

Number spotting

When you're out and about together, look for numbers. You might spot some on the doors in your neighbourhood, bus numbers, prices on food, car number plates, 2m apart signs. Support your child by saying the numerals you see – for '35' you could say both 'thirty-five' and 'three' and 'five'. Depending on their stage of development, your child might spot their age 'I'm 3!' or the same number as their door number. If you have a phone you could take photos of the numbers you see. When you get home, you could look at them together. How many numbers did we see altogether, were any the same? *Number (M)*

Shadow Play

Go outside on a sunny day and look at your shadows together. Can your child see their shadow? Can they see yours? What else has a shadow? Move around. What does their shadow do? What do they notice? Can they run away from their shadow? If you're feeling energetic you could play 'Shadow tag' and try to catch each other's shadows. What happens to your shadows if you go in the shade or inside? When you're back indoors, find a torch or a lamp and a darker space. Together, see if you can make shadows – if you can, use some white paper or a pale sheet as a backdrop. Explore the switch to make the light turn on and off. Experiment together – can you make shadows with your hands? With objects? At later stages of development your child may begin to notice that shadows happen when an object blocks the light. At earlier stages you can make shadows for them and see if they copy your movements. *The World, and Technology (UTW)*

Looking through binoculars

First you'll need to make some! Use 2 cardboard tubes and something to fix them together with (tape/glue/stapler). Your child can help with this. You could find some images of people looking through binoculars – what are binoculars for? What do they help us to do? Now let's get looking! You could start by looking around the house or out of the window and talk about what you can see. Take them with you when you go for a walk. Then add in some 'let's pretend'... we're on a bear hunt, we're looking for dinosaurs, we're on safari, we're adventurers looking for treasure. You could add in some props – small or soft wild animal toys, dinosaurs, hide a Teddy to look for. Use lots of language, add suspense as you creep up on something, be very quiet, keep looking. At an earlier stage of development your child can look through a single tube like a telescope. (Remember to warn your child not to look directly at the sun). *Being Imaginative (EAD)*

Story bag

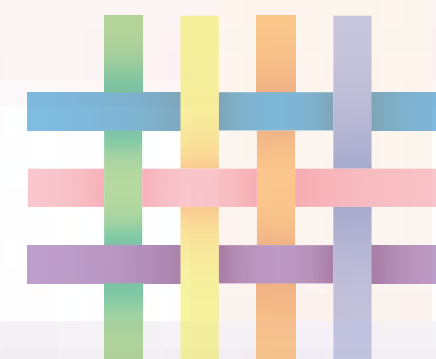
This activity will help your child to predict what might happen next, suggest endings, and practice story structure. Find a bag or empty box and look for some interesting objects to go into it – choose a mix of things that you think will interest your child: a pebble, a toy car, some kitchen tongs, a key, a dinosaur... You can use the story bag in different ways. You could ask your child to choose one thing from the bag. Then together you can tell a story about it, using book language: 'Once upon a time there was a key. It was a magic key. One day...' Model the story telling and pause so your child can add their ideas. Ask 'What happens next?'. The story can be as short or long as you like, and as simple or as complicated as you and your child make it! Remember to ask 'how will the story end?' and include your child's ideas. Another way to use the story bag is to invite your child to take one thing and begin the story with that: 'Once upon a time there was a key. It was a magic key. One day...' then they take out another thing and you weave that into the next part of the tale... 'one day a dinosaur found the magic key and ate it and it glowed in his tummy'... each time you're ready for a new object you can ask 'what will happen next?' Does your child make a suggestion? Remember the story can be as crazy as you like! Finish your story by asking your child what happens at the end. Use lots of descriptive words. You can do this activity over again by changing the objects in the bag/box. At earlier stages of development, your child can choose something from the bag and you can make up simple sentences about it while 'acting them out': 'The blue car drives round and round' or 'The tired teddy goes to sleep'. *Reading (L)*

Here we have some more activities based on the Specific Areas of Learning: **Literacy (L)**, **Maths (M)**, **Understanding the World (UTW)**, and **Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)**. Watch closely - your child will be showing you what they know and when they're ready for something extra.

Under the table and BIG mark making

Any way you can encourage your child to make marks and practice their early writing skills is a bonus! Try these two unusual places to mark make: 1) under the table – get some paper and tape it to the underside of a table. Grab some felt tips or crayons and off they go. If the table is low enough your child will be able to lie on their back and look/reach up. If it's higher, they may need to lie on cushions to raise them, or even sit. 2) big paper – tape bits of paper together to make a really large piece. Go as big as you can or make it very long. Leave this out on the floor with pens and notice what your child does. Do they make big marks, or stay small? Model using the space in different ways and making different kinds of marks. *Writing (L)*

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