

LEARNING AT HOME:

Ideas for parents and carers about learning at Early Level



When your child is in an early learning centre, nursery or in P1 at school we say that they are learning at Early Level. For some children learning at this Level can be later. Part of every child's learning is about **families and friendships**, that **every child is unique and special, their bodies, feelings and making choices** and **looking after living things**. This is part of our Health and Wellbeing learning called *Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood* education.

You are your child's first and most important teacher. With your child at an early learning centre, nursery or school there is the opportunity for parents/carers and staff to work together to help your child to learn. In the pages that follow we explore how you might support learning, there are also some quotes from parents who have been asked about what they do to support their child's learning.

When children are learning at Early Level we think about 'teachable moments'. These are the times when we don't necessarily plan a learning activity, things just pop up and there's an opportunity to help a child learn. When it comes to learning about health and wellbeing this is a good way to think about how you can support learning at home. Here are a few ideas - some of these things are kind of obvious and you will be doing them day-to-day, we mention them just because they do back-up the learning we do at school.

Learning about family and friendships

- **Talking about families.**
Children love to hear stories about you when you were their age and growing up, and about relatives near and far. You can draw or paint family portraits, family trees or start a family/selfie gallery. You can talk about how all our families are different. All the while it is possible to remind children who loves and cares for them, and who is there to support them.
- **Talking about friendships.**
At home and in the community, parents can help their child to meet and play with other children, from family members to neighbours and at local play groups or clubs. It's good for children to have the space to play and work out the challenges of getting on with others – like sharing things, or a child not being nice to them. Parents can also say how happy they are to see kindness and sharing and cooperation.

We have some of these books at school, others you should be able to borrow from the local Library – if they don't have them they might be able to order them for you. Always have a read for yourself and you can decide if they are right for you at home. Enjoy!

The Family Book by Todd Parr

The Family Book celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in.

Families, Families, Families! by Suzanne Lang

If you love each other then you are a family. Discover a whole host of silly animal families in this celebration of the love found in families big and small.

We belong together: a book about adoption and families by Todd Parr

There are lots of different ways to make a family. It just takes love.

Do you sing twinkle? A story about remarriage and new family by Sandra Levins

This book addresses many feelings and questions that children may have while adjusting to remarriage and a blended family after their parents' divorce.

Mommy, Mama and Me by Leslea Newman

From hide-and-seek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together.

Do you want to be my friend? By Eric Carle

Do you want to be my friend asks a little mouse in this classic story.

The boy who built a wall around himself by Ali Redford

Boy built a wall to keep himself safe. Behind it he felt strong and more protected. Then Someone Kind came along...

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

"We have a large family, so we often go through the names of who is in the family to make sure he knows who his grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins are."

"My dad, his Grandpa, looked out some photos of him and I when we were the same age as my son and I are now. It was fun for all of us; my son learnt about his heritage and my dad and I were able to joke about the fashions of the 1980s!"

Learning about every child being unique and special

- **We are all unique!**

When you chat and play together remind your child just how important and special they are. You can talk about all the things they are good at, their own special characteristics and what you love about them. You can also have them think about what makes their brothers, sisters, cousins or friends unique and special.

- **Being a boy or a girl.**

In early years settings and in P1 at school, children are encouraged to be happy with who they are, with the kind of girl or boy they want to be. Many children fit what people often expect a boy or girl to like or to do – others don't. At school, we will do

our best to treat all children equally. At home you can encourage your child to be who they want to be, to play with all different kinds of toys, dress up and do what they enjoy, to share tasks around the home, and to help them learn to respect other children whoever they may be. It's also really helpful to encourage boys and girls to be friends when they want to be, and not to talk about these as girlfriend/boyfriend relationships.

These books will help learning at home. Ask at your local library about them:

All about Me by Debbie MacKinnon and Anthea Sieveking

Children learn about their bodies and themselves by naming, counting, discovering and comparing.

Colin and Lee, Carrot and Pea by Morag Hood

Helps children celebrate individuality, friendship... and vegetables!

I love you just the way you are by Tammi Salzano

A mum and son go about their daily routine with familiar activities such as dressing up, reading, painting and bath time.

It's okay to be different by Todd Parr

Bold, bright colours and silly scenes all about acceptance, understanding and confidence.

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

"I want her to be a girl who can have a mind of her own – be what she wants."

"Mixed sex friendships are very common, for under 5s, up to early primary school. They're just best pals."

"My son often points out people who look different to what he has seen before in his life. He recently said 'look mummy that lady only has one arm'. I just keep it casual and say yes we are all born different and some people just have one arm. Mummy has brown hair and daddy has no hair, just like that."

Learning about their bodies

- **The words we use.** In early learning and in P1 at school, we will use these words: penis, vulva, bottom and nipples. We do this because if children have the correct words this means we all understand each other. This keeps them safe. And they learn that these are just parts of their bodies, they shouldn't be embarrassed about them. You can use these words when you need to talk about their private parts. (Just to explain, we use the word vulva because this is the correct word for the part of their genitals that the girl can see – the vagina is the bit inside).
- **My body belongs to me!** This is the big message we want to get over to children. Children can learn that being touched is their choice. At home you can make sure you don't tell your child they have to kiss someone goodbye or have to go sit on someone's knee – they can decide! You can also give your child the clear message

that if anyone touches or tries to touch their private parts, they can tell you and they will never get in to trouble for such a thing.

- **In the bathroom.** When your child goes to the toilet or has a bath or shower there are opportunities to encourage them to think about what's private. You might have heard of the PANTS rule, this is a way to say to children that their pants cover their private parts. Also, unless you have to help, children can begin to do more things independently. They can close the bathroom door, wash their hands, put on their clothes.

These books will help learning at home. Ask at your local library about them:

My body: Usborne Very First Words (Board Book) by Felicity Books

It includes names for parts of the body, the senses, clothes, things we can do, and what our bodies need to stay healthy.

Lift the flap Questions and Answers about my body by Katie Daynes

The book is filled with entertaining and informative illustrations to help to answer all kinds of body questions that young children ask.

It's My Body by Lory Freeman

A book to teach young children how to resist uncomfortable touch.

Your body belongs to you by Cornelia Spelman

In simple reassuring language the author explains that children can decline a friendly hug or kiss, even from someone they love, and still be friends.

My Body Belongs to Me from My Head to My Toes by Dagmar Geisler

Provides children with confidence about accepting and rejecting physical contact from others, helping to give children a voice in uncomfortable situations.

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

"We often talk about body parts and what is private. It begins in the bath when they are naked."

"I will use the words they are taught."

Learning about feelings and making choices

- **How are you feeling?** At home you can ask and talk about feelings – when your child is excited or happy, but also when they are a bit worried or unsure. A child might not have all the words to explain why they feel something, but you can help them recognise how in their body (or in their tummy) they feel in different circumstances. Recognising feelings and encouraging chats will really help now and in the future.
- **Learning about trusted adults.** In early learning and at school, we are helping children learn about all different adults who help and support them and who can help if they are ever worried or concerned about something. You could talk at home

about how you are always there for your child and also help them recognise the other adults in their life who love and care for them.

These books will help learning at home. Ask at your local library about them:

I feel angry/I feel frightened/I feel sad/I'm worried are all books by Brian Moses.

The books look at these feelings in an amusing and reassuring way.

Little Meerkat's Big Panic: A story about learning new ways to feel calm by Jane Evans

This playful full-colour storybook shows children aged 2-6 easy ways for them to calm their body and brain when feeling anxious.

The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside

Whenever Jenny goes, her worries follow her - in a big blue bag! But her grannie can help.

This story will appeal to all children who have occasional worries of their own.

My many coloured days by Dr Seuss

'You'd be surprised how many ways I change on different coloured days'. Dr Seuss takes the reader on a journey through many different moods.

No Means No! by Jayneen Sanders and Cherie Zamazing

'No Means No!' is a children's picture book about an empowered little girl who has a very strong and clear voice in all issues.

Oliver who was small but mighty by Mara Bergman and Nick Maland

Oliver is small but he wishes he were tall and mighty. This story is about overcoming your fears.

"He doesn't decide on big things, but makes his own decisions, to see how things turn out."

"When it comes to helping make choices and decisions I always explain to my son that his body is private and he and only he will decide who can touch him i.e. if he doesn't want to give a goodbye cuddle or a kiss to a relative or friend then its ok. I will not be forcing him and I do not allow anyone to try to change his mind. I want to show him its always ok to say no, it's ok to say no to an adult and adults are not always right."

Learning about looking after living things

- **Looking after living things.** At home you can grow and look after plants or vegetables, as well as have pets that children have some responsibilities for when it comes to their care.
- **Pregnancy.** At school, we will use some of the books listed below to talk about how a pregnancy begins and how the baby grows in the mummy's womb. At home or in the family or with friends there may be opportunities for children to meet and chat to

women who are pregnant; children will be curious and fascinated to find out more! Pregnancies at home, with the arrival of new brothers or sisters or cousins, are great opportunities to learn about the developments across a pregnancy.

- **What do babies need?** Although very young themselves we want children to learn about all the things a baby needs to be healthy, happy and safe. Again, you can use personal experiences to help your child learn. You can talk about what kind of baby they were, and what helped soothe them and keep them healthy, happy and safe. If there are little brothers or sisters or cousins around, then involve your child and help them recognise and respond to needs.

These books will help learning at home. Ask at your local library about them:

I want a pet by Lauren Child

The more desperate for a pet a young narrator becomes, the more outlandish her suggestions!

What Did I look Like When I Was a Baby? by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross

This book explores family traits and genes in a funny and accessible style.

How did I Begin? by Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom

A warm, friendly introduction to the facts of life for young children that follows the story of a new life from the moment of conception to the birth of a baby.

Before you were born by Jennifer Davis

This joyous, innovative book is about pregnancy.

How are babies made? by Alastair Smith

Lift the flaps on the pages to see the baby changing as it grows and grows.

Now We Have a Baby by Lois Rock

Preparing a young child for the impact a new baby may have on their life and family.

“Now age 3 and with mum expecting second baby my daughter has started to ask questions regarding body parts, generally when she is in the bath or see’s mum or dad getting showered, changed. This is a very new development and we are giving everything its correct name rather than a nickname.”

LEARNING AT SCHOOL:

Information for parents and carers about learning at Early Level



When your child is in an early learning centre, nursery or in P1 at school we say that they are learning at Early Level. For some children learning at this Level can be later. Part of every child's learning is about **families and friendships**, that **every child is unique and special**, **their bodies, feelings and making choices** and **looking after living things**. This is part of our Health and Wellbeing learning called *Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood* education. Here are the main things we learn about at this Level:

When it comes to **families and friendships**, children learn:

- That all our families are different, and that people who are important to the children provide care and love.
- How to make and keep friendships, thinking about how they get along with other children, play together, co-operate and share. This can include learning about personal space and to recognise and respect how another person is feeling.
- About the importance of kindness and showing kindness to others.

When it comes to **every child being unique and special** children learn:

- That people are individual and unique.
- About the similarities and differences among children in their group.
- To understand that treating someone badly based on a difference is not okay.

When it comes to **their bodies**, children learn about:

- Names for parts of their body – and that parts of their body are private.
- Keeping clean and why this is important – learning about hand washing and brushing teeth.

When it comes to **feelings and making choices** children learn:

- To recognise and express their feelings, including when they might feel safe or unsafe, happy or worried.
- To identify adults that they can go to if they have a question or a worry, introducing the idea of trust.

When it comes to **looking after them and other living things** children learn about:

- Where living things come from.
- The needs of plants, animals and babies.
- That there are professional people who help and care for them, like nursery staff, teachers, doctors or nurses.

How do we learn at school?

Children are curious. They are really interested in how people get on and learning about their bodies. While learning at your child's centre or school is important, children are of course very dependent on their parents and carers to look after them, love and care for them and help them learn behaviours and values for life. For children learning at Early Level a lot of our learning together is about talking and playing, so staff will use conversations,

games, drawing and story books to support learning about health and wellbeing. You can find out more about the learning activities we use on this national resource:

<https://rshp.scot/early-years/>

LEARNING AT SCHOOL:

Information for parents and carers about learning at First Level



When your child is in P2, P3 or P4 we say that they are learning at First Level. For some children learning at this Level can also be later. Part of our learning at school is about **relationships, growing up, their bodies** and what we call **the baby's story**. This is part of our Health and Wellbeing learning called *Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood* education. Here are the main things we learn about at this Level:

When it comes to relationships children learn about:

- What makes them unique
- Families, and how all our families are different
- The different adults who might care for children – like teachers, support staff in school or medical staff
- Making and having friends
- Being a boy and a girl and that they can be any kind of boy or girl they want to be
- What makes people alike and what makes us different (diversity)
- Respect for others and the importance of being kind.

When it comes to growing up and their body children learn about:

- Making choices and decisions
- Looking after their body and keeping clean
- How their bodies change as they grow
- Names of parts of their body and names for private body parts; we use the words penis, vulva, bottom, nipples
- Parts of their body are private
- Other people should not touch the private parts of their body
- What behaviour is okay in public and what is okay in private (for example pulling pants up before leaving the bathroom).

When it comes to how human life begins, pregnancy and birth children learn about:

- The life cycles of plants and animals
- How a baby is made (conception)
- Pregnancy and how a baby is born
- What a baby needs and how to care for a baby.

How do we learn at school?

Children at this age are curious. They are really interested in how people get on, learning about their bodies and about babies. While learning at school is important they are also very dependent on their parents and carers to look after them, love and care for them and help them learn behaviours and values for life. For children this age a lot of our learning together is about talking and playing. At school we will use conversations, games, drawing and story books to support learning about health and wellbeing. You can find out more about the learning activities we use on this national resource: <https://rshp.scot/first-level/>

LEARNING AT HOME:

Ideas for parents and carers about learning at First Level



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You are your child's first and most important teacher. With your child at school there is the opportunity for parents/carers and schools to work together to help your child to learn. In the pages that follow we explore how you might support learning, there are also some ideas from parents who have been asked about what they do to support their child's learning.

Learning about relationships

At home you can do these things - some of these things are kind of obvious and you will be doing them day-to-day, we mention them just because they do back-up the learning we do at school.

- **We are all unique!** When you chat and play together remind your child just how important and special they are. Talk about all the things they are good at and what you love about them. You can also have them think about what makes their brothers or sisters or cousins or friends unique and special.
- **Talking about families.** Children love to hear stories about you growing up, about relatives near and far. Small families can celebrate how close they are. You can draw or paint family portraits, family trees or start a family/selfie gallery.
- **Learning about trusted adults.** At school we are helping children learn about all different adults who help and support them and who can help if they are ever worried or concerned about something. You could talk at home about the other adults in your child's life who love and care for them.
- **Being a boy or a girl.** At school we encourage children to be happy with who they are, with the kind of girl or boy they want to be. Many children fit what people often expect a boy or girl to like or to do – others don't. At school we will do our best to treat all children equally. At home you can encourage your child to be who they want to be, to share tasks at home, and to help them learn to respect other children whoever they are.

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

"We take opportunities as they arise for open conversations... something we see on TV or on the bus and use it."

“Boys swap stickers with girls, both do football training, so things have changed, it’s refreshing.”

“There’s no pressure from us. We encourage him to do his dancing; he was embarrassed at first so we assured him it was okay.”

“I tell her girls can do everything.”

“LGBT came up as someone at school had been talking about a celebrity saying he was gay. I told them what ‘gay’ means and we had a chat about boys who fancy boys/girls who fancy girls, they didn’t think there was anything strange about it, and we talked about not using the word as an insult.”

Learning about growing up and bodies

At school we talk about ‘teachable moments’. There are the times when we don’t necessarily plan a learning activity, things just pop up and there’s an opportunity to help a child learn. When it comes to growing up and learning about their body this is a good way to think about how you can support learning at home. Here are a few ideas.

- **My body belongs to me!** This is the big message we want to get over to children at school. Children can learn that being touched is their choice. At home you can make sure you don’t tell your child they have to kiss someone goodbye or go sit on someone’s knee – they can decide! You can also give your child the clear message that if anyone touches or tries to touch their private parts they can tell you and they will never get in to trouble for such a thing.
- **In the bathroom.** When your child goes to the toilet or has a bath or shower there are opportunities to encourage them to think about what’s private. Unless you have to help, children can do things independently. They can close doors, wash their hands, put on their clothes.
- **The words we use.** At school we will use these words: penis, vulva, bottom and nipples. We do this because if children have the correct words this means we all understand each other. This keeps them safe. And they learn that these are just parts of their bodies, they shouldn’t be embarrassed about them. You can use these words when you need to talk about their private parts. (Just to explain, we use the word vulva because this is the correct word for the part of their genitals that the girl can see – the vagina is the inside bit).
- **The Pants Rule.** Children love this way to learn about private parts. Have a look here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

“We have had a chat about my daughter’s body parts and the difference between a boy and a girl as she began to ask questions and so I felt if she was asking the questions then she was ready for the answers.”

“They are aware of other names used ‘flower, winky, willy etc.’ I have always ensured that ‘vulva’ ‘penis’ have been used as correct terms for their anatomy.”

“He’s 5 and he knows the word penis. He can choose what to call it.”

“I decided to use the school words because I didn’t want to confuse him.”

“For a mother this is a bit embarrassing for me as I am quite a private person when it comes to anything about the body etc. but I have realised I have to be open and confident in what I am saying and I want him to know that he can come to me whatever is on his mind.”

“They learn this from school, that pants is their safe area. I’m happy with the schools doing this.”

Learning about how human life begins, pregnancy and birth

At school children learn about how life is created, about pregnancy and birth. We do this by talking about plants and animals, and of course this means talking about human life. We do this because children are curious, they really want to know and its best to be very straightforward. You have probably already been asked: *but where do babies come from?* Here are some ideas about how to talk and learn about this at home. **There are some really great books that help with these conversations. Check out the booklist that follows.**

- **How are babies made?** At school, we will talk about how a baby is made in simple terms that describe sex and conception. Before we do this lesson, we will share the PowerPoint and words that we use so that you can support this learning at home.
- **Pregnancy.** At school, we will talk about how the baby grows in the mummy’s womb. At home or in the family or with friends there may be opportunities for children to meet and chat to women who are pregnant; they will be curious and fascinated to find out more! Pregnancies at home, with the arrival of new brothers or sisters or cousins, are great opportunities to learn about the developments across a pregnancy.
- **How are babies born?** At school children will learn about the baby getting ready to be born and coming down from the womb and out of the mummy’s vagina. At home you can talk about your child’s birth, or the birth of siblings. Maybe you have some early photos to share.
- **What do babies need?** Although very young themselves we want children to learn at school about all the things a baby needs to be healthy, happy and safe. Again, you can use personal experiences to help your child learn. You can talk about what kind of baby they were, and what helped soothe them and keep them healthy, happy and safe.

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

“I explain a lot about reproduction and pregnancy using a book I used when I was pregnant.”

“My daughter was there every step of the way when deciding to have more children to pregnancy and birth so is well clued up on this!”

“I’ve always honest and proactive in discussion when opportunities present themselves such as discussing how I gave birth and what was involved in making a baby - age appropriate though.”

The importance of listening and talking

As you will know, sometimes you just need to be in the right place at the right time. At those moments your child will show an emotion you pick up on, maybe they will look like they need to tell or ask you something, or maybe the question will just pop out. There’s no doubt being a parent or carer can be tough sometimes. But when you can, be there for the chat, the game or the bedtime book.

“It’s about talking about issues. He knows that he can come to me or other family members - I have told him there is not a topic that is off limits.”

Books for Reading Together

We have some of these books at school, others you should be able to borrow from the local Library – if they don’t have them they might be able to order them for you. Enjoy!

Lift the flap Questions and Answers about my Body

Katie Daynes (ISBN 9781409562108)

This Lift-the-Flap book contains the answers to the many questions that curious children have about their bodies, including ‘How do I smell?’ ‘What makes me burp?’ ‘Why do I need to wash my hands?’ ‘Why is blood red?’ and many more.

Your body belongs to you

Cornelia Spelman (ISBN 978-0-8075-9473-5)

In simple reassuring language the author explains that children can decline a friendly hug or kiss, even from someone they love, and still be friends. The text and illustrations remind children that their feelings count. Positive and assertive approach.

Colin and Lee, Carrot and Pea

Morag Hood (ISBN 1509808949)

The perfect way to help children celebrate individuality, friendship... and vegetables!

Miles is the boss of his body

Samantha Kurtzman- Counter and Abbie Schiller (ISBN 0989407136)

On his 6th birthday, Miles' excitement is dimmed when he finds himself being pinched, hugged too tight, picked up and tickled by his well-intentioned family and decides he's had enough! When Miles decrees that he is the "Boss of his body," his whole family expresses support and respect for his personal boundaries.

Who's in a Family

Robert Skutch (ISBN 1883672139)

Family is important, but who's in a family? It's the people who love you the most! This picture book has no preconceptions about what makes a family a family. There's even equal time given to some of children's favourite animal families.

Families, Families, Families!

Suzanne Lang (ISBN 9780552572927)

If you love each other then you are a family. Discover a whole host of silly animal families in this celebration of the love found in families big and small.

The Huge Bag of Worries

Virginia Ironside (ISBN 0340903171)

Whenever Jenny goes, her worries follow her - in a big blue bag! Jenny decides they will have to go. But who can she get to help her? This funny and reassuring story will appeal to all children who have occasional worries of their own.

I'm a Girl!

Yasmeen Ismail (ISBN 1408857006)

The girl in this book likes to win, she likes to be spontaneous, fast and strong. When she meets a boy who likes wearing princess dresses and playing dolls, they both quickly discover that they share interests that are wide and varied. Who says that pink is for girls and blue is for boys?

My many coloured days

Dr Seuss (ISBN 0099266598)

'You'd be surprised how many ways I change on different coloured days. Maybe on some days you feel sort of brown, like a bear; you feel slow and low, low down. But then comes a yellow day and wheeeeeeeeeee! you feel like a busy, buzzy bee'. Dr Seuss takes the reader on a journey through many different moods.

No Means No!

Jayneen Sanders and Cherie Zamazing (ISBN 1925089223)

'No Means No!' is a children's picture book about an empowered little girl who has a very strong and clear voice in all issues, especially those relating to her body and personal boundaries.

Friends

Eric Carle (ISBN 0399172068)

Once there were two friends who were always together... But one day, the boy was all alone. His friend was gone. Undaunted, he sets off on a quest that takes him across a swift cold river, over a tall mountain, through a broad meadow and a forest full of dark shadows. He sleeps under starry skies and dreams of floating on clouds before finally being reunited with his beloved friend.

The boy who built a wall around himself

Ali Redford (ISBN 1849056838)

Boy built a wall to keep himself safe. Behind it he felt strong and more protected. Then Someone Kind came along. Written for children aged 4 to 9, this gentle full-colour picture book uses a simple metaphor to explain how children who have had painful or traumatic experiences can build barriers between themselves and other people. It will help children explore their feelings and encourage communication.

The Invisible Boy

Trudy Ludwig (ISBN 9781582464503)

Meet Brian, the invisible boy. Nobody ever seems to notice him or think to include him in their group, game, or birthday party . . . until, that is, a new kid comes to class. When Justin, the new boy, arrives, Brian is the first to make him feel welcome. And when Brian and Justin team up to work on a class project together, Brian finds a way to shine. This gentle story shows how small acts of kindness can help children feel included and allow them to flourish.

Kindness Starts with you

Jacquelyn Stagg (ISBN 1775183319)

Follow Maddy through her day at school, where your child will learn how easy it can be to spread kindness! From taking turns on the swing to including everyone in the game - this storybook shows that no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

What Did I look Like When I Was a Baby?

Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross (ISBN 184270 2106)

Michael asks his mum; the baboons asks his mum and all other animals ask their mums. The answer in each case is amusing and satisfyingly simple. This book explores family traits and genes in a funny and accessible style. Amusing with lovely visual jokes.

How did I begin?

Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom (ISBN 978-0-7496-5661-4)

An introduction to the facts of life for young children that follows the story from conception to birth of a baby.

Before you were born

Jennifer Davis (ISBN 0761112006)

This joyous, innovative book about pregnancy tells the parallel story of mother and baby from hearing the thumpity-thump of baby's heartbeat to that unforgettable first meeting.

How are babies made?

Alastair Smith (ISBN 0746025025)

Discover how a baby forms inside its mother. Lift the flaps on the pages to see the baby changing as it grows and grows.

Now We Have a Baby

Lois Rock (ISBN 07459 48855)

There's a new baby in your family. There are so many important things to think about and so much you will have to learn to do. Preparing a young child for the impact a new baby may have on their life and family.

Stories for boys who dare to be different

Ben Brooks (ISBN 978-1-78747-198-6)

True tales of amazing boys (who became famous and not so famous men) who changed the world.

Goodnight stories for rebel girls

Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo (ISBN 978-0-141-98600-5)

The stories of heroic women from around the world.

LEARNING AT SCHOOL:

Information for parents and carers about learning at Second Level



When your child is in P5, P6 or P7 we say that they are learning at Second Level. For some children learning at this Level can also be earlier or later. Part of our learning at school is about relationships, being safe, growing up, their bodies, how human life begins, pregnancy, birth and being a parent/carer. This is part of our Health and Wellbeing learning called Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood education.

When it comes to relationships children learn about:

- What makes them unique and what makes people alike and what makes us different (diversity)
- Making and having friends
- Being a boy and a girl, and that they can be any kind of boy or girl they want to be
- Loving relationships and being attracted to others
- Respect for others and the importance of being kind – in our face-to-face relationships and online.

When it comes to being safe children learn about:

- Social media and being safe and smart online
- Feeling safe and unsafe
- Different kinds of abuse and neglect that can happen to a child
- What we mean by consent
- Who they can go to for help and support.

When it comes to growing up and learning about their body children learn about:

- Making choices and decisions
- Looking after their body and keeping clean
- Puberty and how the bodies and emotions of both girls and boys change as they grow
- What 'having sex' is and about contraception and condoms.

When it comes to conception, pregnancy, birth and being a parent/carer children learn about:

- How a baby is made (conception)
- Pregnancy and how a baby is born
- Being a parent and thinking about what kind of parent they would be.

How do we learn at school?

Children at this age are curious. They are really interested in how people get on, learning about their bodies and will have questions about sex. While learning at school is important they are also very dependent on their parents and carers to look after them, love and care for them and help them learn behaviours and values for life. At school we will use conversations, games, drawing and story books to support learning about health and wellbeing. You can find out more about the learning activities we use on this national resource: <https://rshp.scot/second-level/>

LEARNING AT HOME:

Ideas for parents and carers about learning at Second Level



When your child is in P5, P6 or P7 we say that they are learning at Second Level. For some children learning at this Level can also be earlier or later. Part of our learning at school is about **relationships, being safe, growing up, their bodies** and **conception, pregnancy, birth** and **being a parent/carer**. This is part of our Health and Wellbeing learning called *Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood* education.

You are your child's first and most important teacher. With your child at school there is the opportunity for parents/carers and schools to work together to help your child to learn. In the pages that follow we explore how you might support learning, there are also some ideas from parents who have been asked about what they do to support their child's learning.

Learning about relationships

At home you can do these things - some of these things are kind of obvious and you will be doing them day-to-day, we mention them just because they do back-up learning at school.

- **We are all unique!** When you chat and play together remind your child just how important and special they are. Talk about all the things they are good at and what you love about them. You can also have them think about what makes their brothers, sisters, cousins or friends unique and special.
- **Making and having friends.** At this age our children start to become a bit more independent and their friendships become more important to them. This also means that 'fall-outs' become more common. At home you can encourage your child to be friendly to others, to be kind and to do their best to not get involved in arguments and fall-outs. But when your child has a problem with a friend you can also spend time just talking and helping them to figure out the best way to fix a problem – this can include speaking to someone at school to see if we can help too.
- **Being a boy or a girl.** At school we encourage children to be happy with who they are, with the kind of girl or boy they want to be. At school we will do our best to treat all children equally. At home you can encourage your child to be who they want to be, to share tasks at home, and to help them learn to respect other children whoever they are.
- **Loving relationships.** At this age children might already feel some pressure to have boyfriends/girlfriends. You may have already heard someone ask your child: *Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend yet?* This can get in the way of girls and boys simply being friends. At school we recognise that the early stages of puberty mean that children might start to develop feelings for others, and of course that's okay, but it would also be great if at school and at home we help children to simply be children and to play and have fun with each other with no pressure to be in relationships. When we learn about relationships at school it is about helping the child to be confident about

themselves and to imagine that when they are older, and ready for a relationship, this should be with someone who shows respect and care for them.

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

“Have talked about friendships with my daughter. Feel that it’s helpful to talk at their level and relate it to their friends. Also talked about situations where she had experienced problems and what may have helped her to deal with this.”

“He’s very pally with girls and says ‘she’s not my girlfriend!’”

“There’s lots of pressure on lassies, stuff about their weight. Short skirts. And boys, their behaviour needs to be macho, the way they talk like men.”

“At school attitudes and experiences open up. You have to talk with him. I want him to talk about friendships and learn how to manage experiences. To help create who he’ll be. I want him to take the right path.”

Learning about being safe

At this age an important area for learning is to help our children be safe, to recognise and trust their feelings, and to remember who to go to if they need to talk or get help. At home you could think about doing some of these things:

- **Social media and being safe and smart online.** At this age children might be online more, doing homework, chatting to friends, playing games or watching YouTube. At home you can talk about how being online is like being in a place, and wherever you are you need to be and feel safe. You can help your child learn about what information not to share and about coming to you if something they see or hear upsets them. When we are learning about this at school we will let you know and suggest some things you can look at with your child to help your family learn about being safe online.
- **Feeling safe and unsafe.** Children at this age can be helped to recognise, understand and trust their feelings. We can help children to recognise feelings that they feel with their body (in a nervous tummy for example) and feelings in their head (when you just know something isn’t right). You can talk to your child about their feelings and what they feel when they are nervous, unhappy, worried or scared.
- **Different kinds of abuse and neglect that can happen to a child.** We all want the best for our children and for them to be carefree. At school we will learn about abuse which can be physical or sexual abuse or neglect. We do this because we want children to understand these things are wrong, and that a child is never to blame if this happens. At home, when watching TV, or reading a book, these kinds of situations will come up – you can talk to your child and help them understand that every child has the right to be safe and cared for.
- **What we mean by consent.** Consent means asking someone’s permission to do something. Learning about consent helps children to understand that they are the boss of their body. We will share some information with you when we are learning

about consent at school, but basically learning at home could also be about encouraging children to ask for permission for things and understand and accept when the answer is yes or no.

- **Who they can go to for help and support.** Not only are you your child's first and most important teacher, you are also their most important support. At school we will encourage the children to think about adults they trust and can go to if they have a question or worry – you can do this at home too. You can encourage your child to talk about adults in school that they like and trust.

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

“I don't feel I have enough understanding to ensure I'm doing what I should be to help keep my child safe.”

“The kids are on the tablet, they ask for Facebook because their pals are on it. If you come in the room they close the page, you can be in the other room and not have a clue.”

“I talk to him about bullying so that he understands how he likes to be treated and how he should treat other people.”

“I am teaching her about what's right and what's wrong and that she should treat people the way that she would want to be treated.”

Learning about growing up and bodies

By the time children get to the final years of Primary school there are changes happening to their bodies – they are growing up fast. At home you will be dealing with things like your child wanting privacy, being more independent and the early changes that come with puberty – both body changes and strong feelings.

When it comes to learning about these things at home we would like you to think about what are sometimes called 'teachable moments'. There are the times when we don't necessarily plan learning, things just pop up and there's an opportunity to help a child learn. Here are a few ideas.

- **Privacy and 'my body belongs to me!'** When your child goes to the toilet, goes swimming, or has a bath or shower there are opportunities to encourage them to think about what's private. Unless you have to help, children can do things independently. There will probably be lots of time at home where you can remind your child that they are the boss of their body, children can learn that being touched is their choice, and that no-one should touch or ask about their private parts.
- **How the bodies of both girls and boys change as they grow.** At school this means learning about puberty including how feelings change. All children will learn about physical changes, like what happens to their hair, skin, body shape, breasts, smell, periods (menstruation), erections and wet dreams. We will talk about personal

hygiene. We understand that it might be a wee bit embarrassing to talk about some things at home, but at school we will do this in a very matter-of-fact way. It's all about basic human development and happens to us all!

- **What 'having sex' is and about contraception and condoms.** When we talk about sex at school this is explained in very basic ways. We learn about sex as part of adult loving relationships. We do this because, as you will know, children ask questions about this stuff. We also explain what contraception and condoms are, again because children hear about these things and we want them to have good, accurate, basic information. We will share the learning activities with you before we do them, so that you can think about how you would like to talk about it at home.

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

"We're just talking about things as they happen."

"They ask questions and you have to be honest, about hair on their body, we want them to be happy with the changes. It's a different generation, you need to talk."

"We are always open in the home about the names of genitals and don't give them childish names. We speak about what happens when he has an erect penis and why this happens. We answer any questions honestly but with age in mind."

"My daughter was there every step of the way when deciding to have more children to pregnancy and birth so is well clued up on this!"

Learning about conception, pregnancy, birth and being a parent/carer

At school children learn about how life is created, about pregnancy and birth. When they are younger we do this by talking about plants and animals, and this moves on to talking about human life. We do this because children are curious, they really want to know and its best to be very straightforward. Here are some ideas about how to do this at home. **There are some really great books that help with these conversations. Check out the booklist that follows.**

- **How are babies made?** At school, we will talk about how a baby is made in simple terms that describe sex and conception. Before we do this lesson we will share the PowerPoint and words that we use so that you can support this learning at home.
- **Pregnancy.** At school, we will talk about how the baby grows in the mum's womb. At home or in the family or with friends there may be opportunities for children to meet and chat to women who are pregnant; they will be curious and fascinated to find out more! Pregnancies at home with the arrival of new brothers or sisters or cousins are great opportunities to learn about the developments across a pregnancy.
- **How are babies born?** At school children will learn about the baby getting ready to be born and coming down from the womb and out of the mum's vagina. At home you

can talk about your child's birth, or the birth of siblings. Maybe you have some early photos to share.

- **Being a parent and thinking about what kind of parent they would be.** Although very young themselves we want children to learn at school about all the things a child needs to be healthy, happy and safe. Learning about being a parent helps children understand what an important job this is. You can use personal experiences to help your child learn, helping them to understand and recognise all the things you do for them, from when they were a baby to the age they are now.

Here are some of the things other parents have said:

"We ask them about how we are as parents. Like should we do things differently? They have a right to their own voice. We want our children to understand how to be a good parent, so they can't have free reign, they can't be demanding. They know how to behave, they're polite."

"I'm always honest and proactive in discussion when opportunities present themselves such as discussing how I gave birth and what was involved in making a baby - age appropriate though."

The importance of listening and talking

Sometimes you just need to be in the right place at the right time. At those moments your child will show an emotion you pick up on, maybe they will look like they need to tell or ask you something, or maybe the question will just pop out. There's no doubt being a parent or carer can be tough sometimes. But when you can, be there for the chat, the game or the bedtime book.

"It's about talking about issues. He knows that he can come to me or other family members - I have told him there is not a topic that is off limits."

Books for Reading Together

We have some of these books at school, others you should be able to borrow from the local Library – if they don't have them they might be able to order them for you. Enjoy!

Stories for boys who dare to be different

Ben Brooks (ISBN 978-1-78747-198-6)

True tales of amazing boys (who became famous and not so famous men) who changed the world.

Goodnight stories for rebel girls

Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo (ISBN 978-0-141-98600-5)

The stories of heroic women (some famous and some not so famous) from around the world.

What's Happening to Me? (Girls Edition) (Facts of Life)

Susan Meredith ISBN-10: 9780746069950

A sensitive, detailed and informative guide to female puberty, this book will prove invaluable for both young girls (from 9 years old+) and their parents alike, tackling key subjects from the physical changes that occur at this time to practical matters; entertaining, approachable and authoritative.

What's Happening to Me? (Boys Edition) (Facts of Life)

Alex Frith (ISBN 9780746076637)

The companion book for boys (age 9+) who will find this book answers a lot of their questions and help them to worry less about the changes in their bodies.

It's perfectly normal

Robie E. Harris and Michael Emberley (ISBN 978-0-763-62610-5)

A book for children aged 10+ about changing bodies, growing up, sex and sexual health.

Usborne facts of Life: Growing up

Susan Meredith (ISBN 0-7460-3142-4)

What's happening to me? Why is my body changing? Why do I feel different? A book all about adolescence, body changes and sex.

Personal Hygiene? What's that got to do with me?

Pat Crissey (ISBN 978-1-84310-796-5)

Introduces personal hygiene and teaches essential skills and creates good habits for life – from dragon breath to dirty fingernails to smelly armpits and more.

Let's Talk about Sex

Robie E. Harris (ISBN 978-1-84428-174-9)

A book that tells pre-teens and teenagers what they need to know about sex. Down to earth and humorous.