them.

• Watch how your baby shows frustration or discomfort during feeding, bathing or nappy changing. Then see how this changes once they’re comfortable or satisfied.

Becoming attached to parent/carer

• Respond immediately if your baby expresses distress. Try and meet their needs if hungry, tired, lonely or uncomfortable.

• When approaching or lifting your baby up, pause and wait to see if they smile or show other signs of recognition when hearing your voice or feeling your touch.
Social interaction

Joining in social interaction

• Put your baby on your body, eg lying flat or propped up in bed. Move your body in different
directions and feel how your baby adjusts their position in response to your movements.

• You can rock your baby or jiggle them up and down to encourage an exciting game together.

• When you’re talking, give your baby time to make a coo, gurgle, movement or visual response.
Babies with limited vision often take a bit longer to organise their responses so don’t hurry and
give your baby time to respond.

• Watch out for how your baby shows you that they’ve had enough and wants to stop your
interaction, eg starting to cry, stiffening or leaning away from you, turning their head away, closing
their eyes or mouth. Give the two of you a bit of a break and they’ll show you when they’re ready
to play again.
**Listening and attending**

**Talking to your baby**

- Talk to your baby while cuddling and holding them – your voice and physical contact is reassuring and comforting.

- Talk with your face close to their face and take their hand to your face as you talk.

- Make your voice fun to listen to, using short lively words and phrases, repetition, varied intonation and higher pitch voice (child directed speech or baby talk), lively facial expression and head movement (you can put your child’s hand on your face to feel your expression).

- Make it clear when you are talking to your baby by going closer to them, touching them or using their name.

- It’s natural to comment on your baby’s movements or the sounds they make and this is exactly the right thing to do – so when your baby burps, say something like ‘Do you feel better now?’

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For babies with very limited vision always talk to them to let them know you’re there or are about to lift or move them. Touch your baby gently (holding them around the trunk) as you talk to them before you start to lift or move them (forewarning). Encourage other family members to talk to your baby and to use forewarning before they lift them, too…

**Listening**

- Watch how your baby shows that they’re listening to your voice or other sounds. They may go very still and silent, or wriggle fingers or wave arms.
Understanding language and meaning

Structuring the environment
Begin to set up predictable routines for feeding, bath time, nappy changing and sleep. Talk to your baby during these routines.

Take your baby slowly through each part of their daily routines so that they have time to pick up and adjust to the different textures, smells, sounds and movements.

As you walk around with your baby, comment on different sounds and smells.

Communication

• The first step in communication is when parents notice and respond to their baby’s signs of distress or pleasure. This leads on to babies trying intentionally to gain your attention and communicate their needs.

Attracting attention

• At this very early age responding and soothing your baby helps them learn that they’re communicating their needs to you successfully.

• Respond by lifting and soothing your baby if they begin to cry.

• Respond to your baby’s attempts to gain your attention for social contact through other means. Go and cuddle and talk to them when they coo.

Communicating needs

• Observe and listen out for separate cries for hunger, wetness, tiredness – and respond in the way that you think your baby needs.

Expressive language – talking

Making vocal sounds

• Encourage your baby’s early cooing and gurgling by copying their sounds as if having a conversation and sharing their pleasure.
Listening and attending

Talking to your baby

- Babies enjoy patterns in your speech so repetitions of rhymes or lively word routines are very useful.
- Talk about what you and your baby are doing during everyday activities, eg ‘You’re going to have your bath now’, ‘Let’s take off your vest’.
- Guide your baby’s hand to your face when you’re talking – you could kiss their hand. Talk from different sides of your baby’s face to encourage them to turn to you as you talk.
- Spend time with your face close to their face and talk to your baby about what you’re doing or how they’re feeling eg, ‘Was that a yawn? You’re tired.’

Listening

- Notice how your baby responds differently to different sounds including sudden loud noise, soothing music and different voices. Your baby may become quiet, still, distressed or make excited body movements.

Understanding language and meaning

Structuring the environment

- Babies learn a lot about their home world through the regular patterns of daily routines, which you set up for them and for the family using words, sounds and smells which link to regular activities.
- Where possible, stick to predictable routines for feeding, bath time, dressing and nappy changing, play and sleep.
- Different rooms or areas in the house can be recognised by babies by different sounds, textures, smells or sights. Develop this by pointing out links to activities like the sound of water splashing, the smell of bath bubbles, the feel of warm water, wrapping your baby in a warm towel in the bathroom, or the light reflecting on the mirror.
- Give your baby time to prepare for activities and to respond (eg use the sound cue of water splashing before putting your baby in the bath, or use touch or a tactile cue like pulling at your child’s nappy to indicate a nappy change).
Communicating needs

• You’ll soon learn to recognise your child’s different cries for when they’re tired, hungry, lonely, and how to respond differently to them.

• Observe your baby in different situations and see how they’re beginning to show what they need, eg cuddling in for more cuddles, wriggling fingers to be lifted up, crying to show they’re uncomfortable, wet or hungry.

Expressive language – talking

Making vocal sounds

• Copy your baby’s sounds, pause and give them time to make a sound again and soon you will be having your first ‘conversation’. Play vocal games – repeating your baby’s first sounds back to them will become a playful game and encourage your baby to make more sounds.

Talk time. Play time.
Have some quiet times in the day when you talk to or play with your baby when there are no distracting sounds like TV, radio, other people talking, so that your child can hear your voice clearly.
Making connections

Learning about sound

• Your baby will begin to show a different response to your voice and with your help, learn where your voice is coming from. When talking to your baby take their hand to your face – do this when talking immediately in front and then when talking at either side of them.

Learning about objects – mats and surfaces

• Lie your baby down on a few different mats or surfaces so that they start to feel secure on different surfaces, eg their own change mat, their crib mattress and on a soft blanket on the floor. A brightly coloured mat may be helpful. Keep them consistent so that your child starts to recognise them.
Using hands

Learning with touch and response to different textures

• Gently massage and stroke your baby all over with a soft cloth or brush or your hand with baby oil – this will help your child to become familiar with and enjoy a range of different touch sensations.

• Let your baby feel you in different clothes, eg in a fluffy dressing gown, woolly cardigan and in soft cotton. They’ll start picking at your clothes to feel them.

• Let your baby feel your skin and body with their hands. Your baby’s first touch experiences will most likely be of you.

Discovering hands

• Stroke or gently massage your baby’s hands – tickle them gently or blow on their hands (raspberries again!) to provide a pleasurable experience.
Making connections

Learning about sound

• Remember to let your baby know where you are when talking by taking their hand to your face while you talk. Notice how they start responding more to your familiar voice.

Understanding that objects are there

• Let your baby finger familiar objects that they come into contact with, eg your shiny bangle or necklace, their milk bottle, a soft rattle in cot.

• Lie your baby under a ‘baby gym’ or hanging frame. Choose or make a first version with just one or two soft hanging toys, such as a woolly pom pom with a bell inside or a fabric rattle ring. A light-reflecting ball may be helpful too. Hang the toys from the frame just above your baby’s hands or legs so that they can make accidental contact with them with their hands or feet when they move. Use toys that make soft noises so they don’t startle your child.

Understanding about actions on objects

• Help your baby pat and swipe at objects on the ‘baby gym’ or frame hanging over them so that they start to do this by themselves. Gently move their arms by the elbow or forearm until the tips of their fingers find the dangling toy. Gentle pressure behind the elbow is all that’s needed (guiding hands).

• At the end of this stage, help your baby to grasp a light soft toy, eg a squeaker (see Using hands). Then gently putting your hand over their hand, briefly shake the rattle or squeak the squeaker together.

• The first squeakers and rattles should make a gentle sound so as not to startle the baby. Look for soft squeakers that only need a gentle squeeze.
Using hands

**Learning with touch: responding to different textures**

- Let your baby naturally feel and experience different textures that they come into contact with during their everyday routines, e.g., different mats, fleecy blanket, their milk bottle (if they’re using one), water in their bath, a fluffy towel. As babies discover their hands, they’ll start to finger things more. Give forewarning (see below).

**Discovering hands**

- For a short play, tie a light band with bells onto your baby’s wrist or ankle so that they get more feedback about the movement of their hands and legs. This will also encourage them to find their other hand.

- For a short play, put brightly coloured mittens on your baby’s hands or shine a light on shiny or fluorescent coloured mittens.

- Bring your baby’s hands together to encourage mutual finger play and make them aware that they have two hands.

**Co-ordinating hands and fingers – grasping finger or object**

- When your baby’s hand is spontaneously open, touch your finger to the palmar surface (i.e., the palm side) of the finger tips. Your baby will soon be able to curl their fingers deliberately round your finger and hold onto it.

- Once they can do this, you could begin to introduce a very soft squeaker (usually not before the end of this stage). If your baby’s hand is spontaneously open, bring the item to touch the palmar surface of the finger tips. Let them curl their fingers round the toy. Look for soft squeakers that only need a gentle squeeze.

Taking a finger or toy or texture slowly over the back of the fingers and then over the finger tips gives the baby forewarning and helps them adjust their hand position to grasp an object. This will become very important in Stage 1b.
Stage 1a · Activity card

Card 1 · Movement and mobility

Body awareness

• Give your baby the experience of lying in different positions, eg lying on their back, on their tummy (while you’re with them), sitting propped up and lying on each side. Movement in these different positions makes your baby aware of the muscles in different parts of their body. Lie them on a towel on your lap and with two fingers, gently stroke down each side of the spine from the neck downwards – this encourages babies to lift their head and will help to establish head control.

• Babies with limited vision often prefer to lie on their backs and may not like being placed on their tummy. Try to encourage your baby to be comfortable in this position by laying them on your chest for a short time each day and encouraging them to touch your face and receive kisses.

• Gentle massage helps your baby to become more aware of their body.

Position in space

• From two or three weeks of age give your baby the experience of movement in space, eg rock your baby to give them a sense of motion in your arms, dance with them in your arms or carry in a baby sling so that they experience your movement. Ensure that baby carriers/slings are comfortable and safe for both you and your baby.
Exploring the environment

- Give your baby the experience of lying on different surfaces, eg on a soft bed and on a firmer floor.

- Cover surfaces with fabrics of different, pleasant textures and that are brightly coloured. Snuggle your baby up in these occasionally and guide their hands and feet to explore them.

Extending movement/co-ordination

- Your baby will be more interested in your voice and face than anything else at this stage. Talk to them from above and from both sides while they’re lying on their back. This will motivate them to turn and lift their head.

- Give your baby the opportunity to move their arms and legs freely without restrictive coverings or clothing. A bracelet on an arm or leg that makes a sound with movement provides sensory feedback and adds to the motivation to move.
Card 2 · Movement and mobility

Body awareness
• During care routines such as nappy changing, roll your baby onto their tummy for a few seconds before picking them up to extend their tolerance of this position.

Position in space
• Through lifting your baby in the air you can help them develop a sense of position in space. Gradually reduce support to the head and neck as control is established.

Exploring the environment
• Your baby may enjoy short periods lying on a mat or surface that makes a soft rustling sound when you move their arms and legs. Also a very brightly coloured mat may be interesting.
• Give all the rooms your baby may sleep in a distinctive smell, sound or feel so that your child knows where they are on waking.
Extending movement/co-ordination

Head control

• Lifting or turning their head is one of the first controlled movements that your baby will make. Encourage them to lift their head while lying on their tummy, by talking to them with your face close to their face, or by tickling/kissing them under the chin. Your baby may find it easier to lift their head if their arms are brought forward.

• Alternatively, tickle or gently massage the muscles on the back of your baby’s neck and upper body while they’re lying on their tummy or place something new, like an activity mat or textured blanket underneath their chest to motivate your baby to lift their head.

• Encourage your baby to turn their head to each side by:
  – talking to them from different positions and taking their hands to your face
  – varying the side you carry them and encouraging them to turn towards your face and voice
  – positioning sound or light mobiles on different sides of the crib to encourage head movement towards sources of sound or light

• Motivate your baby to hold their head up while being carried upright at your shoulder by having someone behind talk to them. By the end of this stage, when held upright at your shoulder, someone could shake a rattle or hold a toy that lights up to attract attention.

Trunk (body) control

• Introduce a variety of movement experiences, eg move your baby’s arms and legs around in play – ‘run, run, run’. This gives them the awareness and feel of movement.

Baby car seats provide vital support for the head when babies are travelling and they prevent injury in case of an accident. At other times give your baby lots of opportunities to develop their head control. Too much time sitting in a baby seat/bouncer that supports the head and neck reduces opportunities for developing independent head and neck control and later movement co-ordination.
Stage 1a · Activity card

Card 1 · Towards independent self-care

Feeding/eating

• While holding your baby, introduce the nipple or teat across the baby’s cheek – this helps the baby prepare for something coming towards the mouth. Young babies automatically turn to the side that has been stimulated. Let the teat rest gently on the baby’s lips so they can smell and taste the first drop of milk. Pause until the baby opens their mouth.

• Always prepare or forewarn your baby with a touch cue on their chin or cheek and then lips or a visual cue before putting anything into the baby’s mouth.

Dressing and nappy changing

• Laying your baby on a familiar surface such as a changing mat, soft towel or rug will help to cue them into what’s about to happen and build up a sense of security. Mats can be used in or out of the home.

• Keep your baby warm and comfortable and do dressing and nappy changing in an unhurried way while gently talking to them. Make the routine pleasant and fun.
Washing/bathing

• Make gentle water splashing sounds in the baby bath before you lower your baby into the water.

• Bath time should be as calm and cosy as possible and it’s a time when you can begin to awaken your baby’s sense of smell as well as awareness of their body. Use pleasant smelling baby bath products, gently rub and massage your baby’s skin using oils or lotions, and after bathing, let them lie on a soft towel without any clothing.

Bedtime

• A newborn baby’s body clock doesn’t distinguish between day and night and will initially be dependent on feeding routines. Longer periods of sleep will come more easily as a result of establishing familiar routines that stimulate your baby during the day and are more calming at night.
Stage 1a · Activity card

Card 2 · Towards independent self-care

Feeding/eating

• Let your baby know that you are about to feed them using consistent actions. This may be the sound or smell of milk or the feel of the teat or nipple on the cheek or chin or the sight of you or the bottle. Pause and wait to see if your child anticipates the breast or bottle by opening their mouth before the teat or nipple touches their lips.

• Continue to prepare or forewarn your baby with a touch cue on their chin or cheek and then lips before putting anything into the baby’s mouth, so they don’t get a shock and withdraw.

• Later say something like ‘milk time’ and let them see and feel you undoing your blouse or shaking the bottle, as well as continuing with touch cues.

• Notice if your child puts their hand out to touch your breast or the milk bottle.

Dressing and nappy changing

• Following the same sequence every time you remove or put on clothes or change a nappy will help your baby to anticipate what’s going to happen next and minimise anxiety. Try to keep these routines pleasant and unhurried, so your baby enjoys these times with you.

• Feeling the nappy on the back of their hand before undressing will also prepare them.

• Add touch cues when forewarning that you’re about to dress, undress or change nappies, eg before removing an item of clothing, tug it gently, then pause before beginning to take it off so your baby has time to work out what you’re going to do.
Washing/bathing

• Use touch cues as well as words to prepare your baby for washing or bath time, eg before wiping hands or face, touch hands/face with a sponge or flannel and pause before using it. It may be helpful if the sponge is colourful too. Your baby should enjoy being washed and bathed as long as it’s done in a calm, unhurried and playful manner, and in a consistent routine.

• Let your baby know when you’re about to take them out of the bath by using a consistent phrase, eg ‘out you come – one two, three’, then hold your baby, pause and lift them out.

Bedtime

• Sleep comes more easily when there’s a familiar established pattern including a calm period in which to wind down, eg bath time, night wear, followed by milk, cuddles and a special bedtime song helps create an atmosphere for preparing to sleep. Then put your baby down in their cot. Stick to this routine no matter where you are or who’s putting your baby to bed.

• During the daytime try to tire your baby by being active and stimulating when they’re awake. By contrast use a very quiet calm approach for late night feeds so that they get the message that you expect them to return to sleeping. Put them back to sleep in their cot immediately, so that they get used to returning to sleep in their cot at night.
Stage 1b · Activity card

Card 3 · Social and emotional development

Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent/others

• Call your baby’s name gently as you approach them and watch how they respond to your voice before you start to pick them up.

• Encourage your baby to look at your face (if sufficient vision).

Showing feelings

• Repeat actions and routines which your baby seems to especially enjoy and watch how they show pleasure and delight.

• ‘Mirror’ your baby’s emotional feeling and expression to show them you understand they are sad or happy. If they seem sad, make a sad voice and intonation and face and hold them soothingly; if they show excitement, make a happy excited voice and face and respond with excited movements.

Beginning to show attachment to parent and familiar others

• Encourage different family members to interact with your baby so that they come to recognise different voices, handling and faces.

• If your baby smiles to your voice or touch or smile, give them a special kiss and cuddle.
**Social interaction**

**Joining in social interaction**

- Play rough and tumble games lifting your baby up and down and making fun phrases and sounds (‘Up you come’, ‘Weee, down!’) as you lift them. You can do this more vigorously and make the game exciting for your baby.

- Play fun games during caretaking activities like nappy changing, e.g., making play noises or actions (blowing a ‘raspberry’ on their tummy during nappy changing). Keep the game consistent and do it every day so that your baby recognises the game.
Stage 1b · Activity card

Card 4 · Social and emotional development

Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent/other

• Call your baby’s name gently as you approach them and say, ‘Up you come’. Wait to see if they can show you that they want to be picked up.

• Before you lift your baby up, encourage them to reach for you, by taking your baby’s arms to your neck and then lifting them up. Babies with limited vision may not reach out spontaneously at this stage and need help to find you.

• Recognising facial expressions is difficult for children with limited vision. Try and find out at what distance a smile can be seen and responded to. Make a broad smile (wearing lipstick can be useful!) and if your child looks at your face, then always try to talk and smile from within this distance.

Showing feelings

• Give your baby hugs and kisses and help them to return them.

• ‘Mirror’ your baby’s feelings (sad, happy, tired) through your voice intonation, body movements and facial expression. This shows your baby that you are ‘tuning into’ their moods.

Becoming attached to parent or carer

• Help your baby to feel secure with a small number of familiar adults handling them at home. Tell relatives and friends about their vision needs and to say ‘Hello, it’s …’ before lifting the baby up, and to talk to them when handling them.

• When separation begins, make sure that the adult looking after your baby is familiar to them, provides a warm care-giving environment and does caretaking routines in the same way that you do. Childminders and care givers need to know about your baby’s vision needs. They will need to respond to your baby’s need for physical contact and reassurance when separated from you. Also, make sure that your child has some familiar comfort objects with them when they leave you, such as a favourite blanket, mat, toy.

• Observe how your baby responds if they are lifted up by and talked to by a stranger. Do they react differently when they’re handed back to you?
Social interaction

Joining in social interaction

- This is the time to introduce some simple social games and songs, eg bouncing or jigging on your lap with a little song or rhyme to go with it. Keep the words or tune consistent, so that you always say the same words when you do the same actions, eg ‘Ride on a horsey, jig jig jig, ride on a horsey, jig jig jig, then down you go’ (do the bouncing and dropping actions with the words). Many nursery songs like ‘Ride a cock horse’, ‘Jingle bells’ and ‘Horsey horsey’ are good for bouncing and swaying movements.

- See if your baby lets you know that they want the game repeated (eg bouncing again when you stop the singing and action) – then immediately repeat the game.

- Take turns making vocal sounds. Copy your baby’s sounds, which may be a cough, a shriek or a raspberry. See if you can ‘tune into’ and ‘mirror’ their sounds and moods – excitement, surprise, being cross. Then you lead and make a particular sound and see if your baby can ‘mirror’ that sound or mood.

- Bring your face close to your baby’s and give a broad smile; pause and look to see if they’re watching or copying you.

- Begin to introduce social games and familiar rhymes with repeated words and actions. This could include nursery rhymes with simple actions, rhyme games like ‘Round and round the garden’, ‘Pat a cake’, and action songs like ‘Row row the boat’. If you don’t know any, ask your professional advisor who will know lots of songs and rhymes for babies. You may have favourite songs from your own culture or religion. Have fun repeating the same games over and over again with your baby.
Card 3 · Communication, language and meaning

Listening and attending

• While talking to your baby, guide your baby’s hand to your face and your lips or rest your baby’s cheek against you so that they can feel you making sounds like ‘bababa’.

• Remember to use your baby’s name and to touch them (and/or sit very close by) to make it clear when you’re talking to them and encourage other family members to do the same.

• Continue to use child directed speech, with short simple utterances, singsong intonation, lots of repetition and some ‘baby’ words for lively expression. This will get your baby to listen to your speech.

• While listening to music, dance or sway holding your baby, in rhythm to the music.

Understanding meaning

Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations

• Keep routines, like feeding, bathing, dressing, consistent each day so that your baby is able to make connections between the sounds, objects and actions of routines. Use the same words and phrases as you do routines each day.

Your child will start to link objects and actions to everyday routines. At first these will be the simple everyday things they experience like being wrapped in a towel before being taken to the bath or having their bib put on before a meal.
**Communication**

**Attracting attention**

- Observe your baby and watch the different ways that they try to attract your attention. Respond to let your baby know they have succeeded. If your baby vocalises or smiles or waves their arms or looks at you, respond as if they were trying to attract your attention. Lift them up and cuddle and interact briefly, and then put them down again on the floor mat and see if they repeat the action to get your attention again.

**Sharing experiences with toys/objects**

- This is the time to lay the foundation for joint attention by using guiding hands and shared discovery.
- Play together with a rattle or sound-making toy. Help your baby to reach out to touch, pat and hold the toy using guiding hands. Move their arm by the elbow or forearm until the tips of their fingers find the toy. Gentle pressure pushing behind the elbow is all that is needed. This leaves your baby’s hands free to discover what they’re reaching for themselves, while also telling your child that you’re sharing their experiences.
- Watch and think about how your baby shows you what they’re interested in.

**Communicating needs**

- Respond to your baby’s behaviour as if they’re communicating with you. You need to interpret and put into actions and words what you think they’re trying to tell you. If they push away (‘I don’t want to play’) during a joint game, then stop the game. If they open and close their hands (‘I want it’) when they hear or see an interesting toy, give them the toy.

**Expressive language**

**Making vocal sounds**

- Copy your baby’s sounds, pause to give them time to make a vocal sound back to you. If they’re not looking at you, take their hand to your face while you play this game.
**Stage 1b · Activity card**

**Card 4 · Communication, language and meaning**

**Listening and attending**

- Continue to use **child directed speech**, with short simple utterances, singsong intonation, lots of repetition and some ‘baby’ words for lively expression. This will get your baby to listen to your speech.

- Observe how your baby responds differently to different sounds including familiar and unfamiliar sounds. Notice how they’re beginning to show excitement about an activity that’s coming when they hear a sound, eg the bath running.

- Chat to your baby and notice how they’re now able to listen to you for a longer time.

- Notice how your baby’s interest is immediately drawn to any new sound-making toy you offer and how they immediately forget the toy they were playing with before.

**Understanding meaning**

**Linking sounds/actions/words to familiar situations**

- Continue the everyday familiar routines for feeding, bathing, dressing etc. Your baby may start to show that they’re anticipating the next step in a routine, eg they show excitement when you say ‘dinner time’ and put on their bib.

- Help your baby to explore everyday objects before they use them, eg a spoon during feeding, a towel or sponge at bath time. Use a guiding hands approach for helping to explore objects, see the back of this card. Name the object at the same time.

Remember your baby will learn to link words with objects and actions through regular routines and activities if you use the same words and phrases.

Use the same phrases to help your baby anticipate what’s going to happen, eg always say ‘up you come’ before lifting them or ‘bath time’ as you take them for a bath.
Communication

Attracting attention

- Respond when appropriate to your baby’s vocal sounds as if they are asking for your attention. Talk to them so that they know you’ve heard them. Go to them and give a cuddle or play.

Sharing experiences with toys/objects

- Play a regular game with a familiar toy together, eg squeaking a favourite squeaker. You could keep this toy just for joint play. Use the guiding hands approach – move your child’s arm by the elbow or forearm until the tips of the fingers find the toy. While they’re holding and playing with the toy, keep a gentle touch on their elbow or forearm. This is to let your baby know that you’re focusing on them and what they’re doing. Notice too how your baby shows that they’re focusing on the toy.

- Observe if your baby starts to show interest in a toy you are playing with – if they move their hand towards it, give them the toy and then play with it together.

Communicating needs

- Make consistent responses to your baby’s hand or arm movements when they try to express wishes, eg arms raised means ‘pick me up’ or hand opening and closing means ‘I want’. Lift them up or give them the thing they want.

Expressive language

Making vocal sounds

- Copy your baby’s first attempts at consonant sounds, eg ‘ba’ ‘ma’. Pause and give them time to repeat their sound. This can become a vocal turn-taking game.

- Try a different sound after copying your baby a number of times and see if they’ll copy you making a new sound.

- Make sure that your baby has quiet times, when in their cot or during playtime, when they can experiment on their own with making vocal sounds. Don’t have music or background noise on all the time, or it will stop your child listening to their own sounds.

Talk time. Play time.

Have some quiet times in the day when you talk to or play with your baby and there are no other distracting sounds like TV, radio, other people talking, so that they can hear your voice clearly.
Card 3 · Play and learning

Making connections

Learning about sound

• Offer your baby a sound-making toy on their tummy or chest and help them to find it and explore it with both hands. Your baby needs both hands free to do this so they need to be lying on their back in their cot or on the floor. This is a helpful first step in finding an object that’s making a sound.

• Show your baby where sound is coming from by shaking a sound-making toy (a rattle or bells) in front of them and guiding their hand using a guiding hands approach to find it. It’s important that you guide your baby’s hand right to the object and don’t bring the object down to them. Once they’ve been guided to it, let them hold it and play with it briefly. Then repeat it all over again.

Find out about the guiding hands approach in Stage 1b Communication, language and meaning, Cards 3 and 4 Sharing experiences with objects. It’s better not to pull your baby’s hands as they’ll find this uncomfortable and may resist.

Understanding that objects are there

• Help your baby to reach out and grasp a sound-making toy which is making a sound on the table in front of them using the guiding hands approach (see above).

• Keep some favourite toys in the same place, eg tied to cot, a favourite object on a ‘baby gym’ or bath toys in the bath so your baby learns to find them in a familiar place.

Understanding about actions on objects

• Give your baby opportunities to find out about different toys by shaking a rattle, squeezing a squeaker or ringing a bell. Use toys that are small and light enough for your baby to hold and explore and that are as visually suitable as possible.

• Help your baby explore a flat surface and pat hands on it, making a sound, then introduce a first simple ‘cause effect’ toy such as a soft toy piano.

 Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Using hands

**Learning with touch: responding to different textures**

- Your baby will begin to experience more sensations and textures as they start to grasp familiar objects and toys like their milk bottle, a fabric rattle and a plastic squeaker.

Continue to give your child forewarning before putting a texture or object in their hand. Introduce the texture or object on the back or side of the fingers and then wait for your baby to open their fingers. Then slowly slip the texture over the finger tips into their palm.

**Exploring**

- Give opportunities to feel toys with smaller parts like a teething ring with small rings or other moving parts that can be explored to help develop your baby’s finger movements.

- Offer your baby larger toys on their tummy or chest and help them to feel and explore it with both hands. Your baby needs both hands free to do this so they need to be lying on their back in their cot or on the floor.

- Offer your baby their milk bottle (shaking it first) or a larger sound-making toy or a larger silent toy to encourage them to reach and grasp with both hands.

**Co-ordinating hands and fingers – grasping object**

- Help your baby to grasp a rattle for longer – gently shake their forearm so that the rattle makes a sound and keeps their interest.

- A ring rattle may help your baby to hold with both hands and then transfer the toy from one hand to the other.
Making connections

Learning about sound

- Shake or squeak sound-making toys (like rattles or bells) in front of your baby at arm’s reach. If they need help, guide their hand to the toy to find it or let them find it visually. Continue to use a guiding hands approach. It is important that you take the baby’s hand right to the toy and don’t bring it down to their hand. Once they’ve grasped it, let them play with it.

- Talk to or call your baby starting from arm’s length away or nearer and wait for them to turn towards you and reward them with a kiss on that side to show them where you are.

Understanding that objects are there

- Keep the same everyday objects in the same expected places during everyday routines – for example, a flannel or sponge in the bath, a bowl on a high chair, a nappy to hold on the changing mat.

Understanding about actions on objects

- Help your baby to bang toys that make a sound, like a toy piano, a drum, a squeaky toy, or a brick on a table. Use a guiding hands approach.

- Your baby will enjoy toys that produce a musical sound when a large key or button is pushed – initially they might bang it to produce the sound. Show them what happens when they press the button. First place your baby’s hand on yours so that they feel your movement pressing the button. Then, when your baby is comfortable with this, use guiding hands to take them to the button and press gently on their hand to show what will happen. This is called shared discovery since you’re discovering the toy together.
Using hands

Learning with touch – responding to different textures

• Help your child explore the feel of objects and textures during their everyday routines – for example, a wet sponge, a dry towel, the water and bubbles in the bath, talcum powder on their body, their bottle or spoon during feeding, etc. As they start to recognise objects and sensations in their daily life, they’ll become more interested and confident about exploring and feeling them.

• Early finger feeding experiences can be a useful introduction to feeling food textures, including dry and sticky food, see Towards independent self-care.

Discovering hands

• Introduce finger games or rhymes like ‘This little piggy’ and ‘Tom Thumb’.

• Play clapping games and show your child how to do this. Direct their hands by gentle pressure on the elbow or place your child’s hands on yours as you clap.

Exploring

• Introduce your baby to everyday objects with many parts that can be explored like a bunch of keys, a secure string of beads, a toothbrush or hairbrush.

Co-ordinating hands and fingers – grasping object

• Remember to use a forewarning technique when introducing any new object. Take it over the back of the fingers and then leave it on the side of the fingers and wait as your child orientates their wrist and turns their hand until their fingers wrap round the object.

• Give your baby opportunities to play with and hold smaller objects (ones that fit into their hand and are too big to be swallowed) eg a 2.5 cm cube brick on a surface or a small squeaky toy.

• Place a cube on a table or tray surface. Guide your baby’s hand along the surface until their first (index) or second finger touches the cube. Then let them pick it up. At first they may scoop it into the palm but gradually they’ll start to use the thumb when grasping.

• Encourage two-handed reach and play with large squeeze balls which need to be held in two hands and which make a noise when squashed or a toy that has different parts to feel and explore.
Body awareness

• To encourage body awareness, put a bottle of warm milk or water on your baby’s tummy or chest and guide their hands towards it using a guiding hands approach.

Position in space

• Babies love rough and tumble play, and movement through space helps them to establish balance and trunk control. Encourage bouncing, rocking and swinging play.

Exploring the environment

• Continue to provide a number of interesting textured surfaces for your baby to lie on and encourage touching and feeling with hands and feet.

• Some commercially produced play mats/activity quilts make different sounds or light up to movement. Brightly multi-coloured quilts can be helpful. Some even produce a rocking motion as your baby moves.

Extending movement/co-ordination

Head and trunk control

• While your baby is lying on their tummy, encourage them to lift their head and support their trunk on their elbows by talking to them or interesting them in a sound-making toy. Using a firmer surface gives a better base to push against and supports movement more effectively.

• Once head control is established and your baby can sit on your lap with minimal support, sit your baby on one knee holding them with both hands around the hips and then lower down (close to room verticals if they can see them). Rock them gently from side to side to help them practise keeping their body straight.

• Do the same thing with your baby sitting along your thigh facing your other leg and rock gently forward and backwards.

• Gradually increase the size of the rock as their trunk control improves.
Rolling

- Give your baby an experience of the pattern of movements involved in rolling by rolling them onto their tummy – for example when being picked up after a nappy change or bath.

- To make this more fun, use a blanket over a soft safe base (like a bed) and with a partner, gently raise one side to roll your baby for a few centimetres or from one side to the other.

Strengthening the legs

- Encourage your baby to kick their legs by placing a sound-making toy at the base of the cot or under their legs. Toys like ‘kick pianos’ and ‘sound balls’ which can help are available commercially. This is also useful for cause-effect play and understanding object permanence.

The sequence in which babies learn to roll depends on many factors such as how they are usually laid, but is often side to back, stomach to back, back to side, back to stomach. Children vary enormously in their order of learning.
Body awareness

- Place a bottle or favourite toy next to your baby’s body, e.g. touching their arm or leg, and help them to find it using a guiding hands approach. Turn this into a regular ‘Where is it?’ – ‘Here it is!’ game.

Position in space

- Many babies from about six months onwards enjoy motion in an appropriate swing, and like being gently swung and lifted in the air.

Saving reaction

- Introduce ‘parachuting’. Hold your baby around the lower chest and bounce them gently up and down on the bed ‘one, two, three’ and then from the top of the bounce tip them forward towards the bed saying ‘weee’. (A bright bed cover may be helpful.) You need a second person at the early stages of this to guide your child’s arms so that their hands make contact with the bed. Once your baby starts putting their hands out themselves, you no longer need a second adult. (The first three bounces give your baby information about the surface they’re ‘standing’ on – that is, the base, so when they tip forward, they learn to judge where it will be and put out their hands to save themselves). To begin with, the ‘dive’ needs to be head first but not sudden or rapid. Also the height of the bounce should only be about 30–40 cm off the bed surface.

Exploring the environment

- Put your baby on a mat with a few toys like a sound ball that makes a sound when knocked. This encourages them to wriggle and move to pat the toys.

Extending movement/co-ordination

Head and trunk control

- Hold under your baby’s chest when lying on their tummy so that they’re supported. Gradually reduce the support while encouraging your baby to bear weight on their arms and to raise their head and chest when lying on their tummy. Lean round and talk to them to encourage your baby to raise their head.
Rolling

• To encourage rolling, place your baby on their side on a comfortable surface and encourage them to follow your voice or a sound-making toy as it moves in the direction you want them to roll. You can show them what you want them to do by gently rolling them so they learn the pattern of movements required. Make sure that they’re helped to reach you and rewarded with a cuddle, or the toy to play with. Repeat this when your baby is lying on their back.

Sitting and saving

• Encourage pulling to a sitting position by holding your baby’s shoulders and gently raising them from the floor, saying ‘up you come!’ Gradually lessen the amount of support, by moving from shoulders to elbows, to hands as you pull to a sitting position. Reduce the amount of pulling provided by encouraging your baby to pull more and more. This can be done regularly after nappy changing or dressing.

• Place your baby in a sitting position on a firm surface, propped up with pillows to show them how to support themselves using their hands and arms as props on the floor in front of them.

• Sit on the floor with your baby between your legs. Rock them from side to side (singing a ‘seesaw’ game) taking their hands to the floor to the side and showing them how to save themselves.
Feeding/eating

• If introducing a bottle for the first time, shake the bottle, then introduce the teat on the chin below your child’s lips as a forewarning. Gradually bring onto the lips and let your baby taste drops and then open up their mouth. Take it slowly, so that your baby has time to get used to the new feel and taste of the teat and milk.

• When preparing to breast or bottle-feed, guide your baby’s hands to the breast or bottle before offering it to the mouth. It’s better to guide arms by gently pushing the elbows forward rather than pulling on hands. You can then place your hands over theirs to hold the bottle in place. Some babies don’t like to touch or hold objects, but it’s important to keep trying. Sometimes putting a strip of comforting or interesting fabric around a bottle can make it more appealing to hold – for example, you could put the bottle inside a sock (if possible one that your child can see).

• Begin spoon feeding when recommended by your health visitor. Use a plastic spoon with an easy grip to start off. As your baby’s grasp of objects develops let them hold a spoon and play with it even if not feeding.

• When starting to spoon feed, make sure you and your baby are comfortable and you have everything you’ll need to hand if things get messy – for example, bibs, cloths, kitchen paper etc. It’s easier to swallow in a sitting position, so sit with your baby on your knee, if they have stable head control, or in a baby chair with sufficient support.

• If they have sufficient vision, try to find a spoon that your baby can see and bring the spoon in front of their eyes within their visual field so that it doesn’t appear unexpectedly.
Feeding (continued)

• Use forewarning before you put the spoon to your baby’s mouth. Put small quantities on the spoon and gently touch your baby’s chin with the spoon and then move it to their lips. Let your baby taste a bit on their lips. Then say ‘Open your mouth’. Wait for them to open their mouth, before slowly tipping the spoon into the front part of the mouth. Let your baby have time to take the food off the spoon with their lips and palate so that they are in control of the speed of feeding until they become confident about feeding from a spoon.

• At first, babies push the food out of their mouth with their tongue, but with experience, they learn to swallow in a more co-ordinated manner. When trying new foods, babies may splutter, spit or gag on the food but these are typical reactions observed in many infants. Keep offering the food in a calm and encouraging way and try to leave a drop on their lips so that they have a taste of the food.

• When introducing first foods, change only one element at a time and begin with just one spoonful before a bottle. Try adding a few drops of milk to the food to produce a mild flavour and slowly increase the proportion of solids as your baby gets used to the flavour.

• Do the same forewarning each time and gradually your baby will become more confident about opening their mouth as the spoon touches their chin and lips and gradually the spoon can be tipped further into the mouth as eating and swallowing become more co-ordinated.

• Make sure that all care-givers feed using the same approach.

• Follow guidance from your health visitor when introducing foods with different textures and flavours. Take time to introduce any new taste or texture and let your baby get used to and enjoy each one. It may take many attempts before new flavours/textures are eventually enjoyed, so persevere.
Dressing and nappy changing

- Continue to forewarn your baby of what you’re about to do using consistent sound and touch and visual cues and words and actions. Keep to the familiar routine every time.

- While dressing and undressing or changing nappies, talk to your baby describing what you’re doing.

Washing and bathing

- Make bath time fun. Encourage splashing by moving arms and legs and saying ‘Splash splash!’.

- Encourage tolerance of hair washing by gently trickling water over the head and face while playing, laughing and singing, to turn it into a game.

- Give your baby the experience of some different textures against their skin as you bath them, eg a soft face cloth, a natural or synthetic sponge, a soft brush. Use lotions or soaps with different consistencies over the hands and body.

- Continue to forewarn your baby that you’re about to put them in the bath, although by now your baby is probably anticipating it as part of the evening routine, which begins when they hear you start to run the bath water.
Bedtime

• Changing into night clothes at bedtime helps to separate night from day, so try to use night clothes that have a different feel to those worn during the day.

• Continue to use a calm bedtime routine so your baby knows what’s expected of them at this time in the day, eg bath time, pyjamas, milk, cuddles and calming songs.

• Use a slightly different but equally calm approach to settling your baby down for naps during the day, perhaps using a different song to the one used at bedtime, a particular music box or a mobile for an afternoon nap.
Feeding/eating

• If already using a bottle, continue to guide both your baby’s hands to hold it when drinking and gradually reduce the amount of support you give until they can support it independently. This will also encourage their hands to work together. The bottle will be easier to handle if it is not too full.

• As the baby gets a bit older, say something like ‘milk time’, shake the bottle and then do the same as above.

• Remember to tell your baby when you’re about to offer food (‘dinner’) and give additional sound or visual clues by shaking the bottle or tapping the side of the bowl with the spoon.

• As your baby gets used to spoon feeding, put their hand on your hand or forearm so that they feel you lifting your arm with each spoonful. When you get near to their mouth, say ‘open wide’. This will help them to anticipate the spoon coming to their mouth.

• Introduce small amounts of a new taste or texture, and only increase the amount of food as the child becomes familiar with it and is showing pleasure and enjoyment in eating it.

• Once your baby is using a high chair, include them in family mealtimes. You may need to feed them first but you can give them some finger foods on their tray so they’re involved in eating with everyone else. Let them hold a spare spoon while you’re feeding.

• Place the bottle on the highchair tray/table, or hold it in front of your child and encourage them to reach out to find and grasp it with two hands.

• Finger feeding can be introduced by putting favoured foods such as cream cheese, honey, jam, ice cream etc onto your baby’s fingers. At this stage everything is taken to the mouth for exploration so if it tastes good, they’ll soon get the message and try other things. Once solids are established, finger foods, which dissolve without much chewing, can be introduced by placing them in the hand – for example, a rusk or cracker.

• Ask your health visitor about introducing new foods and textures.
Dressing and nappy changing

- Continue to forewarn that you’re about to dress or undress using familiar words and actions and objects for the routine.

- Sit your baby on your knees and use words like ‘push’ as you put their arm through a sleeve or leg into trousers. Say ‘pull’ when you pull on a hat. They will feel the movement that your body is making and this will be a model of how they’ll have to move when they begin to take a more active role in dressing.

- When changing nappies, give your baby something in their hands to play with, or hang a mobile over the changing surface to discourage rolling.

Washing and bathing

- Continue to forewarn when putting in and taking out of bath.

- If your baby is alarmed using the family bath, put their baby bath inside to give them time to get used to it. Put your arm round your baby and hold them while in the bath, until your baby has developed enough balance to sit for a short time in the bath. Continue to put a reassuring arm around them until they’re confident in the bath.

- Give them some fun things to play with in the bath, like a toy bucket, a floating ball, a squeezy toy or a sponge toy.

- If using the family bath, ensure that a non-slip mat is in place as unexpected falls into the water can cause alarm and spoil your enjoyment of bath time.

Bedtime

- Your baby may be sleeping for longer periods through the night by now. If they do wake, keep activity to a minimum and after a brief cuddle and night drink, return them to their bed. It’s best if the room is kept quiet and dark. Don’t play music or give toys, except a very quiet soothing music tape if at all.

- Maintain your bedtime routine before settling your baby at night. When the routine is finished, always put your baby into their cot so that they learn to go to sleep in their own cot. They’ll learn to connect the routine and cot with going to sleep and this will help develop the sleeping pattern of night and day.

- Make it very clear when it’s morning time – especially if your child can’t see light. Use a morning greeting like ‘Good morning! Up you get!’) and hugs or a morning music toy.
Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent and others

- If your child seems to try to attract attention to themselves, e.g. by rolling or bottom shuffling towards you, call out to them and encourage them to approach you and find you in the room. Say ‘I’m here. Come and find me’) and then attend to them. This helps babies become more confident about getting your attention and also encourages more independent movement towards you.

- As you come into a room, call your child’s name and give them time to respond – stopping and listening, turning towards or approaching you, vocalising. Reward them with your attention when they respond.

- Talk about your child to another person in the room and see if they stop still or turn towards the speaker when they hear their name.

- Help your child learn the names of family members and associate them with their voices and body appearance. Encourage family members to say their name as they approach – for example, ‘It’s Grandpa’.

Showing and understanding feelings

- (If your child has sufficient vision) continue to check at what distance facial expressions can be seen and responded to. Then try to talk and smile from within this distance frequently. Smile broadly (bright lipstick helps the lips to be seen) and laugh, so that your child links the smile to the happy vocal expression and having fun. Encourage them if they try to copy this.

- Notice your child’s different feelings in different situations. Talk about your child’s feelings. You might say ‘Are you sad?’ ‘You’re cross’, ‘You don’t like it’. using voice tone and facial expression to reflect emotion, and to respond to what you think are your child’s needs.

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Showing attachment to parent and familiar others

• This is the stage when children tend to start becoming wary of strangers and anxious if separated from their parents and familiar carers. This is called separation anxiety and it’s a positive sign that your child is developing a secure relationship to you and with familiar carers. Help your child to feel secure with a number of adults by giving your child the opportunity to be held, cared for and played with by a number of familiar adults.

• If you’re going to leave your child, tell them that you’re going out and will be back later. Hand them over to a familiar adult before you leave.

• If your child is being left with a familiar grandparent, nanny or childcare worker, make sure that the adult looking after your child knows about your child’s visual needs and provides care using routines similar to yours. (Read the advice in Card 4.)

• Give your child a warm greeting and hug on your return.

• This is the stage to ensure that your child has a secure sleep routine and can accept sleeping in their cot.

• See the section in the Getting Stuck? booklet for further ideas about developing settled sleep behaviour.

Behaviour and self-regulation

• Your child will be starting to try and do simple actions by themselves. Encourage them to try and give physical support and verbal encouragement where needed to ensure that they are successful.

• Stick to consistent everyday routines and activities so that your child continues to learn about your expectations for appropriate behaviour.
Social interaction

Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)

- Play to and fro rocking games on the floor like ‘Row row the boat’. Help your child to join in the actions, eg pulling, rocking. Pause during the game, wait and see if your child can repeat the rocking movement or make a vocal sound to show that they want the action/game to be repeated. Then immediately repeat the game.

- Play action games with a tickle, like ‘Round and round the garden’ or ‘This little piggy’. Do the game slowly and say the words clearly, then pause just before you get to the tickle – wait and see if your child starts chuckling or showing excitement in anticipation!

- Introduce ‘Peek a boo’ games. Put a scarf over or magazine in front of your face, then pull it off and say ‘boo!’.

- Show your child the simple actions from a familiar rhyme game or nursery rhyme, eg clapping hands together for ‘Pat a cake’, stamping feet for ‘You’re happy and you know it’, ‘Twinkle twinkle’ with fingers in ‘Twinkle Twinkle little star’. Clapping hands can be encouraged by taking the child’s wrists and patting their hands together or letting the child put their hands over yours as you clap.

These early social rhyme games and action games are very helpful for early communication, understanding and expressing language (see the Stage 2 cards on Communication, language and meaning that follow).
Joining in social interaction

• Begin to encourage copying or imitation of your actions, eg ‘Daddy clap hands’, ‘Now you clap hands’ (with physical support if needed). ‘Mummy bang table’ ‘(Child’s name) bang table’. Help your child hear and/or see the actions or put their hands over yours to feel you doing the action first, then you can do a guiding hands approach to support them.

Developing early social skills

• Wave your child’s hand (taking the forearm) for ‘Bye bye’ every time someone is leaving the house and says ‘bye bye’. Ask the other person to wave from a distance so they are visible for your baby.
Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent and others

- Respond to your child’s vocalisations or behaviours if they’re trying to attract your attention. Tell them where you are (‘I’m sitting on the sofa’) and let them come and find you. If you’re busy in another room, say ‘I can hear you, I’m coming’.

- Encourage appropriate ways of attracting attention such as calling for ‘Mama’ or ‘Dada’. Reduce your response to physical attempts to get attention and wait for vocalisation – it might just be a single sound at first, eg ‘aah’.

- Let your child lie or sit next to another baby or young child who’s playing so that they start to listen to and learn about other children.

Showing and understanding feelings

- Continue to talk about your child’s feelings using simple language, eg ‘You’re sad. Granny’s gone out to the shops’, ‘You’re cross – you don’t want to stop playing’.

- Your child may not be able to see the facial expressions of others, so explain the feelings other people have – for example, ‘Mummy’s happy’ when you play and laugh together or ‘Mummy’s cross – you won’t keep your shoe on’. Match your intonation to show your mood or the moods of other people.

Showing attachment to parent and familiar others

- Go through the same preparations as on Cards 4 and 5 if you’re leaving your child with a familiar grandparent, nanny, friend or childcare worker.

- If your child shows anxiety when left alone in a room, tell them that you can hear them, what you’re doing and that you’ll be coming back into the room soon. Reassure them verbally until you return.

- Develop games to encourage your child to ‘Find mummy and daddy’. Do this when quite close by at first and help them to find you. This encourages them to move and explore and lets them know that you’re still available, even though out of physical contact or sight.
Behaviour and self-regulation

• This is the stage when your child may begin to try and do things more independently. Help your child to achieve their goals, like feeding themselves with a spoon or manipulating a toy.

• Use scaffolding when your child is trying to achieve a particular goal so they don’t get too frustrated, eg riding a push-along car round the sitting room. See the General overview of development booklet for strategies for supporting learning.

• A balance has to be struck between supporting this growth in independence, while ensuring that your child is responsive to parental guidance and limits.

• Make sure that the home is child-safe at this stage of mobility and exploration.

Social interaction

Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)

• Begin to involve your child in ‘Peek a boo’. Put a small cloth on the top of their head or leave a vest on top of their head when undressing. Pull it off and say ‘Boo!’.

• Say the initial words of a familiar action song, eg ‘Pat a cake’, or ‘Round and round the garden’ or ‘Row row the boat’, and see if your child will start the actions themselves. For example clapping hands or rocking.

• When you’re singing and doing action games together, give an opportunity for your child to try and start one of the games. This might be putting out their hand for ‘Round and round the garden’ or pulling a cloth over their head for ‘Peek a boo’.

• Begin simple turn-taking games with objects like rolling a ball (with bell inside or a brightly coloured ball, depending on vision) between adult and child. You need two adults at the beginning (one supporting your child on the floor). Let them know when you’ve received the ball (‘Daddy got it!’) and when you’re sending it back to them (‘Here it comes!’)

• Play a game of ‘give and take’ – giving and taking an object to and from your child. If your child doesn’t release the toy deliberately, then take it gently and say ‘Ta’ or ‘Thank you’ and then immediately give it back and repeat. When asking your child to ‘give me’ you may first need to help them to learn how to release (see Play and learning, Using hands Stage 2).

• Do an action on or with an object – for example, banging a stick on a xylophone and then encourage your child to copy the same action.
**Listening and attending**

- Observe your child’s reaction to different sounds – new or familiar. Direct their attention to different sounds and provide links to language by naming the sound and where it comes from. For example, ‘Tick tock’ – it’s the clock’ or ‘Brm brm – it’s a car’.

- Help your child to understand the noises around them by taking them to the object, naming it and showing them where the noise comes from.

- Play tapes of singing/rhymes and sing along as well.

- Young children love music and rhythmic motion. Move with your child, bounce and sway them on your knee to the rhythm of the music.

- Help your child to listen to you by getting them to attend to a familiar rhyme game (see Social and emotional development, Stage 2).

**Understanding meaning**

- Name the parts of your child’s body during nappy changing or bathing (see Towards independent self-care, Stage 2).

Introduce a consistent object with some familiar activities, eg give your child the flannel or bath duck when you say ‘bath time’ before you go to the bath or give your child the car keys as you say ‘Let’s go to the car’. This is called an object of reference, since the object refers to the activity (this is a helpful step for later learning of the word that refers to the activity).
Recognising what objects are for

- Show your child how everyday objects are used, e.g., help them to hold and to feel or look at the brush and experience brushing their hair, to hold their toothbrush and brush their teeth (remember to use forewarning before putting anything in their mouth), to hold a spoon or cup to feed or drink. Name the object while showing them how it’s used. Start by doing this during the everyday routine itself.

- During the routine, help your child to get to know the shape, contour and texture of these everyday objects through touching and/or looking at them.

Understanding words

- Use the same simple words and phrases when talking to your child. Continue to use the same phrases during everyday routines.

- Only use ‘No’ when your child is really doing something risky, like touching a hot oven. Say it firmly with a cross voice and cross facial expression with your face close. Physically stop your child from doing the prohibited activity and redirect their attention to something else. Make your house ‘child-safe’ to minimise the ‘Nos’.

- Use symbolic vocalisations with some objects or events, e.g., ‘Brmm brmm’ for car, ‘Meow meow’ when the cat comes in.
Card 5 · Communication, language and meaning

Communication

Joint attention to toys/objects

- When you’re introducing a toy to your child, sit very close to them so that they feel or see you’re in contact with them. This helps them feel your involvement in their play. From this position you can guide their hand to the toy using a guiding hands approach. Talk about what your child is doing or show them what to do.

- Respond to your child’s interests and join them when they seem excited or pleased with a toy and comment on what they’re doing and about the toy they’re playing with – either join in the activity or talk to and touch your child gently on the arm to let them know you’re there and sharing their enjoyment.

- Don’t interfere in your child’s wish to explore a toy independently, but gently show that you’re also interested and involved, eg gently touching their arm and commenting on play.

- Notice how your child shows their interest in toys and tries to draw your attention to their interests. This might be by sitting very close to you, touching you briefly with their hand, holding out the toy, vocalising while playing with the toy. Your child may look at your face from time to time when playing with the toy if you’re very close by.

- Play with an interesting toy next to your child and notice how your child shows you that they’re interested in what you’re doing.

- Do something noisy and interesting a little further away and see if your child tries to approach you to find out what you are doing. Show them what you’re doing.

Communicating needs

- Help your child to show you what they want, eg Say ‘Dinner?’ if they’re grizzly and it’s near dinner time. Take their hand to their mouth to show them a gesture to indicate food. Give them a spoon to hold and bring the dinner.

- Comment on and extend your child’s gestures/vocalisations – for example, as your child pushes something away say ‘You don’t like that, do you?’.

- Watch your child’s gestures during a game, indicating that they wish to do something again, eg when they put their hand out to regain a toy that you’re shaking. Respond to the request.
Expressive language

Vocalisation: making first words

• When your child makes a first attempt at sounds or words in a familiar situation, repeat the word said correctly and enthusiastically and encourage its use in the appropriate context. When your child says ‘da’, say ‘Yes, here’s dada!’; or when your child says ‘din’, say ‘Dinner!’ Help your child to touch and/or see what they’re referring to.

• Ideas for playing with sounds – play with your mouth on a balloon and let your child have a go, make noises putting a hand on and off mouth, blow down a tube.

Making ‘conversation’

• Take turns with vocal sounds and phrases to ‘hold’ a conversation. Pause after your turn so that your child has time to make their response. Copy your child’s sounds or phrases and then extend them or elaborate them – ‘Mama – yes, mama’s cooking dinner’.
Listening and attending

- At bedtime, tell a little story. Sit your child on your lap or in their cot. You can make up a story about what your child did that day. Use simple language that your child is beginning to recognise, and expressive sounds for certain actions, eg ‘Splash splash’ in the bath, ‘We went in the car – brmm brmm’ and also repetition for certain lines that you say each day. For example – ‘Today Lili got up and washed her face – wash wash! Then she brushed her teeth – brush brush! After dinner, we went to the park, and Wheee! Lili went down the slide!’

- While you’re sitting together, introduce simple books that have textures that illustrate the story, flaps, or sound buttons, so your child can be actively involved in the story. They may not understand the story at this stage but they will learn to enjoy the shared experience of story-telling, the repetitive lines and expressive sounds. It’s a good introduction to the pleasure of books.

- When you’re telling a story, make your voice very expressive and playful.

- If your child is busy playing with and exploring a toy or object, keep language brief and only relevant to what they’re doing. Talking to your child when they’re busy will often be ignored at this stage. Wait until you have their full attention before you try and talk to them.

- Changing task and shifting attention – when your child is busy playing with a toy and you want to shift their attention to something new (another object or activity), attract their attention to the new toy or object (through sound or touch or vision) before removing the toy they’ve been playing with. They’ll lose interest in what they were playing with. This is called fading (and it’s helpful in avoiding distress).
Understanding meaning

• Your child will first start to respond to simple instructions in context (that is, when there are other clues about what you’re saying). This is called situational understanding. For example, ‘Wave bye bye’ when Gran’s leaving, ‘Sit down’ when they’re standing, ‘Up you get’ when you hold their hands ready to help them up, ‘Give Mummy a kiss’ with your face close. Give instructions clearly, in simple language and show your child how to respond.

• Talk about what your child’s doing or what they’re interested in. They’ll find it harder to attend to unrelated comments. Make sure your child knows what you’re talking about by helping them to feel it, or by pointing or showing if it’s visible to them, and say the name of the object clearly and simply.

• Name your child’s most familiar or favourite objects when they’re given them, eg their bottle or favourite toy. Some families use shortened names for favourite objects, like ‘bot bot’ for bottle. This is often in response to the child’s first attempts at the word.
Communication

Joint attention to toys/objects

- Watch and think about your child’s behaviour and follow their lead and focus of attention. Sit close to them so they feel that you’re involved in their play. Continue to use a gentle touch on their shoulder, elbow or forearm (whichever is most comfortable to your child) to show that you’re attending while you also talk about the play.

Communicating needs

- Help your child to show you what they want. They may be ready to learn to shake their head for ‘No’. Show them how to shake their head – gently move the head sideways by moving the chin, and say ‘No, you don’t want it, do you?’ Avoid holding the upper part of the head because young children don’t like having this part of their body constrained.
- Respond to your child’s hand gesture if they seem to be reaching out for something, as if it’s a request.
- As your child learns to understand that holding onto a particular object links to a familiar routine or activity, you can help them to indicate what they want or need by holding out the object. You can say ‘You’ve got your cup. Do you want a drink?’

Expresses preferences

- Help your child to choose between two foods or two toys to play with. Name what you’re offering them and ask your child to choose one. (If your child is at level V1 or V2, give them the chance to feel the objects, as you say the name).
Expressive language

First words

• During a familiar social game pause and wait for your child to ask for ‘more’ – if they make a sound, even if just ‘mm’ or ‘aga’ say ‘More?’ or ‘Again?’ and repeat the game.

• Continue with social rhyme games and nursery rhymes (see Social and emotional development, Stage 2) and encourage your child to join in the singing or vocalisations.

• Encourage symbolic vocalisations – for example, ‘aahh’ when cuddling a stuffed toy, animal noises (eg woof, meow, cheep cheep) and vehicle noises (eg brmm). You can say them when you hear the real noise or bring them into a story.

• Respond to your child’s sounds that are almost words – for example, ‘dogon’ say ‘Yes the dog’s gone home’.

• When your child uses a word or sound, expand it by repeating the word in your response, pronounced in the correct way. For example, if your child says ‘bibi’ – reply ‘Biscuit – you want a biscuit? Here’s your biscuit’ (recasting).

• Use the ideas on joint attention on other cards to help link first words to meaning – these are the first attempts at talking about what they’re doing.

Making conversation

• Sit face to face with your child when you’re playing and talking.

• Encourage your child to turn their face towards you when you’re talking.
Making connections

Learning about sound

• Offer a sound-making toy within arm’s reach to the left or right side at ear level and help your child reach it. For children with vision, shake the toy slightly behind where they can’t see it and give them time to find it visually. Remember to guide your child’s hand to the toy if they don’t reach in the right direction. Once they’ve found it, let them hold it and play with it.

Learning about objects

Object permanence – understanding that objects are still there when not touched, heard or seen.

• Begin to help your child to find a toy they’re playing with when the toy slips out of their hand on a surface. Use a guiding hands approach and/or encourage looking.

• Continue to guide your child’s hand to find an object or toy when it rolls out of their grasp. Encourage them to slide their hand along the floor or table top until they feel or find the object again. If within range of vision, encourage your child to look around on the floor or table until they find the object.

• Partly cover a toy with a cloth and help your child to pull off the cloth to find the toy underneath.

• Keep belongings and toys in a consistent place in your child’s room or in their play area so they learn where to find them.
Cause and effect – understanding the effects of actions

• Play with cause and effect toys – ie toys that need a deliberate press to have an effect like movement, sound or light. For example, a toy that lights up or makes sounds if a large button is pressed.

• Show your child how to knock two toys or objects together to make a banging sound, eg two bricks.

Understanding how objects relate to each other

• Have a box or tin (eg biscuit tin) with noise-making objects like rattles in a metal container. Shake the tin to motivate your child to explore inside and remove the objects.

• Try a box of objects of different textures and shapes – this could be a toy box with a number of favourite toys or a ‘bucket’ of bath toys and help your child to reach inside and pull something out to play with.
Using hands

Learning through touch: responding to different textures

• Continue to give your child opportunity and encouragement to feel the shape, contour and textures of everyday objects and materials during their everyday routines. This will help them build up recognition of the objects and materials in their everyday life, which is important for language and concept learning. It also helps them begin to discriminate between different textures and different tactile sensations.

• When introducing an everyday object or material for feeling and exploring, remember to give forewarning (telling your child what it is and introducing it at appropriate visual distance or on the back of the hand). Tell them what it is and what you’re going to do with it – ‘Here’s your brush’ (let her/him feel it) and ‘Now let’s brush your hair’.

• Introduce toys with a wider range of textures to feel as a natural part of playtime.

Exploring

• Offer a range of simple toys with dials, knobs and switches to develop your child’s different hand movements. Continue to use a shared discovery approach – this can start with you demonstrating the action, taking your child’s hand on your hand while you do the action again, and then putting your hand gently over your child’s hands if they need further help to do the action.
Co-ordinating hands and fingers

• Offer a second object when your child is already holding one to encourage them to pass it to the other hand or to hold an object in each hand.

• Using an index (second) finger – introduce toys or activities with a push button such as a door bell, sound toy or simple key board to encourage use of one finger at a time and pushing or poking with the index finger.

• Pincer grasp (finger thumb apposition)

  Give small pieces of finger food such as small cubes of cheese, fruit or bread (if your child has sufficient vision, ensure objects are on a well-contrasting background) and guide their finger and thumb to grasp it. Slide the hand and index (second) finger along the table top until the tip of the index finger touches the small cube of food.

Release of object

• When your child starts to practise releasing objects by throwing (casting) them, take your child to where the object has fallen or attract their visual attention to it so they learn where it has dropped. This is useful for learning about object permanence too (see Play and learning, Stage 2). Help your child to pick up the object again if they want it.

• Let your child play in an enclosed play space, so that the object can be easily found again, eg in play pen, a large box or carry cot.

• Offer your child another toy to hold, when holding something to encourage them to put the first object down.
Making connections

Learning about sound (see also Communication, language and meaning)

- Continue to help your child find the location of toys making sounds. Offer a sound-making toy within arm’s reach to the left or right side above or below ear level and help them to reach for it using a guiding hands approach. For children with vision, shake the toy slightly behind them so that it’s out of sight and give them time to find it visually. Remember to take the child’s hand to the noise-making object. Once they’ve found it, let them hold it and play with it.

- Call your child to find you in different positions in the room – start at about one metre away and then increase to about two metres from the child. When they reach you, reward them with a cuddle. This is also a good game for increasing mobility (see Movement and mobility).

Object permanence

- Help your child to find a toy when it’s partly covered or hidden in a box with a hinged lid (show them you’re hiding it and then help them to find it again).

- Help your child to find a toy when they’ve dropped it and it has rolled a little way off on a surface and they have to stretch out to find it. Help them to slide their hand across the surface to find the toy and/or to look for it.

Cause and effect

- Help your child explore a toy that makes a sound when a smaller button is pressed with a finger.

- Show your child how other cause and effect toys work. For example – pull rod to make music, turn a roller to turn on a (visual) light or make music, press a switch, press notes of keyboard. Continue to use a shared discovery approach – this can start with you demonstrating the action, taking their hand on your hand while you do the action again, and then putting your hand gently over their hand if they need further help to do the action.
Understanding how objects relate to each other

- Help your child to take an object out of a smaller container with just one toy inside, eg a small rattle from a small toy saucepan or small pieces of food from a small deep bowl.

- With your toy box of favourite toys, help your child to take some toys out of them and show him/her how they go back in.

- Show your child how to use one object on another object – eg bang a beater on a drum or xylophone.

- Help your child to use something to reach an object – for example, a pull string or rod to get a clackety toy. Make sure it’s a toy that your child wants to have and show them how to get it first by pulling the string or rod until the toy comes to them. Then let them play with it.

- Your child will enjoy toys with two parts that they can explore and pull apart, eg simple one or two piece inset puzzle with knobs, pulling connected pieces apart, eg duplo, pulling lid with knob off container, a cloth bag or handbag with a few toys or objects inside.
Using hands

Learning through touch: responding to different textures

- Encourage your child to enjoy finger feeding with a variety of different foods and textures. This can include toast or crackers with different toppings, pieces of soft fruit, biscuits.

- Before your child is spoon fed a more sticky or sloppy food, let them feel it with their fingers and take their fingers to their mouth to taste. This tells them a bit more about what they’re about to eat and also helps them feel more comfortable about touching sloppy or sticky consistencies. Talk about the food too – ‘Mmm potato!’ so that they know what they’re touching and tasting.

Exploring

- Help your child to play with toys/objects with more complex buttons, knobs and switches to encourage pushing, pulling, turning and pressing. Continue with a shared discovery approach (see Stage 2 Play and learning, Cause and effect).

- Help your child play and explore a box with an attached lid which produces music on opening or in which a toy or treat has been hidden.

- Choose flexible cloth or plastic books with textures and flaps to feel and encourage your child to turn pages after each page is explored.
Co-ordinating hands and fingers

• Encourage your child to grasp a string or cord to pull a toy towards them.

• Using two hands – offer toys which have two parts to separate – a small container with a lid or a toy which pulls apart, a music box to open the lid.

• Offer your child a two-handled cup to drink from (see also Towards independent self-care).

Release of object

• If your child is deliberately throwing objects away, try to catch them and quickly give them back. This can then develop into a ‘give and take’ game.

• Hold out your hand, so that your child can feel or see your outstretched palm. Say ‘Give it to me’. Gently take the toy from your child saying ‘Ta’ or ‘Thank you’ and then quickly offer it back. This can then become a ‘give and take’ game. Taking turns with shaking a rattle or squeaker may help your child’s motivation to give the object up.

• Rolling a ball back and forth with your child will also help them learn that releasing and taking turns can be fun (the ball will need a bell inside or a flashing light). (See also Social and emotional development.)

• Use toys/games where releasing gives an auditory or visual reward – for example, dropping a noisy toy into a shiny tin, ball dropping down a slope to ring a bell, a ‘woodpecker’ sliding down the tree tapping the trunk as it goes, a toy car that goes whizz as it slides down the slope. This can become a ‘Where’s it gone?’ game.
Card 5 · Movement and mobility

Body awareness/position in space

- Begin to use action words to relate to body parts and actions. Say ‘Bend your legs’, ‘Push your arms’. Say these words as you help your child use a particular part of the body – for example, when they’re trying to crawl. With regular repetition, your child will begin to understand.

- Lay your child on their stomach with a large squeaky inflatable toy under their chest. Play a rocking game so the toy makes a noise and allows your child to touch the floor in front with their hands and behind with their feet. Encourage pushing with their hands or feet when they come in contact with floor. A large beach ball can also be used.

- Continue the rocking games on your knee and tilting activity (see also Stage 1b Card 3 Movement and mobility). Wait to see if they can tilt themselves upright (positioned close to see room verticals, if they have sufficient vision). If not, show them how to regain upright position (‘Up you come’) until they can do it.

Saving reaction – floor as a solid base

- Continue with ‘parachuting’ – see Stage 1b Card 4 Movement and mobility.

- See too the games for sitting and saving on the other side of this card.
Exploring the environment/orientation

• Let your child lie or sit near furniture which they can explore – for example, the legs of a chair and table, cupboard and doors, soft furnishing of a sofa, curtain folds reaching the floor.

• Once your child has started to move you can ‘show’ them around the rooms they spend time in. They need to gradually learn what’s there and where it is. When you put them down to play, place them in the same position each time (eg with his/her back to the sofa) so that they can start to build up a mental map of the room and plan their movements. This needs to be done in all the rooms in your home, gradually over time.

Extending movement/co-ordination

Sitting and saving

• Encourage your child to reach out (for a sound-making toy or biscuit) with one hand while sitting propped.

• Place a toy on the floor, attract your child’s attention to it. Once they have reached it and played with it, put another toy in a different position and repeat. This will encourage them to reach out in different directions while sitting.

• Once your child is sitting securely with minimum adult support, continue to gently tilt them to one side from the waist and see if they put out their hand to the floor to ‘save’ themselves from tipping over. Continue to take their hand to the floor until the saving reaction is secure.

Mobility – rolling, bottom shuffling, creeping (commando crawling) or any means

• Spend some time motivating your child to move about the room. This can be done by placing an interesting sound-making or other toy beyond arm’s reach and encouraging your child to move towards it. A bright toy can also be used to motivate moving. You can also call your child from a short distance away (see also Play and learning Stage 2, for sound localisation activity). When they reach you, give them a big cuddle.
Crawling

- To move from sitting to tummy your child needs to learn to rotate their upper trunk. To encourage this, place toys to either side at arm’s length, and encourage reaching towards them using sound or light-up toys to get their interest. You could also play ‘Boo’ from behind, encouraging them to turn to left and right in response to you moving from side to side. In time and with practice, your child will extend this to a single move from a sitting to crawling position.

- While sitting on your lap, or when you’re lying down, encourage your child to move around, twisting and turning and developing different movements with the confidence of your support.

- Lay your child in a crawling position so that their arms are straight, and legs bent in crawling position. Hold them round the middle and encourage rocking. Gently rock from side to side and front to back to give the experience of movement and to develop balance.

- Once your child can support their weight on arms and knees in a crawling position, encourage them to reach out with one hand and then the other (keeping one hand and both knees in contact with the floor). It often takes several weeks from weight bearing to mobility – and some children skip the crawling stage completely!

- Try placing your child’s legs up into a crawling position and put your hands against the bottom of their feet. Your child’s reaction will be to push against your hands and this will result in movement.
**Strengthening the legs**

- Hold your child upright with a little weight on the legs and gently bounce them on your knee. You will know when they’re ready for this when they start to push down on your legs.

- Continue to give your child the experience of standing, while you support them. Gradually allow them to take more weight onto their legs. At this stage children often enjoy bouncing while you hold them by the hands.

- Give practice standing, as children with limited vision can take longer to establish balance without visual feedback. Once your child can take weight on their legs without their knees bending, stand them briefly, facing you, between your legs while you’re sitting in a chair. Extend to using the cot/safety-gate/playpen rails for support or holding both hands.

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The use of baby walkers is not recommended as this can delay the development of co-ordination of movement for walking and may also be dangerous as the baby is mobile without control. Bouncy harnesses should only be used for short periods, as babies do not develop appropriate muscle control.
Body awareness/position in space

- The ‘toddler’ sections of ‘soft-play’ environments can provide lots of opportunities for safe rough and tumble play and make movement fun. Find a quiet time of the day to visit and give your child time and plenty of support to get used to this new environment.
- Water in a swimming pool supports body weight and children can often propel themselves in water (wearing a suitable buoyancy aid) before learning to move on dry land. Water-play sessions in swimming pools are available once children have had the required immunisations. Go to a children’s pool at a quiet time of the day so that the pool is not too noisy.
- When your child is sitting on the floor, encourage them to lean round or lean over to reach a motivating toy that is held out to them to increase trunk control and balance.

Exploring the environment/orientation

- As your child begins to stand supported, help them to find places in the room where they can hold onto furniture – such as the sofa, the armchair, the playpen. Move them around the room so they get to know more about the layout of the furniture, as it will seem different from a standing position.
- Push and ride toys suitable for one-year-olds can be introduced for short periods of play. Sit-in varieties provide some support while balance is still developing, but they don’t train trunk or hip stability and so should not be used for long periods.

All young children fall over and hurt themselves. Give support by reacting calmly and giving reassurance. It’s natural that you’ll feel anxious – try not to convey this to your child.

Extending movement/co-ordination

Standing

- Give practice at independent standing by holding your child around the waist from behind and gradually reducing the amount of support given. Let your child know you’re still there by encouraging them verbally and with a gentle touch.
• While your child is seated, gently pull them up to a standing position holding at the elbow. Say ‘Pull. Up you come’. As time goes by, hold further down the arm until they can be gently pulled to standing by holding hands. Once standing, gradually release the support from one hand, as balance improves.

• Encourage your child to take over pulling on your hands to rise to a standing position – for example, say ‘Ali – pull’.

• Children who are reluctant to stand can sit on your knee while you’re kneeling on the floor so they’re in a semi-standing position. Place a toy or snack on a low table in front to motivate movement and with your hands on their hips shift your child’s weight forward over their feet to move them towards a standing position.

• Demonstrate how to safely return to a sitting position, by bending knees to kneel, or lower backwards while holding some form of support to avoid unexpected tumbles.

• Give experiences of playing with toys on a low table to develop leg muscles for standing, or scattered along a sofa so your child has to reach out to get them once they’re standing.

• Sit your child on a low chair next to a firm low table and put something interesting on the floor (eg a noisy toy or a brightly coloured toy) and encourage them to get down from the chair to the floor (holding onto the table while doing this) to find the toy.

Cruising

• Encourage cruising (side-steps) around furniture by offering a favourite toy or food from a step or two away (eg on the sofa or table). With your hands on their hips shift your child’s weight off the leg nearest the toy or food allowing them time to take a step. Get another family member to call the child and encourage them to cruise along the sofa to reach them for a cuddle and song.

• To help strengthen the trunk and hip muscles, stand your child on your knees while seated. Hold both hands and gently move your legs up and down alternating the side so that they have to shift weight from side to side. If more support is needed, hold their hips.

• Make sure that the home is child-safe for this stage of mobility and exploration.
Feeding/eating

- Have your child in the kitchen with you while you’re preparing food so that they begin to associate smells and sounds and sights with the food you give them. Let them play with safe kitchen equipment like pans and spoons.

- **Forewarning** before offering food is still important. Continue to use sound clues (eg tapping the bowl) and/or visual clues as well as language – ‘Yum, carrot and potato – here it comes, open wide’. Let your child play with bowls and spoons in preparation for skills to be learnt later.

- When bottle-feeding, allow your child to hold the bottle themselves. You may need to check the angle at which it’s held to reduce taking in too much air, but encourage as much independence as possible.

- When introducing a cup or spouted beaker allow your child to play with it (empty) at meal times for some days before using it. Let your child experience you drinking from it (ie let them feel or see you doing it). Initially, use very small quantities of a drink your child likes and sit them on your knee during the meal. Don’t do this right at the beginning, because they’ll get very frustrated if they’re hungry and thirsty, but introduce it after a little time while they’re still a bit thirsty.

- Introduce new foods and textures as advised by your health visitor. This is an important time to introduce different textures and increasingly lumpy foods.

- When introducing texture to food, start with foods you know your child already likes. Leave some soft lumps in the food when you mash/puree it or add a few crumbs of a food that will absorb the familiar flavour such as soft grains of rice.

- Encourage your child to feel or see your cheeks and jaws while you chew (and make chewing noises – ‘Mmm mmm’) to demonstrate what you want them to do, and then make the same sounds and movements and briefly touch their jaw to encourage chewing.

- When teething, biting is a natural reaction, so slightly harder finger foods can be introduced.
Dressing and nappy changing

• Continue to forewarn that you’re about to dress, undress or change using consistent words, actions, objects and routines.

• Children can usually undress themselves long before they can put clothes on. Encourage your child to take part in undressing by partially removing items such as socks, so they’re just dangling off the toes and supporting them to give the final tug. (This is sometimes known as backward chaining. See General overview of development booklet: Strategies for supporting learning, to find our more) Give lots of praise and extend this to other simple items such as hats.

• Encourage some participation in dressing and changing nappies by asking your child to ‘lift your legs’ then lifting their legs to indicate what you want them to do. After a while they’ll start to react to your instructions.

Washing and bathing

• Name the parts of your child’s body during nappy changing or bathing, kiss their hands or feet and name them, or take your child’s hand to them so they can feel the different parts of their body.

• Bathing with another member of the family, such as a brother or sister, can be fun and encourage confidence in the water. Allow your child to splash others and accept being gently splashed in return.

• This is also an opportunity for your child to start learning that other people’s bodies have the same features as their own – for example, toes.

• As with dressing, encourage some active participation in bathing. Ask your child to lift their leg for washing, pause and then lift the leg to show what you’re asking. Keep repeating this and they’ll begin to understand.

• Encourage co-operation in washing hands and face at various points in the day, eg washing hands before meals, and their face afterwards. Give your child a cloth to hold and encourage them to use it to ‘Wash your face’.

Bedtime

• As your child becomes more able to move around the cot, provide a number of different, quiet objects and activities which may interest them when they wake up after a nap. This encourages some independent exploration and play. This introduces toys and objects with interesting textures and cause-effect parts, in an environment where they feel very secure. It’s a good idea to remove these toys at night.

• If your child wakes at night, give only minimal care and interaction so you don’t encourage them to stay awake.
Developing journal for babies and children with visual impairment

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards

Stage 2 · Activity card

Card 6 · Towards independent self-care

Feeding/eating

• When drinking from a cup with a spout, encourage your child to hold it by both handles and reduce the amount of support you provide. They may still need your help to regulate the flow, but can only learn this through regular practice.

• Once your child is able to use a spouted cup independently, encourage them to use it sitting in the highchair or at a low table. Put the cup on the tray and show them where it is, rather than placing it in their hands. When they’ve finished drinking, say ‘Put it down - on the tray/table’, and gently guide their arms down towards the surface. Encourage this by saying ‘Good boy/girl’ or ‘Well done’.

• Gradually introducing smaller pieces of finger foods also helps develop finger skills (and vision). Guide both hands to the sides of a bowl or tray and encourage exploration of the contents. You may wish to use a bowl that can be firmly stuck to the tray of the high chair. Think about the colour and contrast of spoon, bowl, contents and tray surface.

Once your baby is using a high chair, include them in family mealtimes. You may need to feed them first, but you can give some finger foods on their tray so they’re involved in eating with everyone else. Let them hold a spare spoon while you’re feeding.

• Start with helping your child put their hand on yours as you take the spoon up to their mouth. They’ll open their mouth as they anticipate the spoon getting closer. Say ‘Open your mouth’ as it gets close.

• Once they’re doing this happily, sit behind your child and encourage them to hold the right end of a spoon and dip it into a bowl of sticky food. Guide the spoon up to their mouth and then let them take the final step and try and put it into their mouth. This is backward chaining. See the General overview of development booklet: Strategies for supporting learning to find out more. Give gentle guidance if your child has difficulty getting it into their mouth. Foods like baby rice or mashed potato work well, as some will stick to the spoon even if it’s the wrong way up.

• Allow your child to explore food with their fingers if they want to and name/describe the foods.

• Name the different meals - breakfast, lunch, tea - just before you start having them at different times of the day

• Ask your health visitor about introducing new foods and textures.
Dressing

- Extend participation in dressing by putting your arm down the sleeve and gently drawing your child’s arm down towards you, to indicate what you want them to do. Say ‘Push your arm in’. Repeat this, but pause to give your child time to react.

- Name body parts (‘Here’s your leg’) and extend this to actions by saying ‘Bend your leg’ as you gently bend a leg to go it into trousers, or ‘Push your arm’ as you put an arm into a sleeve.

- Turn dressing activities into a game, by calling ‘boo’ up the sleeve to encourage the child to place their arms in clothing. Say ‘Where’s the wiggly worm?’ as a foot is pushed down into trousers.

- Use the **backward chaining** technique to continue work on skills to take clothes off. This means that you do all but the last step to begin with, and expect your child to complete the task. Gradually increase the number of steps they have to do, e.g. 1) pull sock off toes, 2) pull sock off length of foot to heel, 3) pull sock from over heel. Expect your child to do a little more each time. Start with activities that can be done when sitting on a stable base, such as the floor.

Nappy changing

- When changing nappies, tell your child if they’ve passed urine or had a bowel motion so that by the time you’re toilet training they’ll know what you’re asking him to do. Use simple words which you and family members or carers are all comfortable with – for example, wee and poo.

Bathing

- Bath time can be used to develop a range of hand skills, so be inventive and give your child a variety of safe cups, bowls, bottles, watering cans etc to play with. There are lots of commercially produced toys for bath play that involve pouring, floating etc. Give your child one or two at each bath time, so that they can work out what they’re doing.

- Coloured bubble bath can also be used for children with sufficient vision.

Bedtime

- As your child begins to get more active and mobile and starts to cut out morning naps, there are more opportunities to physically tire them out, so that a longer period of unbroken sleep is required at night. Longer walks and fresh air are particularly helpful.

- Maintain consistent bedtime routines involving bath, night clothes, drink, cuddles and songs and then put children into their own cot for sleep.
Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent and others
• Give plenty of attention to positive appropriate behaviours.

Showing and understanding feelings (Social emotional expression)
• Your child may start to resist your direction and appear defiant. This is part of the natural growth of independence at this stage. (See Behaviour and self–regulation, overleaf for ideas on how to handle this.)

• Notice what gives your child particular delight and pleasure and use this action or thing to motivate and act as reinforcement for something else that needs to be done first. For example, ‘Get dressed, then you can play on your swing’. Make sure that the reinforcement follows immediately after the activity that needs to be done.

• Clap, praise and show your pleasure when your child does something pleasing.

Showing attachment to parent and familiar others
• Encourage short (e.g. half-hour) periods of independent play within a ‘safe’ play area a number of times a day, e.g. in a play pen with familiar and stimulating toys. Inform your child where you are, what you are doing, and then leave them to play independently.

• If your child is now mobile, let them follow you around or if left briefly in a room, tell them where you are, what you are doing, and reassure them verbally until you return.

• In a strange place or with strangers, keep reassuring your child that you’re near by so that they can play securely. They may want to be in physical proximity so they can reach out and feel or see you regularly. As they get more confident, they’ll probably start moving a bit further away or start approaching the strangers.

• Continue to give your child positive experiences of separation at home or in another home with familiar carers. Keep the care-taking routines consistent and make sure that your child has their favourite toys with them and that the carer knows about your child’s vision needs.
Behaviour and self-regulation

- This is the stage when children want to do things independently and can get very frustrated and angry if thwarted. It’s an important stage in developing independence, drive and motivation. But it can also make your child very self-directing and difficult to guide and show new things and behaviours.

- Decide on what are the essential boundaries and limits – eg dinner routine, dressing and bedtime routine, going out behaviours, and ensure that your child has to fit in with these routines and expectations even if they protest.

- Try and keep conflict down to the minimum. Give positive instructions of what needs to be done and give encouragement and praise, rather than saying ‘No’ and trying to stop behaviours.

- If you have to say ‘No’, say it firmly and then move on to distracting your child with a new activity.

Social interaction

Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)

- Play ‘Peek a boo’, by putting a cloth over your child’s head and helping them to remove it in a joint game.

- Continue with simple turn-taking games, eg rolling a ball (with a bell inside or brightly coloured) between adult and child. You can now extend this to a three-way turn, eg pushing the ball to a sister, then to you and then back to your child. Choose the distance according to your child’s visual level.

- In your action games and songs with your child watch for them to start the game by doing the actions and waiting to give them the chance to ask for the game again at the end of the game. They may also participate more actively doing some of the actions when they hear the appropriate phrases.

Developing early social skill

- Encourage family members and visitors to always greet your child in the same way. Show your child how to wave ‘Bye’.

- When you ask your child to give you something say ‘Ta’ or ‘Thank you’ to model this for them and encourage your child to say ‘Ta’ or ‘Thank you’ when they take something from you.

- Gently turn your child’s face towards you when you’re talking to them.
Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent and others

• Your child may enjoy being the centre of attention and do actions or say things that get attention and laughter from adults. Try not to encourage ‘inappropriate’ behaviours or rote learning ‘party pieces’ (eg counting 1, 2, 3, or singing same nursery rhyme) too much, as they may become a habit.

• If your child hits or pushes another child or adult, say firmly ‘No, that hurts (name)’ and move them on to a different activity. It’s advisable not to prohibit or make too much of this, or your child might start doing this to get attention.

Showing and understanding feelings (Social emotional expression)

• Make clear which toys ‘belong’ to your child and respect their feeling of possession. Don’t expect them to be able to share them at this stage, unless they wish to. Help other children, including brothers and sisters, to understand this.

Showing attachment to parent and familiar others

• Think of new games to encourage your child to ‘find Mum and Dad’. This encourages them to move and explore and lets them know that you’re still available even though out of physical contact or sight.

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Behaviour and self-regulation

• If your child has a temper tantrum, hold them calmly or keep them in a safe place (eg in a cot) while you stay close by and calmly reassure them until they recover. Don’t give any extra input except calming behaviour. If tantrums are very intense and frequent and it’s difficult to calm your child, see the Getting Stuck? booklet for further ideas.

Social interaction

Joining in social interaction (games and rhymes)

• Join in with the games your child initiates.

• Games that involve anticipation and waiting to begin, eg ‘ready, steady, go’ are fun and further develop understanding of playing together.

• Show your child how to do the same thing as you do in a game that you regularly play together – this will first be in regular action rhymes or simply making a tune on the xylophone with the beater (‘Mum do it first – like this. Now (child) do it, like this.’)

Developing early social skills

• Say clearly and consistently ‘Hello/Hi’ when you come in from outside or ‘Bye’ when you’re going. Encourage other social greeting or departure phrases like ‘Good morning’, ‘Good night’.
Listening and attending

• Playing ‘ready, steady, go’ games and anticipation games is fun and will help your child develop their listening and waiting skills.

• During rhyme or simple song games, leave gaps, eg at the end of each line, giving your child a chance to fill in the missing word.

• Continue telling your child a simple story each night before bedtime. Make it personal, by telling a story about what your child did that day – ‘In the morning, you went to the shops with daddy. You bought some bananas’. You can add a few objects in the story too – ‘We went to a shop to buy some shoes’ (and then let them hold the new shoes).

• Start to read simple story books with rhyme and repetition to your child. Children start to have their favourites and want to hear the same one over and over. Use books that have texture or flaps and bright colours and shiny bits so your child can be actively involved in the story. If they show visual interest, talk about the features that attract them.

• When reading a story, add in sounds like the splash of water, or the sound of animals or vehicles like a plane, into the story.

• Continue to wait until you have your child’s full attention before you try and talk to them, especially if they’re busy doing or playing with something.

• Continue to use fading (that is, shifting attention to a new toy or activity before removing an existing toy/activity that is being done).

Understanding meaning

Recognising what objects are for

• Show your child how to use everyday objects on family members, eg ‘Brush mummy’s hair’, ‘Give Gran a drink’.

• Show them how to use everyday objects combined together, eg mix a spoon around in a cup or pretend to pour juice from a jug into a cup. Do this during the real life activity and also during pretend play (see Stage 3 Play and learning).
Understanding words

- Continue to name and show your child parts of their body and encourage them to find them on you, eg ‘Where’s Mum’s nose?’

- Name familiar objects that your child uses often, eg favourite toy, bib, cup, brush, shoe, hat, cup. Name it when they start to use it or play with it or look at it.

- Name familiar people in your child’s life when they are approaching and joining them.

- Ask ‘Where’s Mummy?’ ‘Where’s (brother’s name)’ and see if they can find them in the room. This is a good game for encouraging mobility round the room, too.

- Ask your child to ‘Give me (or Give Robert) …the spoon’. First hold out an open hand gesture (palm up) close to your child so that they can feel it under their hand or see it close by. Help them to release the object and then say ‘Ta’ or ‘Thank you’. Do this regularly, until your child learns to ‘give’ when prompted verbally. Wait for the right moment or they may not want to give you the object!

- Talk to your child about what they’re doing, what they’re interested in or what you’re doing to them in simple, clear language – for example, ‘Brush your hair’, ‘Where’s your foot?’ Push your arm in’, ‘Go in the car’. The language you use about what your child is experiencing will be the most relevant.

- Keep your sentences short, with emphasis on the key words eg, ‘Ready, sit down’, ‘There’s the cat’, ‘Tick tock, that’s the clock’.

- Sit close by (in front or towards the side) when you’re talking to your child.
Communication

Joint attention to toys/objects/events

- Watch and think about your child’s behaviour and follow their lead and focus of attention in play (they may reach or touch or be listening intently to a particular sound. Children with sufficient vision may look or point).

- Notice the different ways your child shows what they’re interested in and how they try to draw your attention to what they’re playing with, eg making vocal sounds or lifting up the toy. Talk about what your child is showing interest in. Say ‘That goes bang, bang.’

- Encourage your child to show you the toy they’re playing with – ‘Oh, what have you got – can mummy hold it?’ Guide your child’s hand so that they hold up the toy to you. Talk about it, manipulate it, look at it briefly and then pass it back. Only do this when your child is not too engrossed, otherwise they’ll get frustrated by your interruption.

- If your child’s vision is at the V3, V4 level, model pointing at objects that you want to show to them. Sit close to your child and make sure that the object is within your child’s vision. Make a clear movement as you point and point clearly at the object and talk about the object – ‘Look! There’s the cup.’ (Tap your finger on it too if you need to get your child’s attention.) Painted fingernails help win visual attention!

- Continue with the ideas for shared discovery (Card 6) when introducing your child to a new toy or joining them when they’re doing something interesting. These show your child that you’re interested in and attending to the same thing.

Communicating needs

- Watch and see how your child is developing different gestures or actions to let you know what they want. You can help this, by saying what you think your child means, eg when your child does a gesture related to a favourite nursery song say ‘Oh, you want to sing ‘Twinkle, twinkle little star?’.

Showing preferences

- When you offer your child a choice say ‘Yes, you want this one’. Or, if they don’t want something, say, ‘No you don’t want it’. Show your child how to nod or shake their head to say ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. See also Communication, language and meaning, Stage 2, Card 6. Nod and shake your head close to your child so they can see your movements (V3).
Expressive language

Vocalisation: linking words to meaning

• Keep your sentences short, with emphasis on the key words.

• Continue to use the familiar and repeated phrases consistently with particular activities, routines, objects and events.

• Sit close to your child while they play, or bring your face very close so that they can see you. Use the ideas for Joint attention on Card 5 and talk about what your child is doing and about what they’re experiencing – ‘The bell jingles’ as they shake some bells, ‘The car goes ‘brm’, as you watch them push a car along. This keeps language linked to direct experience and is more meaningful for young children.

First words

• If your child makes any attempt to say a word in the appropriate situation, eg ‘ba’ (ball), immediately show pleasure and say ‘Ball – it’s a ball’. If it’s an action word or request – ‘Up’, then immediately repeat the word and do the actions or request.

• At this stage, your child may begin to imitate what you say. This may be a single word or a short phrase. Show your delight and repeat what they’ve said clearly for them. Then link this word or phrase to talking about and showing them what’s going on in the ‘here and now’.
Listening and attending

- Continue to tell your child a story at bedtime each day, making up a short story about what your child really did that day (Stage 2, Card 6). Continue to use repetition of certain lines. You can add in sounds like the sounds of animals, wind or water splashing and vehicles. This kind of story will be the most meaningful at this stage.

- Read simple stories including books with rhyme, expressive sounds and repetition to your child. It’s helpful to find ones that use words and concepts that are already in or developing in their own vocabulary and understanding. Keep using an expressive and playful voice.

- When sharing simple repetitive stories, give your child plenty of time to join in. These can be toddler stories which have expressive sounds, eg ‘Spot the dog went woof woof…’ Take turns in rhyme games and stories – pause and give your child a chance to take a vocal or action turn.

- Offer your child choices about which book they want to read. Put a different texture label on the front of each one to help them choose.
Understanding meaning

Recognising what objects are for (pretend play)

- Help your child to develop their pretend play with everyday objects, e.g. stirring a spoon in a cup and giving you a cup of tea.

- Introduce a first doll that is real baby size and has clear body and facial features. Show your child the different body parts and hair – ‘baby’s hair’, ‘baby’s nose’ and let them feel and/or look at the different body parts. Demonstrate giving the doll a cuddle, ‘Ahh!’ and a kiss. Encourage your child to join in with playing with the doll, e.g. ‘Brush baby’s hair’ or ‘Give baby a cuddle’. If your child shows no interest, leave it a while and then try again later.

- Give your child opportunities to experience every day activities, e.g. sweeping the floor and washing the dishes.

Understanding words

- Talk to your child about what they’re doing or what you’re doing to them in simple, clear language. Remember the words you use about what your child is experiencing will be the most meaningful.

- Give simple instructions like ‘Put it in the bin’, ‘Find your shoes’, ‘Give it to me’.

- Ask simple questions about things in the present, like ‘Where’s Dad?’, ‘Where’s your bowl?’, ‘Do you want juice?’

- Now that your child is beginning to understand more words, talk more about what you’re doing and what’s going on around you – show your child what you’re doing as you talk about it. Keep the language simple, though.
Card 8 · Communication, language and meaning

Communication

**Joint attention to toys/objects/events**

- Continue to talk about what your child is doing and let them know you’re paying attention to what they’re doing. This can continue to be done by approaching them, giving a light touch on the arm and/or sitting close and looking.

- Encourage your child to hold up objects to show you what they’re playing with and show that you’re interested. Sit close and say ‘Show me what you’ve got there!’ Talk about it when they lift it up (and take a brief turn if they let you). If your child has sufficient vision, make sure that you sit close enough for them to see your face and raise the toy so that it is within your child’s vision.

- Share your feelings or attitudes about something – eg ‘Phew, that’s a bit smelly’, ‘Mmm – that’s nice’, ‘Ouch – that’s cold’. Make clear facial expressions too, if your child can see them.

- If your child’s vision is at the V3, V4 level, come close (less than 30 cm away) and when they look at your face while playing with a toy, look at them, then look at the toy and talk about what they’re doing with it. This begins to tell your child that you’re watching what they’re doing.

- If your child is stuck when doing something, ask ‘Mummy/Daddy help?’ and then show them that you’re helping (‘Mum/Dad’s helping’). This will help them understand they can ask for help and ask for you to join in with their play.

**Communicating needs**

- Continue to respond to your child’s actions, gestures or sounds to encourage their communication.

- Ask your child if they want a drink or food – pause and wait for them to show what they want – they may reach but wait a little for a vocalisation and repeat the correct word after them, eg your child says ‘ju’ – say ‘Juice, here it is’.

**Showing preferences**

- Continue to offer your child a choice, eg between two favourite toys to play with or two foods and pause to wait for them to show what they want, even if at first this is just a vocal sound and a reach.

- Give your child the chance to say ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ after you ask ‘Do you want…?’
Expressive language

- Rephrase or recast your child’s words or sounds that are pronounced incorrectly, by repeating the word in your response, pronounced in the correct way, eg ‘gog’ for dog say – ‘Dog – yes, dog! Dog is furry’. Show pleasure at any attempts.

- Comment and expand on what your child says to you, so they know you’re listening and taking part in the conversation. If your child says ‘ball?’, you notice it’s rolled away and say ‘Do you want your ball? Here’s the ball’ or your child says ‘Ca’ when the cat comes into the room – say ‘Cat, yes – here he is, the cat’s come in’.

- Children like to practise saying words that they’ve learned. Your child may have a favourite phrase like ‘goodgirl’, ‘allgone’ which they say frequently. When they repeat something that you say or something you said earlier, recast it to link it to the ‘here and now’, so it has clear meaning. Your child may say ‘night night’ in the daytime, so you could say ‘Night night – when we go to bed. It’s dinner time now’. 
Making connections

Learning about sound

• Continue with sound localisation activities. Try doing the same activity with a sound-making toy above the child’s head within arm’s reach. Make the sound and see if they can find the toy. Remember to take their hand up to the toy if you need to guide them.

For children at level V1 or V2, it’s important to go on doing sound localising games – finding the sound-making object on left and right side of child, at or above or below ear level, throughout the early years. Children can lose this ability to localise sound if it isn’t practised.

• Call your child to find you or place a favoured music toy in different positions in the room. Start at about two metres and then increase to about three metres from the child. When they reach you or the toy, reward them with a cuddle. This is also a good game for increasing mobility (see Movement and mobility).

Object permanence

• Let your child play with a toy, then while they’re reaching out for it, quickly cover it with a cloth. Let your child pull the cloth off to find the toy.

• Help your child to find a toy when it’s rolled a little out of reach – rattle the toy and encourage your child to reach further to get it, sliding or patting their hand across the floor or surface until they find it. Encourage them to look for it if it is within vision distance.

Cause and effect

• Show your child how to manipulate a more complex cause-effect toy – for example, a music box that requires opening and closing a hinged lid, a jack in the box that has a button to press before jack pops out (though make sure that jack doesn’t pop out and hit their face if they’re peering over the lid looking for jack).
Understanding how objects relate to each other

- Children with very limited vision may need your help to get interested in toys which don’t produce a sound reward and at first they may only enjoy these activities when played with you and when being actively shown how the toys work.

- Toys which help to develop the concept of separating parts include: pulling a ring off stacking rings on a rod, taking a piece with a knob out of a formboard, taking a beaker out of another stacking beaker or pulling two connected pieces apart, eg large joining bricks. Children with V1, V2, may find it more interesting to take a lid off a saucepan, take a treat out of a pot or biscuit out of a tin, cuddly toy out of a box, or crisps out of a packet.

- Use smaller containers which your child has to put their hand into to remove an object, eg a biscuit from a narrow biscuit tin.

- Help your child to find toys in a cloth bag or to explore your handbag (or an old one!) (Check the contents are safe.)

- Help your child to learn to put something inside a container – start with a shiny biscuit tin (or metal tray with sides) which will make a noise when something like keys or a rattle is dropped inside. Then gradually introduce smaller containers like a smaller tin or toy bucket or saucepan and encourage your child to put something inside the container (and then take it out again if they wish). They may need a bit of help at the beginning to organise their release of the object from their hand.

- Have a toy box with a number of favourite toys and help your child to find them, take them out and return them after play, eg take bath toys from a large container and put them back at the end of bath time.
Using hands

**Learning through touch: responding to different textures**

- During everyday activities, introduce your child to different materials that have a variety of textures, eg wooden and metal spoons, different brushes of different family members.

- Let your child feel different clothes on your body as you name them. ‘Today Mum’s wearing a tee shirt’. ‘Joan’s got her furry jacket on’, ‘Gran’s got her woolly jumper on’.

- Encourage stroking, under supervision, of family or friends’ pets. Talk about the cat or dog.

- Encourage your child to play with bubbles and shampoo gel in the bath and then rub the shampoo into their hair.

Remember to forewarn when you’re introducing a new texture or object to your child. For children at level V1 or V2, tell them what it is, show it and/or introduce it on the back of the fingers. Then pause, and let them take it over the side of the fingers into the palm. If your child doesn’t want to feel it, take it away and then introduce it again in a little while.

Exploring

- Children enjoy exploring all kinds of books – the local library is a good place to find different cloth and cardboard books which are easiest for your child to handle and learn to turn the pages. They’ll also enjoy ‘lift the flap’ books. You can buy some picture books and add textures on different pages or under the flaps to go with the story, eg stick a furry piece to the page for ‘doggy’.

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Co-ordinating hands and fingers

- Continue to find toys for your child with more complex ways to make them work – needing more strength and co-ordination with their fingers, eg pulling a string, turning a stiffer knob or pressing individual buttons.

- Toys for putting fingers in small holes will encourage individual finger use, eg a pop up block with round slots and pegs.

- Introduce activities which encourage your child to use their fingers, eg taking small pegs from a board, getting a snack like raisins from inside a packet.

- Put a number of small objects in a bag or container and encourage them to feel inside and pull toys out.

- Encourage your child to pick up smaller objects, so that they develop their pincer grip (thumb and index finger).

Release object from grasp

- See activities: Understanding how objects relate to each other (item 5).
Stage 3 · Activity card

Card 8 · Play and learning

At this stage, your child may sit at a small table and chair for short periods of structured play with you or their teacher – it’s helpful if the table is not too large and has a low ridge round the surface.

Making connections

Learning about sound

• Call your child from a room next to the one that they’re in and see if they can find you. Keep calling them until they come to you. You can motivate them by saying you have a biscuit or juice (or a favourite game) for them.

Object permanence

• Encourage your child to search for a toy that has rolled out of reach on the floor. If they have difficulty, briefly rattle the toy and encourage them to go on searching. Take them to the toy (don’t bring the toy to them) if they still can’t find it. Encourage visual searching (V3, V4).

• When more mobile, help your child to find toys that they have to move towards to find – rattle the toy, or start the music and encourage your child to move towards it.

• (V1, V2) When playing on a table or in a child chair/tray – show your child how to move their hand with wider searching across the surface to find the toy they have lost.

Cause and effect

• Give your child toys where they have to persist to get a result, eg a music box where they have to press several times before the music starts or where they have to wait before starting again.

Understanding how objects relate to each other

• Give your child a wider range of boxes/containers with lids and encourage them to explore the contents – containers with lids with knobs or handles are the easiest to explore.

• Building activities may begin to interest your child – show them how to stack one object on top of another – putting toys on a small table is a good start.
Understanding how objects relate to each other (continued)

- Stack up two big bricks – help your child to put one on top of the other. Then show them how to knock it down on the table or floor, so they make a bit of a noise. Try this again. You can take turns knocking it down.

- Give your child opportunities to practise putting objects back in as part of your everyday activities, eg putting cups in the sink, toys in the play box, paper in the bin, clothes in the washing basket, bath toys in the crate after bath time.

Using hands

Learning through touch: responding to different textures

- When you’re outside, you can start to find things together – a stone, a leaf, a flower, a feather. Let them smell and feel them and tell them what it is. They’ll start to recognise different things that are found outdoors and also get used to feeling their different textures and experiencing their different sensations.

- Increase the range of books with different textures to feel that go with the story (eg furry, rough, shiny surfaces).

- When playing with small toys, help your child to find the small parts eg on a toy car, show them the wheels or a car door that opens.

- Give your child a ‘rummage’ box with paper and bubble wrap inside. Let them enjoy crumpling and tearing the paper and wrap. It’s a good idea to keep this activity linked to the ‘rummage’ box, so they don’t extend the fun of tearing to books!

Co-ordinating hands and fingers

- Exploring different containers and lids will help your child develop co-ordination of their hands and fingers.

- A ‘squeezy bottle’ used in the bath or garden to squirt will help to use two hands together and develop strength in fingers.

- Show your child how to dip something into a pot, eg a cracker into cream cheese, toast into jam, a piece of fruit into a yoghurt pot.

Release object from grasp

- Start to introduce a simple posting activity, eg dropping a ball into a shoe box with a large hole.
Position in space/body awareness

• Strengthen understanding of positional words such as ‘up’ and ‘down’, and ‘in’ and ‘out’ in play activities. You can link this to body parts, eg action rhyme songs like ‘Simon says put your hands up’.

Environmental exploration/orientation

• The room will seem different from a standing position, so show your child around again and identify any obstacles such as tables that could be hazardous (eg head height).

• Walk your child around the house, rather than carrying them, so that they begin to get an idea of its layout. Although they may have already been crawling, layout and features are different from a walking position. Name each room and show them the features in them and tell your child each time you take them to another room.

• Children often love sitting in an enclosed space at this stage, eg in a washing basket or box – they can explore the space and find toys that are near them.

• Lift your child up and let them feel or look at things above their head – the doorframe, high cupboards, the ceiling. This can be done alongside learning to find a sound source above their head (See also Play and learning, Learning about sound).

Extending movement/co-ordination

Sitting

• Try sitting your child at a low table to eat snacks or for tabletop games. A chair with arms gives more support at first.
Walking

- Demonstrate walking by standing your child on your feet while walking for a few steps.

- Encourage walking forward with support, by facing your child, holding both hands (holding their arms straight in front at their shoulder level) and gently pulling them forward with gentle pressure on one side at a time alternating from side to side. Call your child to you as you do this and reward them with a cuddle when they reach you.

- A sturdy and safe push along toy could be used as an alternate form of support.

- As balance improves, support holding just one hand and as confidence grows gradually release your grip a step or two away from some form of support to encourage the first independent steps.

- Encourage independent walking one step at a time by calling your child towards you. Extend the distance as balance improves, but avoid moving backwards as your child moves towards you. This may confuse their developing sense of spatial distance and damage confidence.

- When walking outside, your child may initially hold a hand or their pushchair on a level surface. Gradually extend experiences of different surfaces and increase stamina by regular short walks.

- When your child is confident enough to walk in an open space rather than around furniture, remind them of where things are by revisiting objects or features in familiar rooms.

Managing stairs

- Support your child as they begin to explore steps and stairs. Crawling up on all fours is often the first stage. Encourage them to crawl up a few stairs with supervision to develop skills and confidence.
Body awareness/position in space

- Begin to help your child to develop some sense of distance from the floor by climbing games. Help your child to climb down to the floor from a bed or the sofa. This links with activities below on managing stairs.

Environmental exploration/orientation

- Draw your child’s attention to room features, e.g. kitchen – listen to the washing machine, bathroom – smell the nice bubble bath, sitting room – feel the soft rug, look at the pretty plant etc.

- Encourage walking barefoot on different surfaces in the home (e.g. on rugs, carpets, tiles, wood, vinyl) and outside in a safe environment (e.g. on grass, paving and sand).

Some children with limited vision are very wary of walking on ‘high sensitivity’ surfaces like grass or sand. Start by sitting outside on a rug, having a fun time outside with toys or a snack. Let them get more confident in moving off the rug and exploring the grass or sand. Let them smell and feel it with hands or feet or under other parts of the body. Tell them what it is – it’s ‘grass in the garden’, ‘sand in the sand pit’ or ‘sand on the beach’.

Find things to play with in the garden or sandpit, with sandals on if preferred, so that your child gets to enjoy these environments.
Extending movement and co-ordination

**Keep walking**

- Take your child out walking every day to improve their muscle tone, co-ordination and stamina.
- Provide opportunities to walk on gently sloping and undulating ground.
- Introduce your child to playground equipment like seesaws, rocking toys, slides etc. Physical support will still be required to model how they are used and to keep your child safe.
- Appropriate toddler soft-play facilities can help to build confidence in independent movement and develop skills.
- Encourage your child to follow simple one step directions to move their body, eg games such as ‘If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands/stamp your feet/shake your head etc’.

**Managing stairs**

- Continue to support your child in exploring steps and stairs. Encourage them to crawl up with supervision; this is very good for building stamina and co-ordination and helps develop some concept of depth.
- Show your child a safe way of getting down steps or stairs backwards, facing the stairs and feet and bottom first. Allow them to practise this regularly, with your support. Although safety gates are used to discourage unsupervised exploration it’s important to show how this can be done safely, as soon as your child can move independently.
Stage 3 · Activity card

Card 7 · Towards independent self-care

Feeding/eating

• Encourage your child to fit in with eating routines, eg sit at a small table when told ‘snack time’ or move towards high chair when told ‘tea-time’. When they’re hungry they’ll start to indicate this verbally or through actions (rather than just crying) so you’ll know what they want.

• Sit behind your child and guide their arm to use a spoon to scoop food. A bowl with deep vertical sides helps to give an edge to push the food against and scoop. Describe what you’re doing – dip, push, and scoop. Food with a soft, firm texture (not too runny or solid) often works best at this stage. Usually, it’s best to do the first few spoons yourself if your child is very hungry to avoid frustration, and then encourage use of the spoon while your child is still quite hungry. A favourite food also encourages the use of a spoon.

• Introduce a spouted cup with just one handle. Only part fill it, so it’s not too heavy. Give some support and guidance initially but gradually withdraw. Continue to encourage your child to pick up and put down the cup onto a table or tray.

• Continue to introduce a range of textured and lumpy foods.

• Extend the range of finger foods to include small pieces to encourage use of the thumb and index finger (pincer grip).

Dressing

• Continue to use the backward or reverse chaining approach (see Card 6) to undressing and extend this to other activities, eg removing open shoes. Encourage good habits from the start and show where shoes are kept, so they can be found when they’re needed later.

• Encourage active involvement in dressing and undressing by expecting your child to push their arm down the sleeve, or take a leg out of trousers when asked. Give lots of encouragement but give them time to think about it and react. If not successful, demonstrate what you want to happen and try again each time you dress.

• Dressing up in larger clothes can be fun and is easier for dressing. Hats are often the first item of clothing children can put on unaided.
Nappy changing
• Continue to tell your child what they’ve done (poo, wee or other words your family uses) when changing nappies to get them used to the language.
• Allow them to hold and play with clean wipes while you’re cleaning and explain what they’re for, to introduce the idea.

Washing and bathing
• Encourage your child’s involvement in washing hands before and after meals or messy play, using a hand basin, rather than wiping with a cloth.
• Show your child how to rub hands with soap to get them clean and then how to rinse and dry them afterwards. It will be some time before children master this skill, but as they may not be able to see others doing this, they need lots of concrete experience to remind them of what’s involved.
• Show your child how to use a sponge or washcloth to wash body parts themselves, eg legs, arms and tummy, in the bath.

Bedtime
• Your child may by now have a favourite cuddly toy that they like to take to bed. Awakening to the feel or smell of a favourite toy or blanket gives a sense of security, although its loss or removal can be distressing so try to have several alternatives or replicas.
• Continue with your bedtime routine to provide an atmosphere of calm and security, although some new elements can be introduced one at a time, eg a new song.
Feeding/eating

- Continue to give lots of practice with a spoon. You may still need to model this from behind. This will be rather a messy time, but it’s important that your child is not discouraged from trying by any family anxiety over mess. (A plastic mat on the floor is a good idea!)

- Encourage your child to feed you or other carers with a spoon and give lots of praise.

- Explain what’s happening at meal times, eg ‘I’m cutting your potatoes’, ‘Daddy’s pouring the juice’ so your child can link the sound of what you’re doing with its meaning. They can also be helped to feel or watch your actions so that they know what you’re doing.

- When emptying the shopping or preparing food for dinner at home, let your child feel, smell and/or look at some food as you name it, eg apple, banana, bread, carrot. When shopping, let them feel and smell and/or look at some unwrapped food, eg fruit, bread, before you place it in the trolley and tell them what it is.

- Use a fork to feed solid or chunks of food and give your child a spare one to play with during feeding.

- Give some finger foods in open topped packets for your child to pick out.

Dressing

- Apply the backward/reverse chaining approach to removing a coat or shirt. Remove all but one sleeve and show how to pull it off. Give lots of opportunities to practise, as part of daily routine and extend to the second sleeve when ready. This can be done sitting or standing, if balance is good. Try this with old adult shirts, as they provide more room for manoeuvring.

- Encourage good habits by showing your child where their coat should be hung up, so it can be found again when it’s next needed.

- Extend dressing up activities to putting on large shoes, but be supportive if they try walking in them.

- Continue to encourage participation in dressing. Talk about what you’re going to do, demonstrate and then ask your child to try. Let them play with larger clothes.
Using the toilet

- Take your child with you when you go to the bathroom and tell them what you’ve done, so they realise everyone does this.

- Keep a potty (brightly coloured, if sufficient vision to see) in the bathroom and allow your child to explore it. Talk to them about what it’s for.

Washing and bathing

- Extend naming of body parts during washing to include less obvious features such as toes, back, neck, chin etc.

- Demonstrate how to brush hair and encourage your child to brush yours as well.

- Take your child to the bathroom with you when you clean your teeth and give them a brush with a small amount of paste on it so you can do this together. Talk about what you are doing (and let them feel or watch you doing it to yourself) and the noise it makes. If they put the brush in their mouth, help them to give a gentle brush. Use forewarning when you put the brush in their mouth.

Bedtime

- Bedtime is an ideal opportunity for story telling – making up stories about the child’s day or some event they’ve just experienced, or beginning to read very simple bedtime stories. See also Communication, language and meaning – Listening and attending.

- Now your child may be anticipating and looking forward to bedtime, with its special routine, so involve them in finding pyjamas, choosing songs, books or bedtime toys.
Developing relationships

Learning about self and parent and others

• If your child is eating from a bag of crisps or bowl of grapes etc, ask them to share a crisp or grape with you or another child. Show them how to hold out the bowl to offer food.

• Show your child ‘Nanna’s shoes’ or ‘Mummy’s hat’ and compare them with your child’s shoes, hats etc, so that they learn about possessions. They can have fun dressing up in different family member’s clothes too.

• Later your child will need to learn that they have to respect other people’s possessions and that they can’t play with a brother or sister’s special toy without asking them.

• Your child could have a box that’s only for their special toys that no one else is allowed to use. This helps them to find and feel more secure about their own possessions.

• Encourage your child to talk about themselves by name or ‘I’, by modelling in turn-taking game. Say ‘Mummy has it. I have it.’ Then giving object to child saying ‘I give it to you. (Child’s name) has it – you’ve got it.’

• Talk about the behaviour and intentions of other people in the family or a familiar child who’s visiting so that your child gets more curious and interested and understanding of what others are doing, eg ‘Dan wants to play with the garage’.
Showing and understanding feelings (Social emotional expression)

• Introduce simple words for ‘feelings’ or ‘mental states’ like ‘happy’, ‘sad’, ‘cross’, ‘hurt’, ‘scared’, into conversation to talk about your child’s or someone else’s feelings. This helps your child to start learning about words that express feelings and about how they feel themselves, eg ‘Going to the park makes you happy’, ‘That loud noise was a bit scary but it’s only the…’

• If another child is hurt or upset, talk about how that child is feeling and help your child to console them, by stroking their arm or cuddling them.

Showing attachment to parent and familiar others

• Follow the guidelines given earlier on Cards 9 and 10 for Social and emotional development to help staged separation from you and from other familiar carers outside the home. Your child may begin to be more independent at home for longer periods and settle more quickly into a pre-school or unfamiliar environment.

• Help your child develop a secure relationship with a care giver outside the home, such as a nursery key worker. It’s helpful to remember that young children with limited vision are often developmentally behind other children of the same age, so greater support in terms of a one-to-one secure key relationship may be needed in the pre-school setting. All carers will need to be regularly informed about your child’s current vision needs.

• Let your child show affection and give cuddles (with prompting from you if needed) to their brothers or sisters or to a familiar friend.
Developing relationships

Behaviour and self-regulation

• Your child may be expressing their mind more clearly. Listen to and help them to express preferences and intentions and where appropriate, respect their wishes.

• Keep firm limits and boundaries and stay in control of routines – this gives your child secure and predictable routines and a good understanding of your expectations, which is important at this stage.

• Keep to everyday routines and expectations firmly if your child tries to refuse. Try starting to negotiate or following less preferred activities with a rewarding activity. Say ‘After your bath, we’ll have story time’ or ‘After shopping, we’ll go to park’, ‘Wait while I do the washing, then I’ll come and play’.

• Continue to give positive attention to and praise appropriate behaviours. Try not to ‘reward’ inappropriate or negative behaviours with attention.
Social interaction

Joining in social interaction

• Continue with a quiet time each day when you sit together for story-telling with books.

• Set up a longer joint pretend play with appropriate props and help your child carry out the pretend game, eg bathing a doll, having a tea-party.

• At home or in pre-school give your child the opportunity to play near other children, eg at a water table or with toys on the floor or at a table.

• Continue to give your child (and brothers and sisters and familiar friends) safe areas to have fun running around together and clambering over cushions etc.

• Help your child to begin to start play with another child, eg model how to ask for a toy or to join in with a simple game.

• Help your child to play with a toy with another child, taking turns, eg rolling ball back and forth, manipulating a cause and effect toy. Make sure that the other child takes turns but doesn’t take over the game. Once you’ve done a little structuring, leave them alone together and see if some spontaneous play interaction takes off. A slightly older other child is often helpful at this stage.

• Provide scaffold to help attempts at interacting with another child – giving just enough support and assistance to help it happen, but not taking over and stepping back if the children can carry on without your help.

Showing knowledge of social scripts

• During everyday routines, ask your child to tell you what happens next in the sequence and what object(s) you need to find next, etc, so that they can show you their knowledge of everyday activities and the order of events.

• Encourage active helping with everyday routines, eg squeezing toothpaste on a toothbrush, cleaning self in bath with bubble soap, pouring cereal into breakfast bowl, tidying up toys at end of the day.

Developing early social skills

• Be consistent in using and expecting attempts at saying ‘Please’ and ‘Thank you’ (or ‘Ta’).
Stage 5 · Activity card

Card 11 · Communication, language and meaning

Listening and attending

- Try making a deliberate mistake when reading a familiar book and see if your child corrects you.
- Continue to introduce books with large, bright coloured pictures (V3 – only the ones with better vision, V4). See the Record of developing vision to choose appropriate pictures. Talk about the pictures and let your child look at them as you tell the story. See if they can recognise and talk about the pictures too.
- Another idea is to have a bag with a few objects that go with the story (V1, V2, V3). This is often called a ‘bag book’ because the objects that go with the book are kept in a bag. You can make your own bag books, though ones for older children can also be bought commercially. If it’s a story about a girl who lost her hat, have a hat in the bag ready to take out at the right time in the story. Perhaps a bird came down and took the hat, so have a toy bird in the bag ready to take out.
- Make sure you have your child’s attention before talking to or giving an instruction. If they’re busy doing something, you may need to talk to them and give a physical prompt on their arm or a visual cue until they switch attention to you.
- Give your child some warning before changing activity. Say ‘When this song finishes we’re going out’.
- If you’re talking to someone else, ask your child to ‘Wait a minute, I’m talking’ and finish talking (keep it short at this stage!) and then stop and reply to your child.

Understanding meaning

- If going to have an unfamiliar experience, talk about it before you go – for example, eg if going to a farm, talk about the kind of animals you’ll see, how they’ll look (V3, V4), smell and feel.
- At the start of the day talk about what your child’s going to do, the places they’ll visit, the people they’ll see. Remind them at the end of the day what they’ve done and talk about the events together.
- When introducing new objects to your child, let them feel and/or look at them and as they do this, describe how they feel, look and work and demonstrate how the object can be used.
Understanding meaning (continued)

• Help your child to learn to listen to the names of objects by asking them to give you an object or toy from a small number of toys.

• Continue to describe where objects and toys are, using ‘on’, ‘under’ and ‘behind’, ‘in front of’. Play hide and seek with objects – ‘Where’s the...?’

• Give your child simple instructions (with two main information carrying ideas) like ‘Put the cup on the table’ and ‘Get your coat and shoes’ when going out. Later these can become instructions with three main ideas, eg ‘Let’s give dolly a drink and a biscuit’.

• Collect objects from your outings, eg leaves, shells, tickets, small ornaments and keep them in a scrapbook or scrapbox that you can browse through and talk about each item together – where and when you found it, etc. This is especially fun after a holiday.

Pretend play

• Play pretend games with your child – pretend play will be meaningful if based around your child’s experiences, eg having a tea party, going to the shop, making dinner, going on the train, having a birthday party and cultural festivals. Help your child to plan and organise what objects will be needed for the game and help them collect them.

• Have a dressing up box and include hats, shoes and bags and other clothes to dress up as people that your child knows. Talk about the person that they’re dressing up as and what they usually wear and how they behave, eg ‘This is the fleece Dad wears when he’s gardening’.

• Your child may also want to dress up as a character in one of their stories and you can help them to imagine what they might wear and find things to put on.

• Pretend play can extend to taking on roles and carrying out pretend actions – for example, ‘You’re the train driver’. Encourage older brothers or sisters or friend to help your child participate in a role play.

• Encourage your child to improvise – to pretend that something is a real object, eg wooden cylinders are ‘fish fingers’ on a plate, the sofa is a ‘train’, the bin lid is a ‘steering wheel’ in the car.
Communication

Joint attention to toys/objects/events

- Talk to your child about distant sounds that they can hear, like a car horn or a cat ‘Meeowing’ and explain what they are. Show your child what these things are if you have the opportunity when out and about.

- Talk about what you’re doing around the house and show your child what things are when you do everyday activities together.

- Watch out for the ways your child tries to draw your attention to what they’re interested in.

- Encourage them to hold out and show you something that they want you to attend to and tell them that you can see it. Share your different ways of experiencing the object – ‘I can see it; you can feel it (or see it)’.

- Begin to introduce words/phrases that describe joint attention. ‘Mummy’ s watching you’, ‘I can see what you’re doing (and then tell your child what they’re doing)’, ‘ So! You’re looking at/listening to/feeling what Mike has’. This is the beginning of introducing the idea that there are different ways of attending.

Communicating needs

- See Expressive Language (over page)

Making conversation

- See Expressive Language (over page)
Expressive language

• Don’t encourage use of words or phrases said out of context to get your attention. Only respond when your child uses the word or phrase in the right context or makes their comment meaningful by linking it to real life things.

• **Recast** and expand on your child’s language so that they begin to hear a full correct pattern of language. Keep sentences clear and short so that they can hear your language structure and understand what you’re saying.

• Expand your child’s words adding new information and grammar so they hear how a longer sentence can be made, eg ‘nana go’ could be added to by saying ‘Yes, nana’s gone upstairs. Nana’s getting your book’. Once your child is beginning to combine two words, you can use short, complete sentences.

• Continue to recast your child’s language to show the appropriate **intonation** (voice pattern) that you think matches what they’re trying to say, eg ‘ball gone’ using a declaring or describing intonation. This will help your child to start using the right intonation to get across their meaning.

• Learning about I and You can be difficult. Try remodelling your child’s answers. For example, when you say ‘D’you want an apple or a banana?’ and your child says ‘You want a banana’, say ‘I think you mean, ‘I want a banana’.

• Use open-ended questions to keep conversation going, eg ‘Tell me about..’ or ‘How did that happen?’ rather than ‘What’s that?’ or ‘Is that your doll?’ which only require a one or two word answer.

• Encourage your child to tell and retell stories they know well.

• Encourage your child to deliver messages, eg ‘Tell Duleep to put his coat on – we’re going out’.
Stage 5 · Activity card

Card 11 · Play and learning

Your child may now be able to play for more extended periods at a small table and follow your directions.

Making connections

Object permanence and more organised searching

• Help your child to find where everyday objects are kept in the house by finding bowls and cutlery for dinner, putting clothes away or finding socks in a drawer.

• Play ‘Who can find’ and ‘Where’s the...’ games to help your child learn where things are placed around the home.

• Take your child to a toy which they’ve been playing with if it has rolled away they can’t find it. Playing with a toy which can roll away, eg a ball or car that produces a continuous sound will help your child locate it across the floor. Help them to use patting or visual searching and move in different directions to find a toy. Then help them to do it in a more systematic manner – ‘Let’s look in this corner first’.

• You can begin to guide your child through a more organised way of searching on a table top. This is only an introduction, because more systematic searching tends to develop later than Stage 5.

• (V1, V2, V3) Place 3 to 5 objects in a line on a table top and guide your child’s hand along the line until they find an object you’ve named. For V4, you can ask for a named object or photo (‘Is this the brush?’) pointing at each object in turn as you move along the line.

• When this is well established, you can start guiding your child to move their hand or visually scan along the line of objects from left to right.
Cause effect

- Play with toys that need more than one step to be completed, eg putting a token in a cash register and pulling a lever to open the drawer or putting a ring on a rod toy and then pressing a knob for the ring to fly off.

Understanding how objects relate to each other

- Show your child how biscuits go back in a tin and the lid goes on and put small toys away in a container with a lid. They’ll enjoy playing with containers with lids and putting objects in and out and replacing the lid.

- Keep your empty plastic containers of different sizes and shapes – your child will have fun experimenting with how they fit together and putting things in and out of them.

- Continue practise with taking lids off screw-capped bottles and jars like a mustard jar or herb bottles. Show your child how to screw the lid back on, with their wrist using ‘turning’ motions.

- Introduce simple form boards with two pieces (and knobs). These can vary in size or by shape (circle, square, triangle). Some inset puzzles are available which are motivating for children with the most limited vision (V1, V2) – they produce a noise when the piece is correctly placed.

- Another interesting container to explore is a large matchbox with something hidden inside.

Early understanding of quantity

- Play with containers and water, eg buckets, cups, sieves, and talk about ‘empty’, ‘full up’. Pour water from one container to another. When your child starts enjoying sand play, this can also be done in sand.

- Help your child measure out food quantities for dinner, eg pouring drink from a small jug into a child’s cup, serving a helping from the saucepan or from a serving bowl into a child’s bowl – also talk about ‘more?’, ‘a little more, ‘a lot more’ and ‘all gone/finished’…
Understanding size – large and small

1. Play with large and small everyday objects, e.g., big shoe/little shoe, big spoon and little spoon.

2. Play with inset formboards with different sizes (e.g., two circles of different size).

3. Play with two small pots with lids of different sizes. Show your child where the pots are and take off each lid and help them to put both lids on (‘big pot’, ‘little pot’) and then let them play with putting lids on each pot.

4. Stacking toys of different sizes will help your child to stack. Start with the ‘big’ beaker or brick on the bottom. Then put the ‘small’ one on top. This can also be done with a stacking ring – start with the ‘big’ one on the bottom, and put the small one on the top. Take turns with putting on stacking beakers or rings and show your child how they fit according to size.
Early sorting and categorizing

• Go on encouraging object to object matching using touch (or looking, V3, V4) and recognising the identity of each object – keep the two objects the same.

• Once your child can match two objects that are the same, introduce them to matching an object to its picture (V4). If you have a camera, take a clear photo of one of your child’s everyday objects (against a contrasting plain background). Have the photo developed at a large size. Then you can start playing at matching the object to the picture – ‘Here’s your cup. Look at the picture of your cup’.

• Play with objects that can be sorted into two groups, eg socks from the washing basket (adult socks and small socks for children), or cutlery from the cutlery tray (forks and spoons) and separating a pile into two groups (eg shoes and brushes). Start with only two or three objects in each group.

• Later play a game sorting objects according to shape, size or colour (V3, V4). Start with real items, eg large spoons and large forks, or large and small spoons, or red and yellow plastic spoons. Put each type into a different pile or container. Start with only two or three objects in each group. Afterwards, help your child to feel inside each container to find out and identify what’s inside.
Using hands

Learning through touch: responding to different textures

- Continue to help your child explore a bag or box (treasure chest) of different familiar objects, eg keys, spoon, toothbrush etc and ask them to find a named object by feeling inside to identify what’s there.

- Play matching games with textures – smooth, furry, prickly, rough. Name the textures with your child, eg finding one that’s the same (‘furry’) from one or two others on the table (or in the box).

- You could make some cloth books with different fabrics, shells, feathers, strings and ribbons sewn in.

- V1, V2, V3 Show your child how to identify and match different shapes (feeling the ‘round’ surface of the ball or circle, and the line sides and ‘points’ of the square).

- Your child may be ready to enjoy play with more ‘high sensitivity’ materials – ‘messy play’, like play with sand, finger painting and sticking activities. However, many children with limited vision are initially wary of these materials and it’s wise to introduce them slowly, as part of a game or meaningful activity and at the child’s own pace. Make a ‘pudding’ out of sticky dough to feed the dolly. If they don’t like the sensation of sticky material on their fingers directly, give other tools (eg a brush, marker, stick, spoon) to help your child play with the material. This may make them more confident about touching directly. Give them a cloth so they can wipe off their fingers whenever they want.

Recognising different objects of the same type/function

- Help your child to identify more and more everyday objects through touch. Children with vision (V3) will often need to use their hand skills to increase their recognition through vision. Children may tend to rely on one or more feature to recognise an object (a blue round shape of a certain size is ‘my beaker’ (V3), the long plastic handle with plastic bits is ‘my brush’ (V1, V2)). Recognition often doesn’t extend (or ‘generalise’) to other objects of the same type that are different in shape, colour or texture.
Recognising different objects of the same type/function continued

• Help your child to feel slowly or look carefully (and feel if needed) over the whole object – ‘There’s the round lip, and the round body and the handle – it’s a cup!’; ‘Feel the handle, the bristly bits – it’s a hairbrush!’. This also introduces language about texture and shape. When your child has understanding and recognition of their own familiar objects, introduce unfamiliar ones of the same type (‘Nanna’s hairbrush’, ‘cup’ or beaker at playgroup, a different shape of telephone, different shaped shoes).

Co-ordinating hands and fingers

• Play with smaller screw tops, eg ring off screw rod, lid off food or toiletry jars (this is also a good opportunity for identifying and matching sensory smells).

• Show your child how to unwrap wrappers around small sweets.

• Your child can sit with you and start to make biscuits – helping you roll out the pastry with the rolling pin. Let them smell and feel the dough and eat the biscuit afterwards!

• Other toys that will develop use of hands and fingers include large peg boards, threading large beads on a piece of dowel or stiffened thread. Children with some vision (V4) could try a soft lace once they can manage a stiffer one.

• Show your child how some toys fit together, eg lego bricks, Duplo or mega blocks or toys that screw together.

• Make up a collage of things you have found in the garden or make a picture with fuzzy felts.

• Your child may be ready to enjoy finger painting making bright coloured marks on paper or using a brush on paper to make bright painting marks or potato printing (V3 – only the ones with better vision, V4). Use strong colours with good contrast to the paper and thick ‘pens’ which are easily seen. Let your child enjoy scribbling. They may enjoy copying a line across or up/down the paper or a big circle. Even if your child does not see what they do very well, they can enjoy the sensation of doing it.

• V1, V2, V3 – show your child how to make marks on plasticine or playdough with fingers or with a marker. Let them feel the groove that they’ve made.

• V1, V2, V3 – make marks with shape cutters in dough or playdough and draw around with a finger or marker or draw shapes in the sand when playing outside.
Body awareness/position in space

- Use singing, music and movement games to re-enforce understanding of different parts of the body and body positions – ‘Simon says’ games, ‘Head, shoulders, arms and knees’, ‘If you’re happy and you know it, stamp your feet’, ‘Wheels on the bus’.

- Continue with games that use ‘on top of’, ‘under’, ‘behind’, ‘in front of’. This needs lots of practice because children with limited vision take longer to work out where their body is in space or in relationship to objects. Go on with ‘hide and seek’ games where the adult or child says and shows where they are.

- On the swings, encourage your child to move their body back and forth to get the swing moving. Later this extends to moving legs back and forth.

- Later begin to introduce left and right. Use a sticker or bangle to mark the left hand and play ‘Simon says... put up your left hand’.

Environmental exploration/orientation

- Encourage your child to do simple tasks that involve moving around the home, eg put toys in the toy box or a book on the shelf, and ask them to find them again and bring to you.

- Provide opportunities to play in tents or tunnels (check manufacturer’s recommended ages).

- Encourage and model the building of ‘houses’ or ‘dens’ with walls and ceilings using cardboard boxes or tables and cloths etc.

- Show your child around any pre-school setting that they’re likely to attend when the room/s are empty. Try to help them to recognise how to find important features like the toilets or doors. This will need to be repeated several times to help them remember where things are and become confident in the new environment. Adults new to working with your child may need training in how best to guide them.

- Walk your child around a local playground and show them the way from one piece of equipment to the next to help them build up a mental map. Talk to your child about what’s there and about keeping safe, eg away from the swings. Then ask your child to show you around your local playground, taking you to the slide.

- Continue to practise listening skills and play games guessing what different sounds are. Talk about how the sounds are different when it’s wet or windy.
Extending movement and co-ordination

- Demonstrate how to move backwards and practise by dancing, eg ‘hokey-cokey’. Initially hold hands and then reduce support. This is important for getting out of small spaces when there’s no room to turn.

Running, jumping, crouching and climbing

- Provide opportunities to run in safe environments (you may run alongside), which involve stopping and making rapid turns without loosing balance. Have little racing games – ‘Let’s have a race!’
- Holding both hands, encourage your child to jump off a low step into your arms and later to the floor.
- Encourage jumping experiences in soft play environments where there are safe mats to jump onto.
- At this age, children may start to enjoy walking along low walls (or benches etc) and jumping off the end. Support will be needed to begin with but balance improves with practice. Children with limited vision will need to learn to check whether there’s an obstacle below them and to judge the depth of a low wall before they jump in outside areas.
- Play games that involve reaching up high, to encourage your child to stand on tip-toes. Walking as quietly as possible on crinkly paper, leaves, pebbles etc also encourages walking on toes. You may need to hold hands initially but your child’s balance will improve with practice.

Managing stairs

- Play games encouraging balancing on one foot. Hold both hands initially and gradually reduce support.
- Encourage the use of ladders on play equipment or age appropriate climbing frames and gradually reduce support as skill increases.
- Give more experience going up and down stairs. Encourage holding onto a low handrail if available or continuing holding hands. Your child is likely to be able to go up stairs independently but may take longer to feel safe when coming down.

Pedalling

- Demonstrate how to push pedals on a tricycle and encourage your child to do this independently.
Feeding/eating

- Involve your child in more food preparation tasks, eg show how to use a knife for spreading and cutting sandwiches. Give lots of practice of cutting with a safe blade using dough or plastercine as well as foods like bananas, medium/soft cheese, cooked carrots etc.

- Place some favourite foods in jars with simple screw tops and show how they can be opened.

- Store your child’s eating equipment in an accessible place and encourage them to find their own cutlery and bowls and put them on the table.

- Set the table together with place mats, forks, knives, spoons, plates and cups.

- When eating a family meal at the table, encourage your child to drink out of a partly filled, open topped cup like everyone else. Remind them to replace it on the table after drinking from it.

- Play ‘guess the food’ games by describing the food you’re about to eat.

- Encourage your child to carry an open topped cup with a small amount of liquid in it for a few steps. Similarly encourage them to carry something like a piece of fruit or sandwich in a bowl or plate. Extend this as skill improves.

- Practise spooning things from one container to another. Later allow your child to do this with real food stuffs, eg flour or sugar from packet onto scales for baking, yoghurt from a large pot to a small one.

- Encourage pouring liquids from a jug or bottle, eg milk on own cereals (V4). Children with less vision can be introduced to the idea by you showing them how to do it (hand over hand and letting them feel the liquid as it pours into the bowl).

- Eating with a spoon will become more reliable with practice. Add to this by showing how to use a spoon to transfer things from a container, eg spooning pasta from a bowl to a plate.
Dressing

- Practise taking off a large loose T-shirt or jumper before bath time. Use reverse chaining and start by removing arms so the clothing is around their neck. Place the child’s hands on the neckband and assist them in pulling it over their head. Once this has been mastered leave one arm in the sleeve and show how to hold the edge of the sleeve with one hand while pulling their other arm out. Later repeat this with the other arm.

- Encourage your child to undress independently at bath time.

- Continue with the experience of undoing buttons and extend this to fastening buttons.

- Guide arms into open fronted coat when held, and encourage your child to do this independently. Do the same with pulling on socks. This is best demonstrated sitting on the floor with your child facing forwards between your legs.

- Use a child height coat rack or peg so that your child can learn how to hang up their coat, as this will be expected in playgroups and nurseries.

- Involve your child in putting away their clothes in their bedroom so they can find them on request.
Using the toilet

- Allow your child to explore the toilet thoroughly and explain how it’s used and sit them on the closed lid to help them get used to its height. A small step is a good idea to help getting on and to maintain good posture while sitting.

- When moving on to using the toilet or ‘large potty’ make sure your child feels secure by using a suitable child seat and has a stable base under their feet while sitting.

- Show how the flush works and explain what happens when using public facilities or other people’s bathrooms. Warn your child that it may sound different to how it sounds at home so that they won’t be alarmed by different noises.

Washing and bathing

- Continue to incorporate teeth care into the daily bathing routine and gradually reduce the amount of physical help you give. Continue to help your child to carry out rinsing. Encourage your child to run their tongue over their teeth to check they are clean.

- In addition to practising hand washing, encourage your child to dry their hands with the towel and put it back in the appropriate place so it can be found when next required.

- The bath is the best place to learn to turn taps off and on as there is less likelihood of a flood (of course being careful of the hot tap).
Bedtime

• Many children cut out their afternoon nap sometime after their third birthday. If your child is not ready to settle down to sleep until late in the evening you may need to cut out daytime napping to prevent this. This can be a difficult time for parents and children, but essential to establishing healthy routines for all the family. Prevent napping by stimulating your child if they appear drowsy, eg a trip to the park or ‘soft play’, activity games or nursery rhymes.

• Avoid travelling in the car at times when they may fall asleep and if you can’t keep them awake allow only 10 minutes in a two-hour period.

• It often takes around two weeks of persistence to establish a new sleep pattern. If your child has difficulty sleeping overnight, discuss this with professionals who may be able to help – for example, a health visitor, specialist teacher or paediatrician.
Developing vision activity card

Card 1

Preparation

Distance: within 1/3 metre

Position: Child lying on their back on a play mat or cradled in your arms or looking over your shoulder in ‘winding’ position.

Range of lures (in order of how difficult they are to see):

In a darkened room – an ‘oogly’ on a pen torch or a glowing toy.

In a light room – smiling expressive faces, spinning tinsel balls, spinning colourful balls, eg woolly pom-poms and colourful soft toys at least 12cm in diameter.

Activities

Visual awareness/visual interest

• Try to attract your baby’s interest using the lure decided on with your teacher (from now on referred to as a ‘chosen lure’), or something very similar:
  – make lit toys flash on and off
  – move your head slightly as you smile and ‘talk’
  – make dangling balls spin ‘on the spot’.

• Guide your child’s arm gently from the elbow so that their fingers come in contact with the lure, giving it reality and alerting their interest in looking to see it better.

• Repeat several times in the same position.

With babies who initially appear not to have any visual response

• Start with the ‘oogly’ on a pen torch in a darkened room and guide their hand to it.

Many children who appear at first to have no visual response do show improvement when vision is promoted.

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Eye movements

Directing gaze

• Once your child alerts consistently to your ‘chosen lure’, present it again in a different position and watch for orientation or a shift of gaze.

Following

• Once your child has alerted and is looking at the lure, slowly move it from side to side, up and down and from directly in front of them towards their nose to encourage convergence.

• Gradually speed up the movement as your child’s skills improve.

• Gradually increase the distance as your child’s skills improve.

Introduce lures that are more difficult to see in sequence, once your child is alerting and following your ‘chosen lure’ well.
**Developing vision activity card**

Card 2a

**Preparation**

**Distance: from within \( \frac{1}{3} \) metre to 3 metres**

**Position:** As your baby’s head and body control improve, gradually move from the positions on Card 1 to sitting (well-supported) on your lap.

Only start tabletop activities when your child has good body control. If they’re not physically ready but are visually ready, discuss an alternative position with an occupational therapist or physiotherapist.

**Range of lures (in order of how difficult they are to see):**

**Large:**

In a darkened room, an ‘oogly’ on a pen torch or glowing toy.

In a light room – yourself, your smiling face, a spinning tinsel ball, a spinning colourful ball (eg woolly pom-pom), a colourful soft toy on an elastic so it moves gently up and down (12cm large), child’s plastic football (12cm and 25cm).

**Smaller:**

On a table surface – colourful balls (12cm and 6cm in size), coloured cubes (2 to 3cm), grapes, coloured smarties or other sweets, raisins, breakfast cereals, ‘hundreds and thousands’ (tiny cake decorations).

There should be good contrast between the surface and objects (eg a dark surface and a light coloured lure).
Activities

Visual awareness and visual interest

• Continue activities with the lure that you and your teacher now feel is appropriate, in the way described on Card 1 for activities within 1/3 metre.

• To increase your child’s sphere or range of visual interest beyond 3/4 metre use yourself as the lure in the first instance.

• Start near enough to get your child’s visual interest in you and then back slowly away.

• Note the distance at which your child loses interest; move forward and ‘dance’ on the spot and wave.

• Once your child is aware and interested in you at the greater distance:
  – substitute a large toy (25cm or more) jiggling it in your hand held out to one side, at the same or slightly closer distance or
  – use yourself at a greater distance.

Tabletop activities (see note under position overleaf)

• First place a large toy on a table or highchair tray surface (when your child is not looking) and encourage them to look for it by saying ‘Ooh look!’ and tapping the surface under the table top or tray. If they look at it, guide their hand to it, or if already reaching, give them time to reach out.

• Once your child can easily locate the toy visually, try a slightly smaller one.

• When you get to the smallest sizes (2.5cm or less) make sure they’re not watching your hand as you place it. Your VI teacher will show you how to do this.

Continued on Card 2b
Activities

Eye movements

Directing gaze

In front but slightly to one side and at greater distances

- Once your child consistently shows visual interest in you, present yourself slightly to one side or other of midline, rather than directly in front, at a distance you know that they can see you.
- If they don’t see you, move on the spot.
- If your child still doesn’t look at you, say ‘Hello, here I am!’ and watch for a shift of gaze or move nearer and more to the front and wave.
- Once your child shifts their gaze to you, repeat at a greater distance and either substitute a large toy, jiggling it in your hand held out to one side, at the same or at a slightly closer distance or use yourself at a greater distance.

From one target to another at the same distance

- You will need two people to act as lures. Each person stands in front about 1½ metres apart at a distance at which you know your child can see you.
- One person attracts their visual attention by moving or calling.
- The other then moves on the spot and waves – only speaking if absolutely necessary.
- Repeat at progressively greater distances as visual performance improves.
Following and convergence

• Continue Card 1 activities until your specialist teacher feels that your child’s ability to follow in near and far distance and convergence have reached their peak.

• For distant following, first use a person, then a large toy (25cm or larger), then a 12cm spinning ball, moving on to smaller objects as skills improve.

Tracking

• With your baby or child sitting on someone’s knees at a table, sit opposite and roll a plastic football (25cm) slowly from one side of the table to the other and back again.

• Once your child tracks the movement, increase the speed of the roll and decrease the size of the football, as skills improve.

• Repeat the sequence, but this time roll the ball from yourself towards your baby or child and get the other person to roll it back to you.
Developing vision activity card

Card 3a

**Preparation**

**Distance: from within 1/3 metre to 6 metres**

**Position:** As for Card 2, plus sitting on the floor, with you behind, for tracking beyond 1 metre.

**Range of lures:** As for Card 2 plus three everyday objects or toys, a tray and an armchair with plain upholstery.

**Level of understanding:** understands the names of two or three family members and two or three everyday objects or toys.

**Activities**

**Visual awareness, visual interest and functional acuity**

**Sphere of visual interest**

- Continue the sequences on Cards 2a and 2b for visual awareness and interest to widen the sphere of visual interest at distances decided with your VI teacher. Use yourself and large toys as lures.

**Tabletop activities**

- Continue the activities on Cards 2a and 2b with increasingly small lures as discussed and agreed with your specialist teacher.

**Vision for people**

- While you play with your child, arrange for another family member to come and sit or stand about a metre away (but not directly in front of you).
- Say ‘Where’s Grannie?’ Grannie should not speak!
- Watch your child scan or look around the room and see whether or not they can locate Grannie.
- If not, ask Grannie to move a little on the spot. If your child still can’t locate her, she should bend down and step closer.
- As soon as your child locates her, Grannie should say ‘Yes, here I am!’ and reward her grandchild with a kiss or a hug.
- Gradually introduce other family members and increase the distance as your child’s visual performance improves.

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Vision for objects

• When your child is not looking, place one of their own everyday objects or toys about a metre away (but not directly in front of them).

• Say ‘Where’s your beaker’? or if they have the spoken **vocabulary**, point at it and say ‘What’s that’?

• If your child doesn’t locate or name it, place it nearer next time.

• If your child does locate and name it, place it further away and to the other side.

• Show obvious pleasure when your child finds it.

• Introduce other items that they know the name for, one at a time.

• Then introduce other items of the **same type** but **different colour**.

Continued on Card 3b
Card 3b

Activities

Eye movements

Directing gaze
In front but slightly to one side of the midline at greater distances

• Continue the sequences from Cards 2a and 2b using yourself and large toys as lures.

From one target to another at the same distance

• Continue sequences from Cards 2a and 2b, using two people and large toys as lures.

Peep-boo

• Visual readiness: A good time to start this activity is when your baby/child is visually aware and interested in looking at your face at about 1 metre. Substitute an armchair for the tray when your child is visually interested in large (25cm or greater) toys at a distance of 2 metres (see below).

• Hide your face behind a tray and say ‘peep-boo’ as you pop out to one or other side – at a distance of about ¾ metre. Once your child gets the idea, make sure you say ‘peep-boo’ while your face is still hidden, then pop out silently.

• Once your child finds your smiling face visually, use a plain covered armchair placed about 1 metre away to continue playing. Pop out above as well as to each side of the chair.

• Once your child is able to locate your face quickly, gradually move the chair further away.

• Once your child is able to locate your face at 3 metres, try substituting a favourite doll or soft toy as the lure. Start at 1 metre.
Following and convergence

Continue activities on Cards 2a and 2b until your specialist teacher feels that following in near and far distance and convergence have reached their peak.

- For following at distance, first use a person then a large toy (25cm or larger), then a 12cm spinning ball as your child’s skills improve.

Tracking

Once your child can track quite fast at a table and can sit with support, move down to the floor and sit behind them with your legs to each side. Make sure that the ball and the floor surface contrast strongly. You need three people in all – A, B and C – sitting so that a triangle is formed with you and your child in the middle with A at the apex and B and C at the two base angles.

- Start at a distance of about 1 1/2 metres. A helps your child roll a ball slowly to B who pats it on to C who pats it back to your child.

- Vary the pattern and sequence, eg A to C to B and back to A.

- Watch and note whether your child can keep track of where the ball is.

- Gradually increase the speed and distance and decrease the size of the ball as your child’s visual performance improves.
Developing vision activity card

Card 4a

Preparation

Distance: from within 1 metre to 6 metres

Positions: As for Card 3 plus free standing, sitting or kneeling with you on the floor.

Level of understanding: Understanding the names of family, friends, pets, everyday objects, toys and items in pictures is needed before you can try the activities on Card 4. Some parts require the child to indicate what they see by naming, making a meaningful noise, eg saying ‘brmm – brmm’ for car or making a gesture, eg of drinking.

Range of lures: As for Card 3 plus

People:

1. Two members of your family or friends of dissimilar height, body shape and colouring a) dressed differently and b) in similar colours.

2. Two members of your family or friends of similar height, body shape and colouring a) dressed differently and b) in similar colours.

Objects:

1. Three pairs of objects or toys of the same size but different colour and shape.

2. Three pairs of everyday objects or toys of the same size, colour and similar shape.

3. Four sets of family items of a particular type – tea shirts, shoes, Wellington boots, trainers, hats – that can be presented in a cluster in a pile or in a basket. Try to establish sets where the colours are dissimilar and other sets where the colour is similar.

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Pictures:

1. A book or a set of single item, life-size pictures of everyday objects or toys in bold colours, with clear outlines, a plain background and strong contrast to the background.

2. A book or set of similar pictures of everyday objects or toys but embedded in a simple scene including another two items. Items in the scene should not overlap the target item and should also be in bold colours, have a clear outline, be on a plain background and have strong contrast to background.

3. A book or set of pictures of a simple everyday scenes or activities containing two or three visual targets 4 to 6cm in size embedded in a natural setting – like a printed photograph.

4. A book or set of pictures of more complex everyday scenes and with smaller visual targets (1 to 2cm) in a natural setting.

Continued on Card 4b
Developing vision activity card

Card 4b

Preparation

Photographs:

A digital camera is useful for making photographs for a child with limited vision. If you do not have one, maybe your specialist teacher does. Take the photo against a plain background or natural surroundings as indicated and print off on matt A4 or A5 paper.

You will need:

1. Two sets of photographs of the face of individual family members or friends against a plain, well-contrasted background. One set with faces approx 8 to 10cm in size and one set with faces approx 4 to 5cm in size.

2. Two sets of photographs, each containing faces of two family members or friends against a plain contrasted background. One set with each face approx 6 to 8cm in size and one set with each face approx 3 to 6cm in size.

3. Two sets of full-length photographs of individual family members or friends against a plain, contrasted background. One set A4 size, one set A5 size.

4. Two sets of full-length photographs of two family members or friends against a plain contrasted background. One set A4 size, one set A5 size.

5. Two sets of photographs of the face of individual family members or friends in a natural indoor or outdoor setting. One set with face approx 8 to 10cm in size and one set with face approx 4 to 5cm in size.

6. Two sets of photographs, each containing faces of two family members or friends in a natural indoor or outdoor setting. One set with each face approx 6 to 8cm in size and one set with each face approx 3 to 6cm in size.

7. Two sets of full-length photographs of individual family members or friends in a natural indoor or outdoor setting. One set A4 size, one set A5 size.

8. Two sets of full-length photographs of two family members or friends in a natural indoor or outdoor setting. One set A4 size, one set A5 size.

9. Two sets of photographs of family occasions and activities, eg on the beach, in the playground or in a natural outdoor setting.

For scanning, you will need several pages with small pictures arranged in a row. Each picture of a different animal or everyday item or shape. Your specialist teacher can supply these.
Activities

Continue any Card 3 activities that you and your teacher feel need more development, plus the following:

Vision for people

- Start with two family members whose names you feel sure your child recognises and who are different in size and shape and wearing different colours. Ask them to stand about a metre from your child but not to speak.

  Then say ‘Where’s Daddy?’ or ‘Where’s Ali?’

- If your child points or smiles to the right person, they should reward them with a kiss. Repeat a little later with the family members’ positions reversed.

- If your child looks puzzled or appears not to see, ask the adults to step nearer and repeat.

- Once this task is easy at one metre, repeat it a little further away.

- When your child can do this easily, introduce other family members or friends and increase the distance.

- The next step is to use two friends or family members who are of similar shape and height wearing dissimilar clothes.

- Once your child can recognise these people at two metres or more, try it with them wearing similar clothes, eg jeans and white T-shirts. Your child will then have to look for finer details, eg of their faces, to tell them apart.

Functional acuity

The aim of this whole section is to encourage your child to improve their functional acuity by looking for detail.
Developing vision activity card

Card 4c

Activities

Vision for everyday objects and toys

- Start with one of the pairs of objects or toys that are of similar size but different in colour and shape. You need to feel sure that your child recognises them by name.

- Place two toys about 12cm apart, but within your child’s reach on a table or the floor and ask for one of them. The toy should be ‘silent’ – ie not make a sound.

- If your child succeeds, then place them on the floor about one metre apart and ask ‘Where’s your …….?’

- If your child looks or points at the correct item, let them fetch it and then play with it together for a few minutes. Repeat a little later with the order reversed.

- If your child looks puzzled, say ‘There it is, there’s your ……….’ and pick it up and play with it with them.

- Introduce another pair of objects or toys from the set when your child can do this with the first pair.

- Gradually increase the distance away from your child that you place the objects.

- Once secure with the pairs of toys of similar size but different in colour and shape at two metres, introduce one of the pairs of objects or toys that are similar in colour, shape and size. Your child will have to look for greater detail to tell these apart.

- Again see if your child can choose or point at one of the toys or objects first when near and then increase the distance.

- Try the same ideas with smaller toys and objects when your child can do this with larger ones.

- Introduce a set of family items (different colours but same type) in a heap on the floor or in a box and ask the child to find their own shoe or Mummy’s shoe.

- When good with these sets of different coloured items, introduce the sets that are of similar colour.

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Vision for pictures

• Pictures, even life-size ones, are more difficult to see than their three-dimensional counterparts, because they are two-dimensional. Children with limited vision often need them to be brought much closer than objects to identify them.

• It’s very important when looking at and talking about pictures in a book with your child that they can see them clearly enough to make visual sense of them. If a picture is very blurred your child may learn that a brown blob on a blue background is called a teddy and when later you show them a brown dog swimming in a blue pond they will call it a teddy and both of you will then be confused.

• The Record of developing vision gives you a way of finding out which types of pictures your child can see sufficiently well to make sense of visually, and it can therefore help you and your teacher choose books with pictures to suit your child’s vision. Pictures are good for improving your child’s vision but they need to be the right ones.

• Look at the list of picture materials on Card 4a. Fill in the record with your specialist teacher and together choose books that suit your child’s vision for pictures.

• It’s important not always to say ‘Where’s the dog or the ball or the boy?’ but also to ask ‘What’s that?’ which will encourage your child to look more intently.

• In the context of a story, sometimes say ‘As the farmer strode through the field he saw a ……(pause) – then point to the animal or object and say ‘Look there it is, what did he see?’ rather than saying ‘…he saw a sheep, where’s the sheep?’ ‘Where’s the sheep?’ is easier, as your child only has to scan the picture for white objects.

• Sometimes stop and talk about one or more items in a picture, eg ‘Yes it’s a duck, what colour is he?’ (pause for reply – give the answer if your child doesn’t), ‘Where’s his beak?, it’s orange and his eye…..’

• Similarly, get your child to talk about what’s happening in a scene showing an activity.

Continued on Card 4d
Activities

Vision for photographs

• Photographs, like pictures are two-dimensional and more difficult to see than objects.

• Even simple photographs from the first set are more difficult to see than the pictures from the first set, because a face that is photographed will be in a range of tones and colours rather than in uniform strong colours.

• The Record of developing vision gives you a way of finding out which set of photographs your child can see sufficiently well to make sense of visually, and will therefore help you and your teacher choose which set of photographs to start with. Systematically progress through the sets, in the order they are set out in the introduction to Card 4 activities.

• As with pictures, your child will look more closely at the photos if asked to:
  – tell you who’s in the photo rather than always asking them to point out Dad
  – tell you what Dad’s wearing rather than saying ‘Daddy’s wearing a blue shirt’
  – tell you what’s on the picnic table rather than pointing to the cakes
  – describe an activity rather than you saying ‘They’re sweeping, where’s the ‘broom?’

Remember to look at the Visual environment and visual materials cards
Eye movements

Scanning

• Place three to five familiar objects or toys on a table top about 10cm apart and say ‘Give me the ...’ while you run your finger along the line slowly, starting by tapping the item at one or other end of the row.

• Watch to see if your child follows your finger. If they do, repeat in the other direction with a new set of toys. If they don’t, draw your child’s attention to the item at one end by putting your hand on it and saying ‘Is it this one? No? How about this one?’ – and then pointing to the next item and repeating along the line.

• Once your child follows your finger regularly in either direction, concentrate on moving your finger from their left-hand end to their right.

• Once your child does this well, try the same thing, but without running your finger along the line and watch to see if your child starts at the left-hand end and scans towards the right.

• If they don’t, start guiding their gaze with your finger again.

Always show pleasure when your child chooses the right object, whether or not they follow your finger.

Tracking

• Alternatively, hold a coloured streamer and make circular arm movements slowly at first and watch to see if your child follows the movements of the streamer.

• Set up a winding road or train track and run a battery-powered car or train along it. If you don’t have one perhaps your child’s nursery or a friend does.

• Place the car or train on the track and watch to see if your child tracks it.
The visual environment and visual materials for development and learning

Vision provides a child with information they need for every aspect of early development. So you need to review how you can use your child’s current vision to best advantage to support every aspect of their development regularly with your visiting teacher.

In both the Developmental journal and Activity cards, you will find frequent reminders to check these Visual environment and visual materials cards. Doing so will help you make sure that you are carrying out developmental activities in the best visual surroundings for your child, using toys or objects that best suit their current level of vision.

This card introduces you to four categories or levels of functional vision and to the visual characteristics of materials and surroundings – size, luminance, colour, contrasts etc – that suit each level.

Functional categories of vision or ‘visual levels’

V1: No perception of light.

V2: Aware of light and large light reflecting objects (of 12cm in size or more) within 30cm, but not of V3 or V4 items.

V3: Aware of colourful objects (of 12cm or less) within 30cm, but not V4 items.

V4: Aware of objects (1.2cm in size or less) on a well-contrasted table top within 30cm.

Level V4 is not demonstrable even in fully sighted babies until five to six months of age, as before this age such small objects do not catch their interest.

How to decide which is your child’s visual level

Your specialist teacher will have a set of standard materials with which to help you explore your child’s current visual level. Vision, even in babies with limited vision, usually improves with age, so remember to recheck this together every four to six weeks in the first 12 months and at longer regular intervals after this (discuss the best interval with your specialist teacher).
Ideas for children at level V1

• Concentrate on providing developmental information through hearing, touch and movement feedback mechanisms.

However, remember to use Record of developing vision Record 1 and Developing vision activity card 1 in order to encourage your child’s development of vision towards V2. (Consult your eye specialist if you think that your baby has one of the very few eye conditions which prevent development of vision.)
In a darkened room, use:

- glowing light sources and make them flash on and off in one place. Look around – there’s lots to choose from in the shops
- an ‘oogly’ on a pen torch
- glowing toys or night lights
- illuminated sparkling tubes or spheres
- wands or table lights with fronds and tips that glow in a cascade of colours
- a ball of mini Christmas tree lights
- a light that shines on your own face when bending low over your baby and if you normally wear glasses, keep them on, as they reflect light

Don’t shine a light directly at your child’s eyes – it may be unpleasantly bright and lack the three-dimensional qualities that are important for arousing visual interest.

In a room lit by daylight or ceiling lights

For vision activities use:

- pom-pom balls at least 12cm in size made of gold or silver tinsel dangling on a string
- Christmas tree balls or decorations at least 12cm in size and dangling

To encourage your child’s postural control choose a room with:

- shiny uprights and verticals that reflect light, eg metal window/door frames, mirrors, metal picture frames

To encourage your child’s saving reactions and concept of the floor as a solid base:

- choose a play mat with reflective (shiny) surfaces
Yourself
• wear large, shiny necklaces, bracelets and rings
• if you normally wear glasses, keep them on, as they reflect light

Your child’s baby gym
• wrap tinsel around the arch and choose sparkly or light reflecting toys to hang from it

Your child’s toys
• choose rattles and squeakers with bells and add shiny stickers
• choose a xylophone with shiny notes
• put shiny stickers on each toy or everyday item in a distinctive pattern to help your child locate and recognise them
• dress dolls or teddies in clothes made from silvery or sequined cloth
• give each soft toy a different tinsel (light reflecting) necklace

Everyday objects
• use stainless steel spoons and bowls on a dark tray surface
• use bottle covers in bright colours with shiny stickers stuck on them

Bubbles!
• bubbles reflect light. Blow a single large one in a room with the lights on.

Remember health and safety issues when you think about the materials you adapt or use – for example, beads, jingle bells, tinsel etc. If you’re unsure whether something is safe, discuss it first with your specialist teacher.
General points

- choose everyday objects or toys 12cm or more in size in bright colours, with good contrast between the parts of the object

- ensure good contrast between items and table or floor surfaces – items will also be clearer if the background surface is matt (not shiny)

- check the Record of developing vision and ensure you choose large enough items for developmental tasks that take place more than 30 to 40cm away

For eye movement activities

- woolly pom-pom balls 12cm in size dangling
- lightweight plastic footballs 25 and 12cm in size

To encourage your child’s postural control

- windows or door frames and picture frames, eg wood against white wall for postural control activities
- wear a brightly coloured bobble hat or tie

To encourage your child’s saving reactions and concept of the floor as a solid base

- floor and bedcovers in strong bright colours
- a play mat with sections in different strong colours

To encourage your child’s awareness of their own hands

- use baby mittens in bright colours
Yourself

• wear tops and trousers or skirts that are have good colour contrast
• wear colourful necklaces and bracelets and rings
• if you normally wear glasses, keep them on as they reflect light
• wear bright lipstick particularly for activities to help communication and social interaction
• wear nail varnish to attract your child’s interest in exploring your hands and watching your hand movements

Your child’s baby gym

• choose dangling toys of different bright colours

Your child’s toys

• choose musical and visual cause and effect toys, tea sets, train sets, insert puzzles in bright colours with good contrast between the parts of the objects
• dress your child’s doll or teddy in clothes made from different colours; choose a doll with hair and eyes that contrast to skin colour
• give each soft toy a different coloured necklace

Everyday objects

• use bottles and flasks with brightly coloured covers
• try and find a bowl, a spoon and a tray surface in contrasting colours

Remember health and safety issues when you think about the materials you adapt or use – for example, beads, jingle bells, tinsel etc. If you’re unsure whether something is safe, discuss it first with your specialist teacher.
General points

When your child can see a small item (1cm sweet) close by (30cm), familiar people, objects, toys and pictures, and events (such as washing up on the other side of the kitchen) may be blurred in middle distance (up to two metres) and increasingly so further away and may be being recognised from features such as overall size, shape and colour rather than fine details. These items will seem slightly blurred at these distances even for those children who are visually aware of a 1mm cake decoration within 30cm and many will have some difficulty sorting out smaller sizes of print and complex pictures in near distance.

As a guide for children with V4 category vision:

- Once your child has had a chance to look closely at most commercially available toys and everyday objects, they will be able to recognise them in near and middle distance (up to two metres away). However, visual details may become blurry at that distance.

- Family members and pets will be recognisable at distances between two and three metres but facial features may be blurred at that distance.

- The visual details of small commercial toys, eg cars, trains, farm animals, tea sets, toy foods (for cooking and shopping games) (3 to 5cm in size) may be recognisable within 1½ metres but the visual details may only be clear within 30cm.

- All but the 1st and 2nd sets of pictures described on Developing vision activity card 4a – may be blurry, even in near distance.
So:

- You can expect your child to recognise familiar objects/toys/pictures/events of these sizes when familiar at the distances suggested overleaf, but children need them at nearer distances to learn about their characteristics visually or to learn from you talking about them.

- Check your Record of developing vision with your teacher before using different sizes of toys for the developmental activities you are working on, and think together about suitable distances for their use. For example, you would ask your child to fetch a familiar shoe from further away then you would talk about the pattern on the strap, when it is close.

Fine finger control

- Make sure that smaller objects such as pieces of breakfast cereal or raisins used to train fine manipulation are strongly contrasted to the background surface.

Remember health and safety issues when you think about the materials you adapt or use – for example, beads, jingle bells, tinsel etc. If you're unsure whether something is safe, discuss it first with your specialist teacher.