

Growing Together Learning Group Handbook



*"The greatest gift you can give
your child is your time."*

Growing Together (GT) Learning Group

The Growing Together Team, work alongside parents by sharing knowledge.

The crèche area provides a safe and stimulating environment for children to play, learn and interact with each other and for parents to feel supported as they develop an understanding of child development.

Planned activities based on communication and language, personal, social and emotional and physical development are provided.

Activities provided are to support positive interaction and communication.

As Growing Together is a popular group and we have limited spaces, a level of commitment to attending the weekly sessions is expected.

If you do not attend for 3 consecutive weeks, your name will be removed from the register and placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available.

Growing Together is a 2-year programme.



Together, we are creating Brighter Futures for families in Jersey.

Brain development



Focus on the child at the present rather than on developmental stages that are weeks or months into the future.

Care and caring are really important to a young child and they will learn easily in an environment where they have warm loving relationships.

Children do not learn if they are pressurised and constantly directed. It is more beneficial to enjoy sharing everyday activities with them as they will be learning all the time.

Young children enjoy a mixture of new experiences and familiarity. Often the best choice for learning is to do something again.

Think of yourself as the most vital item of play equipment. Be enthusiastic about activities as if you are genuinely interested, children are more likely to learn.

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The Value of Play

Play benefits children in many ways by providing opportunities for them to learn who they are, what they can do and how to relate to the world around them.

It allows them to lead with their ideas and imagination.

It is important to value play and set aside time for play.

Play helps to build a warm relationship between family members.

Through play adults can help children to solve problems, test out ideas and explore their imaginations.

It encourages the development of vocabulary so that children learn to express their thoughts, feelings and needs.

Play is also a time when parents can respond to their children in ways that promote feelings of self-worth and competence.

Studies have shown that children have fewer behaviour problems if their parents engage in play that involves make believe with them when they are young.

Parents can help children to develop their creative play by:

- Stopping, looking and listening
- Observing and supporting

Provide a running commentary on what they are watching instead of asking questions.

Activities which have been shown to help children's development

Reading with your child



Painting, Drawing and Cutting



Playing with my friends.



Singing Songs and Rhymes



Going on Trips



Playing with Letters and Number



Going to the Library



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Stages of Language

Communicator (8 to 13 months)

Baby sends deliberate messages directly to others using a combination of eye gaze, facial expressions, sounds and gestures. To help your child: speak slowly, say the names for things while holding them or pointing at them, give loads of praise and have fun. “With sounds, looks and gestures, I talk to you. Now help me learn a word or two.”

First Word User (12 to 18 months)

Child cracks the language code and starts to use single words. To help your child; praise every effort, say words correctly instead of saying, ‘no, that’s wrong.’ “From my mouth the words now pour. Your job is to give me more.”

Combiner (18 to 24 months)

Child starts combining words. To help your child; add on one word to help him put two words together. For example, child says ‘drink’, you say. ‘yes, cold drink’ and emphasise the extra word. “I put words together and begin to chat, converse with me; it’s a simple as that.”

Early Sentence User (2 to 3 years)

Child progresses from 2 word combinations to 5 word sentences and can hold short, simple conversations. To help your child: keep it simple and speak slowly. “My words and sentences now have grown, I can tell stories on my own.”

Later Sentence User (3 to 5 years)

Child uses longer and more complex sentences and can hold a conversation. To help your child: take time to listen and give time for answering. Celebrate every effort. “I’ve learned to talk and take my turn; my job now is to talk to learn.”

Tips for reading with a baby or a toddler

- Follow your child's lead, allow them to choose the book, explore, turn the pages and show you what they are interested in.
- Don't worry too much about reading every word. Simplify the story if it is too complicated.
- Spend plenty of time looking at the pictures.
- Language develops through constant repetition; do not worry about reading a favourite book time and time again.
- Rhyme and rhythm are very important in speech development and books of nursery rhymes are popular with this age group and help them to understand what songs are about.
- If your youngster points at something, give it a name, she may even want you to name the same object on each page of the book.
- Use plenty of eye contact and alter the tone and pitch of your voice.
- Do not bombard with questions. Give your child time to respond with words or actions after you have spoken to him.
- Be A good role model. Children who see adults reading books, newspapers and magazines will soon want to copy.

Choosing First Books

Selecting books that delight and engage helps children take their first steps toward a lifelong love of reading

To start with, choose books with clear, simple, colourful pictures of objects or animals that are part of baby's everyday world.

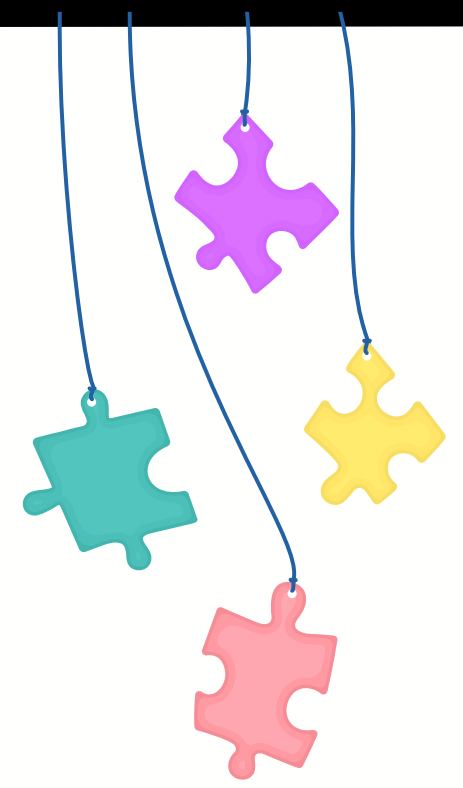
Include board or bath books which will stand up to handling and chewing.

From about 12 months, as your child acquires more understanding, you can begin to introduce books that encourage more involvement; lift the flap books, and books with pop-ups and tags to pull.

Finally, children love to look at photograph albums where they can see family, friends and pictures of familiar experiences.

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Ideas to try at home



Play

Do a simple jigsaw puzzle with your child.

If you don't have any puzzles, you can make your own by cutting up a picture from a magazine into 4 to 6 pieces – can you child put them back together to make the picture?

Treasure box

You and your child could make up a treasure box along a theme.

You could get some pots and pans, pretend food and some soft toys and get ready for a picnic.

Understanding

Posty

Make a postbox out of an old cardboard box, with a hole cut in it.

You child can be a posty – have 4 or 5 toys to choose from.

Ask them to collect different 'parcels' for posting.

“Can you post the spot book?”.

Shopping games

Set up a pretend shop.

Have 4 or 5 things in your shop – they can be toys or real things from your cupboards.

Ask your child to go and buy.....

The beans and the milk.

The apple, the cheese and the yoghurt.

Ideas to try at home

Interaction

Get down to their level

Conversations with a child are easier if you are on the same level. It might mean sitting or lying on the floor to talk and play. Talk about what is happening.

What's a TV programme together and talk about it afterwards.

When they are playing, comment on what they are doing.

Wait for children to talk first then expand on what they have to say.

Listening

Spot the mistake

Sing a simple rhyme or song, but make a mistake - can children spot the mistake?

Incy wincy spider climbing up.....a tree (should be spout)

The wheels on the.....train go round and round (should be bus)

Twinkle twinkle little.....hat (should be star)

Go games - wait for go

Build a tower of bricks. Your child waits for you to say "Go" before they can knock it down.

Have a race- ready steady go....

Push a car to each other - ready steady go...

Dance around - ready stead go....

Roll the ball - ready steady go...

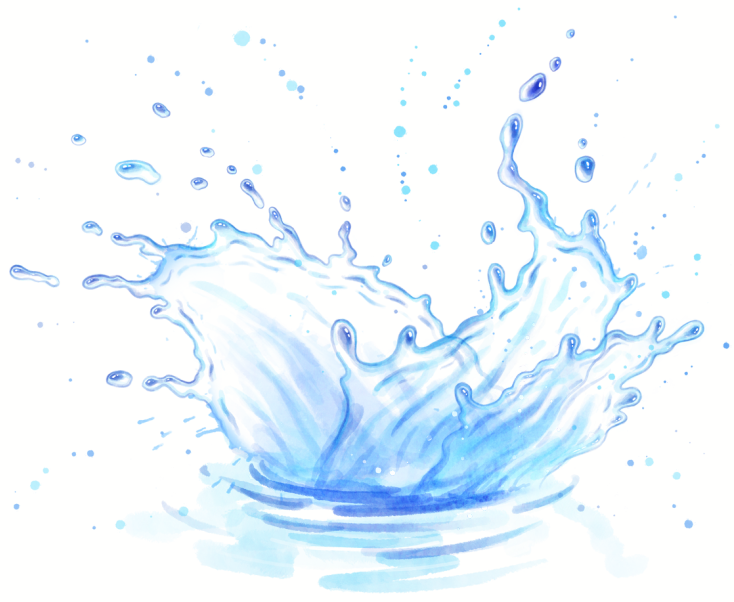
Treasure Basket

Babies and toddlers learn by feeling, tasting, smelling, listening to and looking at things.

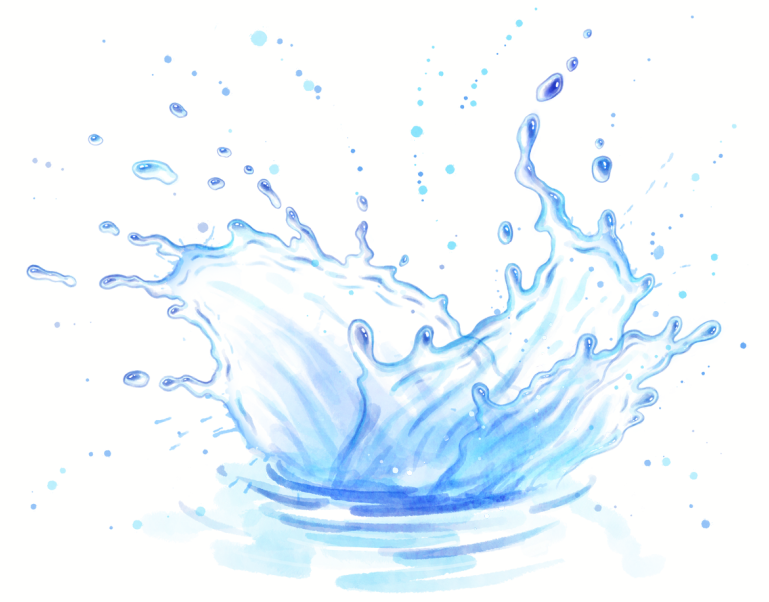
A really good way to stimulate their senses is to create a “treasure basket”. Use a container - a wicker basket is great but an empty cardboard box would do. It needs to be shallow enough for a seated child to be able to grasp objects from.

Fill it with everyday household items from the following list:

- Plastic bottles (filled with rice or pasta to make a noisy shaker-make sure they are sealed tight)
- Clean empty boxes, jars and tins with or without lids (wooden, cardboard, metal or plastic) and slide boxes
- Balls of different sizes
- Paper of all sorts for crumpling, tearing and rustling
- Unbreakable baby mirrors
- Smooth wooden objects, wooden spoons and door knobs are good
- Cardboard tubes from inside of rolls of wrapping paper or sellotape
- Scraps of fabric, woolen pom poms and ribbons
- Wooden dolly clothes pegs, cotton reels
- Large pebbles
- A bunch of keys



Fun With Water



Babies enjoy sensory experiences and usually like the feel of warm water on their hands, feet and bodies. They enjoy being able to touch, splash and move water around.

Some simple ideas for making bath time enjoyable are:

- Hold baby securely and gently trickle warm water over their bodies. Talk as you do this.
- Allow them to splash and stir the water to strengthen their limbs
- Let them try to catch hold of bath toys as they bob on the water and encourage them as they do this
- Water play - Use a bowl with a small amount of water and prepare to get wet!
- Let the baby move some floating bath toys around. Push them under and watch them bob back to the surface
- Make little waves for the toys to swirl about in
- Pour some water from a small plastic jug or watering can. Allow the baby to watch and put their fingers into the flow. Hold a container under the water and create bubbles as the water drives the air out.
- Let a sponge soak up the water then squeeze it out from a short height.
- Use appropriate baby bath mix to make bubbles.

Babies need close and careful supervision when near water, however shallow.

Songs



Baa Baa Black Sheep

Baa, baa black sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes, sir, yes, sir,
Three bags full.
One for the master
And one for the dame,
And one for the little boy who
Lives down the lane.

Baa, baa white sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes, madam, yes, madam,
Three bags full.
Enough to make a jumper
Enough to make a frock
Enough to mend the hole
In (child's name)'s sock



The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round
and round, round and round,
round and round.

The wheels on the bus go round
and round All day long.
(Roll hands like wheels)

The wipers on the bus go swish,
swish, swish, swish, swish, swish,
swish, swish, swish

The wipers on the bus go swish,
swish, swish
All day long.
(Swish hands like wipers)

Continue using actions with:

The horn on the bus goes beep,
beep, beep....

The doors on the bus go open
and shut....

The mums on the bus go chatter,
chatter, chatter..

The dads on the bus go nod, nod,
nod...

The children on the bus go up
and down, up and down, up and
down

Songs

Twinkle Twinkle

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are.

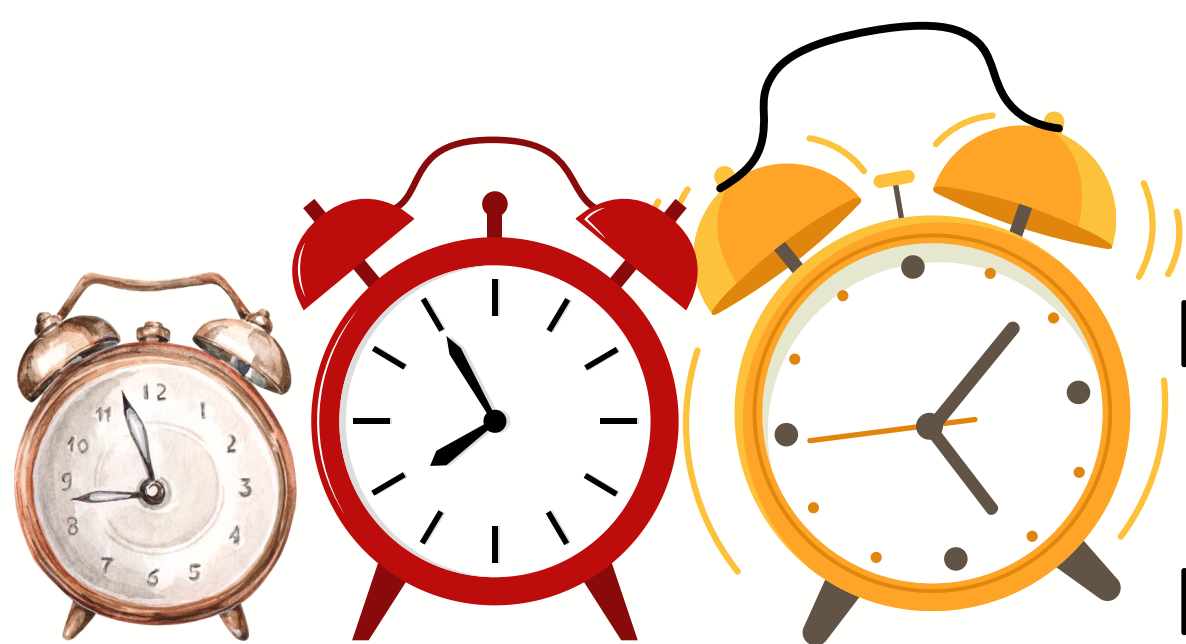
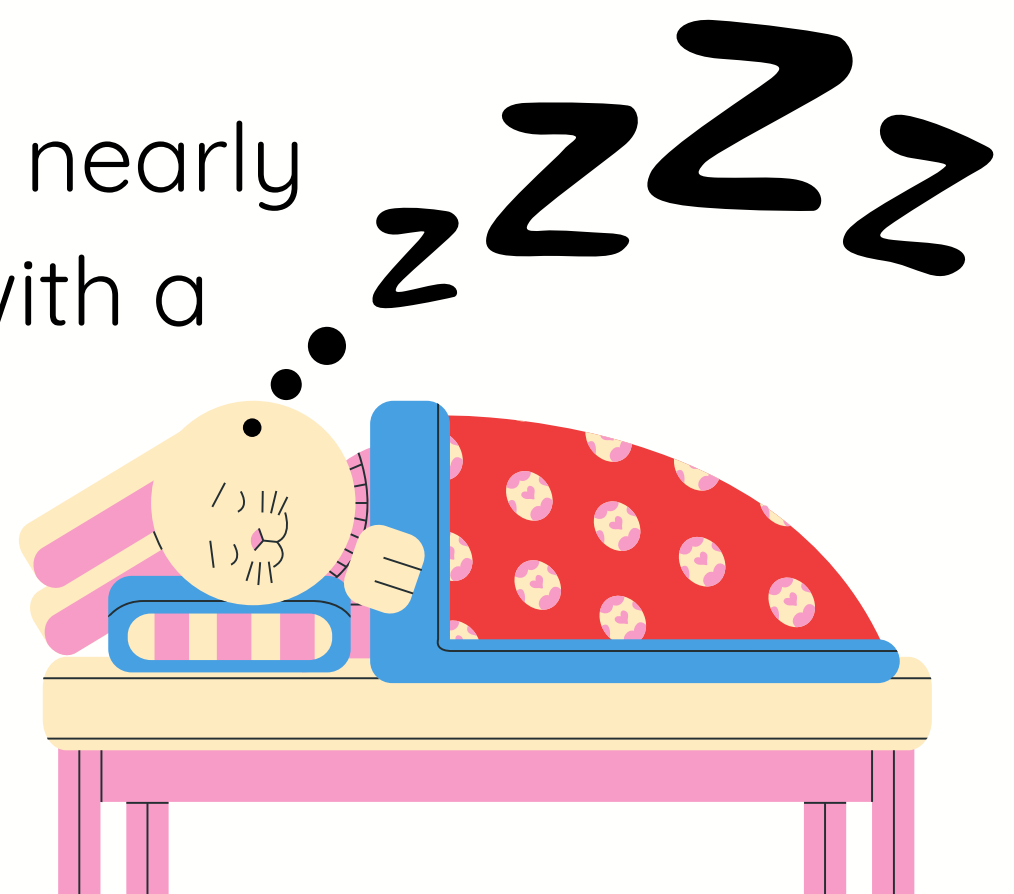


Barney "I love You" Song

I love you, you love me,
We're a happy family,
With a great big hug,
And a kiss from me to you,
Won't you say you love me to?

Sleeping Bunnies

See the little bunnies sleeping till it's nearly
noon, shall we try and wake them with a
merry tune?
Oh so still
Are they ill?
Ssssssshhhhhhhhh



WAKE UP BUNNIES!

Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop

I Took His Hand and Followed

My dishes went unwashed today
I didn't make my bed
I took his hand and followed
Where his eager footsteps led.

Oh yes we went adventuring
My little child and I
Exploring all the great outdoors
Beneath the sun and sky.

We watched a robin feed her young
We climbed a sunlit hill
Saw cloud-sheep scamper through the sky
We plucked a daffodil.

That my house was so neglected
That I didn't brush the stairs
In twenty years no one on earth
Will know or even care.

But that I've helped my little child
To noble adulthood grow
In twenty years the whole wide world
May look and see and know.

Together, we are creating Brighter Futures for families in Jersey.



Enjoy your time at Growing Together, a precious time to develop and play alongside your child.

You are your child's first and most important educator.

Enjoy this special time as you grow together.

