



Play Every Day in Lincolnshire

Simple Ideas to Support Talking and Learning Through Everyday Moments



Scan me





Out and about

Summer gives families more chances to be outside — but this month isn't about going far or spending money.

It's about noticing what's around you. Children learn language best when adults talk about what they can see, hear and feel in real time. Waiting for a bus. Walking to the park. Sitting on a bench. These are learning moments. This issue focuses on:



Noticing and describing



Everyday journeys



Back-and-forth conversation



Shared attention



Reducing screen use on the go

You don't need a big day out.
You just need to look up and talk together.

Nursery Rhymes/Songs

Round and Round the Garden Lyrics



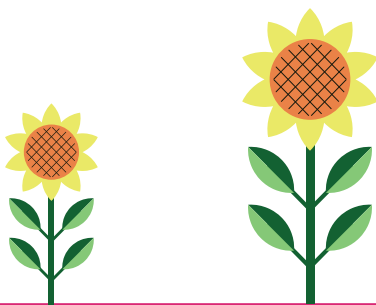
How to Use It

- Gently trace circles on your child's palm
- Walk fingers up their arm on "one step, two step"
- Pause before the tickle

Pause and wait before the tickle —
anticipation builds attention and turn-taking

[CBeebies example](#)

[Super Simple Songs version](#)



Play ideas at Home



Playing Shops

You don't need toy tills — use tins, fruit, boxes or empty packets.

What to do

- Set up a small “shop” on a table or floor
- Take turns being the shopkeeper
- Use coins, paper or pretend payment cards

Talk together:

- “How much?”
- “You chose apples.”
- “That’s heavy.”
- “What else do we need?”



Why this matters

Role play builds real-world vocabulary and confidence.

Keep it simple.

Five minutes is enough.

SEND

- Keep the layout the same each time
- Use visual cues (drawn pictures of items)
- Use repetitive language: “Buy.” “Pay.” “Thank you.”
- Reduce noise and clutter if your child is easily overwhelmed

Predictability builds confidence.

EAL (Children growing up using more than one language at home)

- Use home language alongside English
- Name items in both languages
- Encourage pointing if words aren't there yet
- Model short phrases rather than questions

Language grows through repetition and shared attention.

Sensory-Sensitive Children

- Avoid noisy tills or coins if sound is overwhelming
- Use soft items (cloth bags, soft fruit toys)
- Let your child watch first

Participation can begin with observing.

Younger Children

- Use just 3–4 items instead of many
- Focus on naming: “Apple.” “Milk.”
- Model simple phrases: “More?” “Finished?”
- Let them explore filling and emptying baskets

Short and simple is enough.



Cloud watching

Lie on the grass, sit on a bench or look out of a window.

What to do

Look up together and describe what you see.

Talk together:

- "That one looks fluffy."
- "It's moving fast."
- "What shape can you see?"
- Pause and wait for your child to respond



Why this matters

Looking into the distance supports eye development.

Describing what you see builds vocabulary.

No green space?

Look at rooftops, birds, trees or passing cars instead.

Younger Children

- Keep it short — 1–2 minutes is enough
- Focus on simple describing words: "Big." "White." "Fast."
- Copy their pointing and name what they see

Shared looking builds shared attention.

SEND

- Use a consistent phrase each time: "Look up." "Cloud."
- Lie side by side for comfort and calm
- Use a visual timer if helpful
- If lying down is uncomfortable, sit and look ahead instead

Routine helps children feel secure.

EAL

- Name clouds in home language and English
- Use gestures (pointing, stretching arms wide)
- Encourage single words — full sentences aren't needed

Understanding comes before speaking.

Sensory-Sensitive Children

- Avoid bright sunlight — use shade or hats Sit rather than lie on grass if textures feel uncomfortable
- Use a blanket for comfort

Feeling physically comfortable supports engagement.

No Outdoor Space

- Look at clouds through a window
- Watch birds on rooftops
- Notice trees moving in the wind
- Look at passing cars or buses instead

The key is shared looking and talking.

Mobility Considerations

- Sit on a bench
- Look upwards from a buggy or wheelchair
- Focus on sounds if looking up is difficult

"What can you hear?" is just as powerful as "What can you see?"

Why Adaptations Matter

- Children don't need long activities.
- They need small moments of shared attention.
- Looking at the same thing and talking about it is what builds language.

Play ideas - Outdoors

Painting with water

A no-mess, no-cost outdoor activity using just water and a brush.

What You Need

- A bucket, bowl or washing-up bowl
- Water
- Paint brushes (any size)
- Optional: rollers, old decorating brushes, sponges

That's it.

No paint. No paper. No clean-up stress.

What to do (Together)

1. Fill a bowl with water
2. Dip the brush in
3. Paint onto: Fences, walls, paving slabs, garden sheds or concrete
4. Watch it disappear as it dries

Let your child explore freely — big strokes, dots, lines, patterns.

Talk Together

- "You're painting."
- "Long lines."
- "It's wet."
- "It's drying."
- "Where did it go?"
- "Shall we do more?"

Pause and wait for responses. Even a point or single word counts.

Why this helps

- Strengthens shoulder and arm muscles (important for early writing)
- Builds hand control and coordination
- Introduces early mark-making without pressure
- Encourages creativity

Supports descriptive language

It's also calming and repetitive — great for emotional regulation.

Outdoor Language Boost

Add simple challenges:

- "Can you paint a circle?"
- "Can you paint something tall?"
- "Let's make zig-zags."
- "Can you write the first letter of your name?" (for older children)

No pressure — just playful exploration.

Adaptations

Younger children:

- Name what they are doing and repeat key words.
- SEND: Use larger brushes or rollers. Keep language consistent.
- EAL: Use home language alongside English. Repeat key describing words.

Grown-Up Reassurance

- It disappears on its own.
- It doesn't stain.
- It doesn't matter what it looks like.
- The learning is in the movement and the talking.
- Five minutes is enough.

Sensory/Messy Play



Make playdough

What to do

Squash, roll, press, pinch.

Talk together:

- "Squeeze."
- "Roll it."
- "It's soft."
- "More water?"



Simple recipe

- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup salt
- Water (add slowly)

Optional: food colouring.



Why this helps

Strengthens hands for early writing

Builds descriptive language

Encourages creativity.



Outdoor option

Use a tray outside to reduce mess. Add natural items: leaves, sticks, stones

Press patterns into the dough

Children Who Avoid Mess

- Keep playdough on a tray
- Wipe hands nearby
- Start with pressing shapes using cutters
- Model touching briefly, then washing hands

Small steps count.

Sensory-Sensitive Children

- Let your child watch first
- Offer tools (rolling pin, spoon, cutter) instead of hands
- Try firmer dough if sticky textures are difficult
- Reduce added smells or colours if overwhelming

It's okay not to touch straight away.

Younger Children

- Offer a small piece rather than a big lump
- Model simple actions: "Squeeze." "Roll." "Pat."
- Use hands together — "Ready... push."
- Keep sessions short (2–5 minutes is enough)

Repetition builds confidence.

Play and Routines



Shopping lists

Shopping is full of opportunities for talking, remembering and problem-solving. Making a list together helps children understand that writing has a purpose — it helps us remember what we need.



What to do (Together)

Before you go to the shops:
Sit together and talk about what you need.

"What have we run out of?"

"Do we need milk?"

"What shall we have for lunch?"

Write the list together.

You could

Write words

- Draw simple pictures
- Cut pictures from magazines
- Let your child make their own marks or squiggles

Don't worry if their writing is just lines or circles.

Those first marks are an important step towards real writing. They are learning that marks on paper mean something.

Say things like:

- "You're writing."
- "That says bananas."
- "Let's check our list."

At the Shop

Take the list with you.

Let your child:

- Hold the list
- Help find items
- Put things in the trolley
- Tick or cross off items as you collect them

Talk together

- "We found the apples."
- "What's next?"
- "Let's check the list."
- "We remembered everything!"

Tickling items off shows children that lists help us remember and organise our thinking.



Why this helps

- Builds early writing skills
- Strengthens memory and attention
- Introduces problem-solving
- Builds real-life vocabulary
- Encourages independence
- Shows children that writing has meaning

This is how children begin to understand reading and writing — through everyday life.

Adaptions

Younger Children

- Choose just 2–3 items
- Use pictures rather than words
- Focus on naming: “Milk.” “Bread.”
- Let them scribble while you write

Short and simple works best.

SEND

- Use the same format each time (a simple box list)
- Keep language consistent: “Find.” “Tick.” “Finished.”
- Use visual symbols if helpful
- Reduce choices if too many feel overwhelming

Predictability supports confidence.

Children Who Find Shops Overwhelming

- Look at the list before you go
- Choose a quiet time if possible
- Give one small job only
- Stand to one side and talk about what you can see

Even one successful moment counts.

Screen-Free Travel Tip

- “What can you see?”
- Counting red cars
- Singing a short rhyme
- Talking about what you’re going to buy

These little conversations build language far more than silent scrolling.

Grown-Up Reassurance

It doesn’t need to be neat.

It doesn’t need to be long.

You don’t need to finish the whole list perfectly.

The talking, choosing and ticking off together is what matters.

Everyday moments grow confident learners.



1

LINCOLN / WEST LINDSEY

Free & local ideas



Explore parks and open spaces



Enjoy nature trails and wildlife spotting



Visit your local library for story time and activities



Look out for free family events in market towns and villages



Get active together on walks and bike rides

GREEN SPACES TO EXPLORE



Hartsholme



Boultham Park



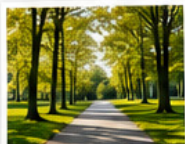
Whisby Nature Park



Lincoln Arboretum



Willingham Woods, Market Rasen



FREE & Play Ideas Across

SIMPLE. LOCAL. NO COST

1

LINCOLN / WEST LINDSEY



Hartsholme



Boultham Park



Whisby Nature Park



Lincoln Arboretum



Willingham Woods, Market Rasen



3

NORTH & SOUTH KESTEVEN

Free & local ideas



Go on a bug hunt or explore nature



Explore parks and woodlands



Meet up with other families for play at your local park



Get creative with chalk drawings or nature art



Borrow toys and games from your local library

GREEN SPACES TO EXPLORE



Belton House Parkland



Wyndham Park



Queen Elizabeth Park, Grantham



Dysart Park, Grantham



Millennium Green



3

NORTH & SOUTH KESTEVEN



Belton House Parkland



Wyndham Park



Queen Elizabeth Park, Grantham



Dysart Park, Grantham



Millennium Green



MAP KEY



Park / Green Space



Nature Reserve



Playing Field



Water

Small moments. Big memories.

LOCAL across Lincolnshire

ST. JUST TIME TOGETHER.



2

EAST LINDSEY



- Donna Nook National Reserve
- Hubbards Hills, Louth
- Huttoft Bank, Sandilands
- Wolla Bank Pit, Chapel St Leonards
- Lincolnshire Wolds
- Gibraltar Point



4

BOSTON & SOUTH HOLLAND

- Frampton Marsh
- Central Park
- Ayscoughfee Hall Museum and Gardens
- Castle Sports Complex Playing Field
- Monks House Lane Playing Field
- Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field



♥ All these ideas are **FREE** or low cost and perfect for little adventures close to home. Get outside, explore, play and make memories together!

2

EAST LINDSEY

Free & local ideas



Spot seals at Donna Nook (be sure to check the pupping season!)



Build sandcastles and explore the beach



Enjoy a picnic and play by the coast



Join a free event at your local library



Take a family bike ride along quiet country lanes



GREEN SPACES TO EXPLORE

- Donna Nook National Reserve
- Hubbards Hills, Louth
- Huttoft Bank, Sandilands
- Wolla Bank Pit, Chapel St Leonards
- Lincolnshire Wolds
- Gibraltar Point

4

BOSTON & SOUTH HOLLAND

Free & local ideas



Watch the boats and birds at Frampton Marsh



Enjoy a countryside walk and explore wildlife



Look out for free family events in your local area



Visit your local library for story time and activities



Get active at local playing fields



GREEN SPACES TO EXPLORE

- Frampton Marsh
- Central Park
- Ayscoughfee Hall Museum and Gardens
- Castle Sports Complex Playing Field
- Monks House Lane Playing Field
- Sir Halley Stewart Playing Field

Big memories. ♥

Find more local ideas and events at
www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/families
(or your local council website)





Planting/growing/nature

Grow Cress (Then Eat It in Your Wrap!)

Cress is quick to grow and easy to care for. Children can see change happen in just a few days — which makes it exciting and motivating.

It's a simple way to show that plants grow from seeds and that food comes from somewhere.

What you need

- Cress seeds
- A small pot, yoghurt pot or shallow container
- Cotton wool, kitchen roll or compost
- Water

That's all.

What to Do (Together)

Put damp cotton wool, kitchen roll, tissues or soil into your container.

- Sprinkle the seeds on top.
- Gently press them down.
- Place somewhere light (a windowsill works well).
- Water lightly each day.

Check it together every day.

Talk together

- "First we plant."
- "Now we water."
- "Look — it's growing."
- "It's taller today."
- "Let's measure with our fingers."

In just a few days you'll see green shoots appear.

Eat What You Grow

When it's ready, cut the cress and add it to your wrap.

- Sprinkle it into a cheese wrap
- Add it to egg or hummus
- Put it on top of mashed avocado

Talk together:

- "We grew this."
- "It smells fresh."
- "Let's taste it."
- "Is it crunchy?"

Children are often more willing to try food when they've helped grow it.



Why this helps

- Builds patience and responsibility
- Teaches cause and effect
- Introduces new vocabulary (seed, grow, roots, water)
- Encourages trying new foods
- Strengthens connection through shared care

It also links play to real life — growing food we can eat.

Adaptions

Sensory-Sensitive Children

- Use a spoon for watering
- Avoid over-wet soil if texture is uncomfortable
- Allow observation before touching
- Watching is participation too.

No Outdoor Space

Cress grows well on a windowsill.
It does not need a garden.

Grown-Up Reassurance

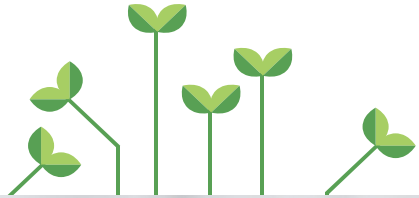
It doesn't have to grow perfectly.

If some seeds don't sprout, that's okay.

You can try again.

The learning is in the planting, waiting and talking.

Even a small pot counts.





Places to visit and free things to do

You don't need to travel far.
Local Parks & Green Spaces

- Roll down a hill
- Run, stop, start
- Listen for birds

Talk together:

- "What can you hear?"
- "Who's that?"
- "Where shall we go?"



Travel Tip

Many bus companies allow children under 5 to travel free with a paying adult. Check with your local operator.

We run 47 children's centres and Family Hubs in Lincolnshire, which offer activities, free drop-in sessions and helpful services. Use our directory to find your nearest children's centre.

[Start for life - Lincolnshire County Council](#)



Planting/growing/nature



Wraps and Rolls for a Picnic

A simple, low-prep activity focused on choosing, spreading, rolling and talking together. You don't need special ingredients. Use what you already have.

What You Need (Use What You Have)

Wraps, rolls or soft flatbreads

Fillings such as:

- Soft cheese
- Hummus
- Mashed banana
- Mashed egg
- Grated cheese
- Avocado
- Leftover chicken
- Soft fruit

A spoon or butter knife

A plate

Optional: small container or lunch box

Younger Children

- Offer one filling choice
- Help guide their hand to spread
- Focus on simple words: "Roll." "Cut." "Eat."

Short and successful is best.

Grown-Up Reassurance

It doesn't have to look perfect.

It doesn't have to be healthy "Instagram food."

It doesn't have to be eaten perfectly. Being side-by-side and talking is what builds learning.

Even a simple wrap counts.



What to do

1. Wash hands

Talk about what you're doing.

- "The water is warm."
- "Rub, rub, rub."
- "Now we're ready."



2. Choose Fillings

Let your child choose.

- "What shall we put in?"
- "You chose cheese."
- "That's soft."

Choice builds independence.

3. Spread

Support your child to spread the filling. Talk together:

Spread it to the edges."

"That's tricky."

"More or finished?"

Don't worry if it's uneven —
the process matters.



4. Roll

Help roll the wrap tightly.

- "Roll it up."
- "Keep going."
- "We did it!"

You can slice into small pinwheels
if easier to hold.

5. Pack for a Picnic

Put the wraps into a lunch box or
container. Take them:

- To the park
- Into the garden
- On a short walk
- Even just onto a blanket on
the floor



Outdoor Link

Eating outside turns food into an experience. Talk about:

- The wind
- The sounds
- What you can see
- Who is nearby

Even five minutes outdoors adds language and connection.

Children Who Are Reluctant Eaters

- Focus on making, not eating
- Let them lick or nibble if they want
- Avoid pressure

The play and talk matter most.

Sensory-Sensitive Children

- Keep foods separate if mixed textures are difficult
- Allow them to explore with a spoon first
- Start with familiar foods

Participation looks different for every child.



Why this helps

- Strengthens hand and finger muscles
- Builds independence
- Develops vocabulary (spread, roll, slice)
- Encourages turn-taking
- Connects effort to outcome
- Builds confidence around food

Cooking side-by-side builds conversation naturally.



Did You Know



Screen time & Hand Strength

Did you know that too much time tapping and swiping on screens can reduce opportunities to build hand strength?

Tapping a screen uses small, repetitive finger movements. But young children also need to squeeze, pinch, twist, thread, dig, build and draw.

- Strengthen muscles needed for holding a pencil
- Support control and coordination
- Help with cutting, dressing and feeding
- Build the foundations for early writing

This doesn't mean screens are "bad".

It simply means children need a balance of real-world play to help their hands grow strong.



Try This Instead

- Playdough squeezing
- Threading pasta
- Pouring water
- Painting with water outside
- Building towers
- Pegs on a washing line
- Helping mix food

Even a few minutes of hands-on play each day makes a difference.



Gentle Reminder

Strong hands don't come from worksheets.

They come from play.

Self-Help Tip (School Readiness)

Practising with a Lunch Box

If you've made wrap rolls or sandwiches together, try packing them into a lunch box. Practising opening and closing containers at home helps children feel confident and independent when they start nursery or school.

Why this matters:

At school and nursery, children are expected to:

- Open their own lunch box
- Unwrap food
- Manage packets and containers
- Eat within a set time
- Tidy up afterwards



Why this helps

These small skills make a big difference to how confident children feel. When children can manage their food independently, they:

- Feel proud
- Build hand strength
- Develop coordination
- Practise problem-solving
- Learn responsibility

It also supports the same muscles needed for early writing.

What to do (Together)

After making your wrap or sandwich:

- Put it in a lunch box
- Add a piece of fruit
- Include a small container

Let your child practise:

- Opening and closing the lid
- Opening small pots
- Peeling fruit
- Wrapping and unwrapping
- Putting rubbish back in

Talk together:

- "Can you open it?"
- "That's tricky."
- "You did it."
- "Shall we try again?"

Allow time. Avoid rushing in straight away.

Adaptations

Younger Children

- Use easy-open containers
- Practise with just one item
- Model slowly and clearly

SEND

- Use the same lunch box each time
- Practise in a calm space
- Break it into steps (open > take out > close)

Grown-Up Tip

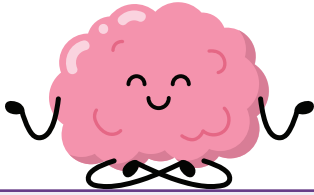
Let your child try first.

Struggling a little is part of learning.

Helping at the end still counts.

You don't need a full packed lunch to practise — even one wrap in a box is enough. Simple routines build strong independence.

Top tips



Did You Know?

A child's brain grows fastest from birth to five.

Every time you talk, sing, play or explore together, your child's brain is building connections that support language and learning. Ordinary moments matter most.

Parent Mental Health Top Tip

Your child doesn't need a perfect parent, just a present one.

- A short walk.
- A shared snack.
- A silly rhyme.

That's enough.



Did You Know?

Young children's skin burns more easily than adult skin, even on cloudy days.

Use shade, hats and loose clothing first. Apply sunscreen to exposed skin and reapply regularly — especially after water play. Offer water often.

Find out more [NHS Sun Safety guidance](#):

For advice, speak to your GP, Health Visitor or call **NHS 111**.

