

Cluster meeting: talking about under 3's

Tuesday 26th November 2024
3pm or 6:15pm

Beverley Jones

(Early Years Consultant)

Beverley.jones@shropshire.gov.uk

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Feedback from previous meeting
3. Bite-size: creating a communication supportive environment
4. Signposting and support
5. Suggestions for future meetings
6. Q&A's



Introducing solid foods – a roadmap

0-6 months

- Until they are 6 months old, babies should only have breastmilk or formula milk.
- Breastfed babies should be given vitamin D supplements.
- A baby's digestive system isn't mature enough to handle nutrients in foods until around 6 months.

Around 6 months

Babies are ready for solid foods when:

- They can stay sitting and supporting their own head.
- They can coordinate hands, eyes and mouth.
- They can swallow their food.
- Start off with slightly bitter pureed vegetables (like broccoli) before moving onto sweeter ones (like carrot).
- Many babies can handle a range of blended and mashed foods – go at a pace to suit them.
- Food is complementary to breastmilk or formula until they are at least 12 months old.
- Water can be offered as a drink, but cow's milk should never be given as a drink until 12 months.

Around 7-12 months

- Around 7 months, babies should be offered three meals a day, alongside breastmilk or formula.
- As babies become more confident at eating, you can give them food with lumps in.
- Babies have a heightened gag reflex, they will gag and spit out food as they work out how to move lumps around their mouths.
- Babies will naturally reduce the amount of breastmilk they drink as they eat more food. If they are formula fed, gradually reduce the amount of formula milk you give them.

How to cut food for babies

6 to 9 months:

Babies are developing their pincer grasp. Cut food into long, thin strips or wedges to make it easy for them to hold and nibble. Try cooked vegetables, soft fruits and well-cooked pasta.

9 to 12 months:

Babies are getting better at holding things, so introduce bite-sized pieces. This helps them practise chewing. Foods like soft fruits, cheese and well-cooked meat can be cut into pea sized cubes.

Over 12 months:

Older babies and toddlers can handle a variety of textures. Be sure to cut food into pieces that are appropriate for the child's mouth and throat size, making sure they are easy to chew.

Remember:

- Always supervise babies and toddlers while they are eating.
- Avoid choking by cutting food into the right sizes.
- Introduce a variety of textures and flavours.
- Pay attention to what the child likes and doesn't like.



Cutting food safely when introducing solid foods



How to prepare and cut food safely for babies



Share

Watch on  YouTube

[Help for early years providers : Introducing solid foods](#)

[Food safety advice on choking hazards in settings - Foundation Years](#)




Early years choking hazards food safety advice

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For babies and young children, food can be a choking hazard, especially when they do not chew their food well or they try to swallow it whole.

Early years food choking hazards

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Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.

[Weaning - Start for Life - NHS](#)

[Your baby's first solid foods - NHS](#)

[Help your baby enjoy new foods - NHS](#)

Creating a communication supportive environment:

What is a communication supportive environment?

“A communication supportive environment is one that ensures that children’s speech, language and communication skills are planned and supported throughout the day.”

[Creating a communication supportive environment: Early years - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)

Does your physical environment have ...?

- Cosy quiet spaces
- Areas to play and learn
- Minimal background noise
- Resources labelled with pictures and words
- Pictures or photographs to be able to self-register
- Book corners to curl up and share books
- Clear and consistent routines.



Do the children have opportunities to practise their communication skills ..?

- Follow the child's lead and talk about their interests
- Build on what children say
- Talk in simple sentences and pause often
- Model words and sentences that match the child's level.

Further tips can be found at:

[Supporting babies' early communication skills](#)

[Supporting children's early communication skills](#)



What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-
FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf

Do the children have lots of opportunities to practise their speech, language and communication skills throughout the day..?

- Having 1:1 conversations with their key person
- Sharing books with their key person (1:1 or 1:2 each day)
- Spending time in a small group with their key person (islands of intimacy)
- Opportunities to explore real objects and real experiences in and out of the setting.

On reflection ...

Does your environment have different spaces for different purposes and for different types of conversations?



Signposting and support:

Links to further resources

- [!\[\]\(e43e4b1050bbff3ab0579ed9f5c72143_img.jpg\) 0.3 Year Olds EY Booklist](#)
- [!\[\]\(e7d3cee3a7083a6857e0f6e8a0e459d2_img.jpg\) Know How Guide Working With Under 2'S \(November 2024\)](#)
- [!\[\]\(9a63baa92001a7c79bbe2079f9b71672_img.jpg\) Know How Guide Working With 2 Year Olds \(November 2024\)](#)
- [!\[\]\(bca03746d1733b80de7b9db49848da6f_img.jpg\) Bite Size CPD Playing With Schemas](#)
- [!\[\]\(053f9a1074e44c4b64650195d0753efc_img.jpg\) Bite Size CPD Best Beginnings Caring For Babies \(2\)](#)

[Babies and toddlers | Shropshire Learning Gateway](#)

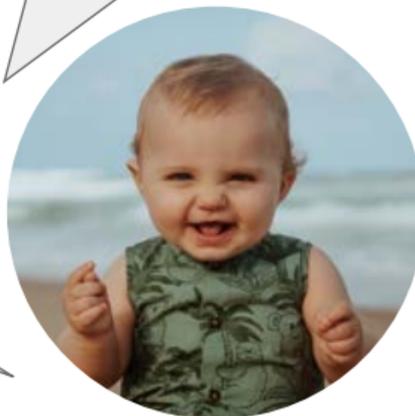
Birth to three: how you can help me with my learning

Communication & Language

- Sing songs and rhymes during everyday activities like nappy changes.
- Tell me the names of things as I pick them up to explore. I need to hear a variety of words.
- Listen and wait for me to speak or communicate with a sound or a look first. Repeat and build on what I say by adding one or two words.
- When you talk to me, give me time – 10 seconds helps me understand and think of a reply.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- Let me help get snack or lunch ready and learn to pour my own drink.
- Help me understand my feelings by using words to label my feelings like 'sad', 'upset,' 'angry'
- Model turn taking – "Can I have a turn?" "My turn next."



Physical Development

- Give me lots of different things to grasp, hold, squeeze and explore, like finger paint, playdough, spoons, brushes, shells.
- Let me try to put my shoes on.
- Play ball games with me.

Virtual support sessions:

- Every Thursday morning
09:30 – 12:00
- **Beverley Jones**
- **Tel: 01743 254454**
- Any questions or queries about a child's learning and development and behaviour.



Suggestions for future meetings:



Support for practitioners

Access resources and advice to help improve practice in the early years, including SEND guidance.



Areas of learning

Find out more about each area of learning, including activities you can do in your setting.



Health and wellbeing

Resources to help you support children's health, safety and learning.

[Help for early years providers : Get help for your setting](#)

Next meeting:

Tuesday 18th March 2025

- 3pm – 4pm or 6:15pm – 7:15pm

Booking details will be available at:

- [CPD Schedule and Booking Information 2024 - 2025 | Shropshire Learning Gateway](#)

