

RISE & SHINE

RISE NI (NHSCT) PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the term 3 edition of the RISE NI NHSCT Preschool newsletter! Given that we are in the midst of a global pandemic and the fact that most children are not currently in preschool, this edition will focus on what parents/carers/families can do to keep their children entertained during these 'strange' times, whilst also promoting general development and emotional health & wellbeing. We hope you enjoy some action packed and fun-filled days ahead, as you try out some of 'summer' themed activities. But first...

AS A REMINDER...

WHAT DO WE DO?



RISE NI stands for the Regional Integrated Support for Education NI. We work with mainstream settings in the Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area to support staff and children from preschool through to the end of year 4. The service focuses on the following areas of development:

Social,
emotional
and/or
behavioural

Speech,
language
and
communication

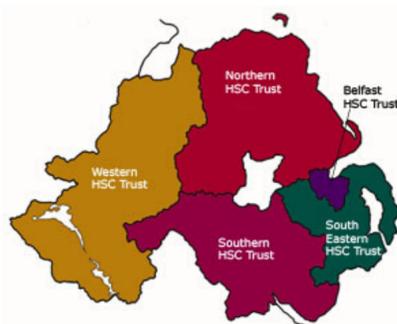
Sensory
processing,
fine motor
and visual
perception

Gross motor

WHERE ARE WE?

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust covers a large area within Northern Ireland. To manage this, we work across 4 different 'sectors':

- East Antrim which covers the Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus, Larne and Ballyclare area
- Antrim/Ballymena which covers the Crumlin, Antrim, Randalstown and Ballymena area
- Causeway which covers the Ballymoney, Coleraine and Ballycastle area
- Mid Ulster which covers the Portglenone, Maghera, Magherafelt and Cookstown area



OUR TEAMS...

Each sector team has a team lead, therapy assistant and admin support, and has input from behaviour therapy, clinical psychology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Our regional aim is to support children in schools, by working closely with parents and school staff, to help children develop the foundational skills for learning. We do this through different levels of support - universal, targeted or specialist.

Universal support

General training, advice and strategies for school staff and parents to enhance and enrich the development of all children

Targeted support

Targeted advice, consultation, strategies, training, class based and small group programmes

Specialist support

Assessment for children with persistent needs who have not responded positively to strategies and support already used in school

IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS, REMEMBER THESE TOP TIPS FROM PARENTING NI...

 <p>Positive Parenting Top Tip</p>  <p>#1 Love your children, no matter what they do.</p> <p><small>Helpline: 0808 8010 722 parentingni.org</small></p>	 <p>Positive Parenting Top Tip</p>  <p>#2 Listen to your children.</p> <p><small>Helpline: 0808 8010 722 parentingni.org</small></p>	 <p>Positive Parenting Top Tip</p>  <p>#3 Praise your children.</p> <p><small>Helpline: 0808 8010 722 parentingni.org</small></p>	 <p>Positive Parenting Top Tip</p>  <p>#4 Expect the best from your children.</p> <p><small>Helpline: 0808 8010 722 parentingni.org</small></p>	 <p>Positive Parenting Top Tip</p>  <p>#5 Make them feel safe physically & emotionally.</p> <p><small>Helpline: 0808 8010 722 parentingni.org</small></p>
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ROUTINES, ROUTINES, ROUTINES!!

Children thrive in homes that provide routines, consistency and structure. Especially now, children need this to feel more secure in their surroundings. Waking up, eating meals, going for exercise, doing 'work' and bed times should all occur at about the same time every day! You might even want to use a schedule to make sure everyone knows what's happening...



REMEMBER...PLAY IS THE 'WORK' OF CHILDREN

It is through play that children learn and engage with the world around them. Play helps children develop important social, emotional and communication skills; builds their self-confidence and develops resilience and empathy as children learn to control their impulses and frustrations. So...

★ Allow time for play



★ Provide household 'play' things e.g. box, pans, spoons, plastic containers etc. and allow your child to play in their own way both indoors and outside!



★ Join in when invited. Follow your child's lead and resist the temptation to get them to play your way

★ Be a positive, playful role model!



SENSORY MOTOR & PERCEPTUAL

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

DEVELOPING VISUAL PERCEPTION IN PRE-SCHOOL

WHAT IS VISUAL PERCEPTION?

Visual perception is the process in which our brains take in and make sense of visual information. Visual perception helps us to understand our environment better e.g. by judging distances, judging the speed of moving objects, remembering something we have seen before and observing the position of objects/people in relation to other objects. These skills begin to develop in infancy and continue to mature into adolescence.

In early childhood we use visual perceptual skills to safely navigate playground equipment, play with a ball, complete jigsaws, and copy a model with duplo or blocks. Later on in life our visual perceptual skills play a key role in reading and writing.

DEVELOPMENTAL NORMS

9 months - Able to work out the position of objects in their environment (depth perception)

2 years - Can identify and match toys or simple pictures

2 ½ years - Recognises simple shapes

3 years - Matches 2 or 3 primary colours

4 years - Constructs simple block tower following demonstration

Sharma, A., Cockerill, H. and Sheridan, A. (2008) From birth to five years.

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP VISUAL PERCEPTION

NOTE :

If a child has difficulty with these tasks, it may be useful to get their eyes tested to ensure that there is no underlying difficulty with their sight (rather than perception).

I SPY

Play during your trips to the park, in the car or even in your back garden! Look for signs of summer and provide clues that your child will understand e.g. "something white", "something moving" etc.

JIGSAW PUZZLES



Make your own by cutting up a summer picture - begin with 3-4 pieces and increase as skills improve.

TOY MEMORY GAME



<https://www.sitters.co.uk/blog/the-top-14-party-games-for-kids.aspx>

Spread out a few small toys/summer themed items. Ask your child to look at the toys and try to remember all of the items. Cover the toys with a blanket and slowly take one item away. Remove the blanket and ask your child if they can guess the missing item!

COPY COLOUR PATTERN



<https://pocketofpreschool.com/camping-centers-and-activities>

Use paint or whatever coloured play items you have in the house!

HIDE AND SEEK

Play hide and seek in your back garden. Either play with people or hide a summer toy/item!

OBSTACLE COURSE



Make your own obstacle course involving lots of crawling, jumping, side-stepping and challenges. A trip to the play park will also be awesome!

SUMMER PICTURE BINGO



Print and play! Find resource at: <https://www.kidsparkz.com/summer.html>

SENSORY MOTOR & PERCEPTUAL

PHYSIOTHERAPY



EYE HAND/FOOT COORDINATION



WHAT IS EYE HAND/FOOT COORDINATION?

This refers to the way that our eyes are used to guide our hands/feet in completing a task, often with speed and accuracy. We use eye hand coordination every time we reach out to pick something up, button up a shirt, play with a ball, and draw on a page. Eye foot coordination is required for the most basic tasks, like walking, stepping over objects and climbing stairs. It is also important for activities like playing football and dancing.

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP EYE HAND COORDINATION

WATER BALLOON GAMES

Who doesn't like playing with water balloons, especially when the sun is out? Of course, if you don't fancy a full change of clothes, just add a small amount of water to balloon to stop it blowing away.

-**Water Balloon hunt** – find the hidden balloon and then have a water fight

-**Dodge balloon** (or wet sponges)

-**Water balloon target game**

-**Pinatas** – peg the balloons to a line and use a bat to burst them

-**Balloon and spoon** – like egg and spoon or use a large spoon to transfer balloons from one container to another.



kidfriendlythingstodo.com



planningplaytimes.com



outofschooladventure.com

ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP EYE FOOT COORDINATION

PADDLING POOL TOE DIVE



Fill a paddling pool with toys. The child must try to fish out as many items from the pool as they can using their feet.

BALLOON POP



Burst water balloons by stamping or jumping on them

OBSTACLE COURSE



Set up an obstacle course: walking along a chalk line/rope, run through a row of cones, step in and out of a ladder placed on the ground, step along stepping stones, walk along a plank, climb in and out of cardboard boxes, go up and down a slide, kick a ball at a target

TEACHING RELAXATION STRATEGIES IN PRE-SCHOOL

 WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED TO
LEARN RELAXATION TECHNIQUES? 

Children need to learn coping strategies which teach them how to tolerate overwhelming feelings. Coping strategies and skills help us better manage our feelings, thoughts and behaviours. By teaching children coping strategies, we are teaching important skills that will help them face difficult and stressful situations as they get older. It will start to build up their resilience. Often when we feel overwhelmed by our feelings we first notice it in our bodies. Relaxation is a coping strategy that helps children calm their bodies and calm their thoughts. Relaxed children are able to think more constructively and positively.



BENEFITS OF RELAXATION



- Relaxation can help relax muscles and calm the nervous system
- Relaxation can help promote general good health
 - Relaxation can help children sleep
- Relaxation can help calm and clear your child's mind
 - Relaxation can help with concentration
 - Relaxation can help memory retention
- Relaxation helps reduce stress and anxiety in children
- Relaxation can help develop children's self-confidence and self-esteem
- Relaxation improves emotional health and literacy
- Relaxation can help develop children's imagination, creativity, and self-expression

ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE RELAXATION

NOTE:

Relaxation exercises should be practised regularly so children learn the skills when they are feeling calm and will know what to do when they feel overwhelmed.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR RELAXATION

You may like to ask your child to find a space on the floor where they can lie down

You can provide blankets to put on top of them and create a calm feeling



You can pretend spray "fairy dust" over them as a way to help them settle down

Moderate your tone of voice - children can respond well to soft and soothing moments because of their big imaginations

VISUALISATION

Imagine you are lying on a beautiful sandy beach and you feel the sun warm your body. Make a picture in your mind of the golden sand and warm sun. As the sun warms your body you feel more and more relaxed. The sky is a clear, clear blue. Above you, you can see a small white cloud drifting away into the distance. It is drifting away and you feel more and more relaxed. Now relax for 30 seconds. When you are ready, open your eyes, ready to face the rest of the day relaxed and calm.



DEEP BREATHING



Get the children to imagine they are smelling a beautiful summer flower - close your eyes if that is comfortable. Imagine you are holding a flower. Then breathe out and pretend to blow the flower petals. Repeat the cycle of breathing in and gently breathing out for a couple of minutes. You could pretend to smell a different flower each time you breathe in. You could also imagine yourself sitting in a meadow of fresh flowers. This flower breath is an any easy way to help your child become aware of their breath.

USEFUL WEBSITES/APPS



Headspace

relax Kids



www.relaxkids.com



Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame

THE STARFISH

Lie down on your back, with your legs and arms apart. Stay very still and imagine you are a sleepy starfish resting at the bottom of the ocean. Breathe in, and as you breathe out, relax your head. See how still you can be at the bottom of the ocean, resting like a sleepy starfish. Say to yourself, "I am calm and quiet, I am calm and quiet." You can find this exercise and others in a free relaxation kit. Includes: free MP3s, 10 relaxation exercises, relaxation tips, craft activities, games and more. Download on www.relaxkids.com/freepack

