**Abstraction principle** see ‘Principles of learning to count’

**Active listening** This is the way in which a person gives a speaker their full attention, by showing they are interested and actively responding to what they have to say. Active listening is evident through verbal or non-verbal interactions, such as body language (stance and positioning), nodding, facial expressions, eye contact and appropriate verbal responses such as “Mmmm”, “Yes”, etc.

(CL Becoming a good listener | EL Storytelling)

**Alliteration** Repeated letter sounds at the beginning of words, e.g. “**B**ouncy baby”, “**T**iny teddy”, “**W**onderful ways with **w**ords” etc.

(EL Wonderful ways with **w**ords | EL Becoming a reader)

**Athey, Chris** see ‘Schemas’

**Attachment** (John Bowlby 1907-1990) This refers to the nurturing ties of physical and emotional love and care that are formed between a parent/carer and their baby/child in the early years of development. Secure attachment is established when parents/carers respond positively and consistently to their baby’s sounds, movements and gestures as well as their physical and emotional needs. Through these nurturing exchanges, the baby learns to feel safe and secure, thereby forming a secure attachment which provides the emotional safety and security that help babies thrive and learn. The baby only normally needs ‘good enough parenting’ to form a secure attachment. Attachment describes the relationship between adult and baby from the baby’s perspective [compare ‘Bonding’].

(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Treasure Baskets: babies making choices | PSED Making the most of routines | PSED Knowing me, knowing you | CL Strand Key Ideas | CL Early conversations | CL The very first language | CL Musical moments | CL Musical interactions | HPD Building a brain | HPD Early sensory experiences | EL Strand Key Ideas | EL Sharing books with babies | EL Sharing books with toddlers and young children)

**Aurally** Related to sounds and sense of hearing.

(CL Strand Key Ideas | HPD Early sensory experiences)

**Babbling** and **variegated babbling** Babbling refers to the stage in learning a language when a baby creates and experiments with sounds without producing recognisable words. This begins with simple babbling at around the age of 6 months, where the baby repeats syllables using single consonants and vowel sounds, e.g. “ma-ma”, “da-da”, “ba-ba” etc. At around 8 – 9 months they progress to **variegated babbling**, which is the use of more complex sound patterns in a range of syllables using several consonant and vowel sounds, e.g. “dagoo”, “nada”, “badadoo” etc.

(CL Finding a voice | CL Early conversations)
**Baby states** These are a helpful way to think about the different levels of alertness or moods that babies commonly experience. Being aware of baby states can help parents/carers recognise and interpret the actions and responses of their babies (‘cues’). This will help them to understand their feelings and respond to their needs appropriately. Babies can move very quickly from one state to another – and not always in a particular order.

There are six baby states - three sleep states and three awake states. These have been widely recognised, and the following definitions have been adapted from www.your-baby.org.uk (University of Warwick):

- **Deep sleep**: Babies’ breathing is regular and steady and they lie very still. They are hard to wake when they are in a deep sleep.

- **Light sleep**: Babies may have fluttering eyelids or rapid eye movements – they may also make facial expressions and little noises. Babies often move into a light sleep from a deep sleep.

- **Drowsy sleep**: Babies may have glazed eyes with ‘heavy’ lids and may be startled by sudden noises. Babies tend to be drowsy just before falling asleep or waking up.

- **Quiet alert**: Babies have still bodies, their eyes are wide and they appear interested in what is going on around them.

- **Unsettled**: Babies show they are unsettled by whining, wiggling, fussing or arching their backs. They are more sensitive to noise, light or hunger.

- **Crying**: Babies show that they are distressed and need help by crying forcefully, thrashing about and making facial grimaces.

(PSED Knowing me, knowing you)

**Backward chaining** This is a way of helping children to develop their skills, by encouraging them to complete the last step of a task or activity, then moving backward through the sequence (over time) until they are able to complete the task from beginning to end. Doing it this way helps them to feel a greater sense of achievement as they are able to ‘complete’ the task each time. This is the reverse of starting from the beginning when helping a child to learn a new task or activity (forward chaining).

(PSED The importance of support and encouragement)

**Balanced diet** A balanced diet is eating a variety of foods from different food groups, in order to provide an adequate range of nutrients to support growth and development.

(HPD Food for life)

**Bandura, Albert** (1925-to date) is known for his work on social learning and social cognitive theory. These emphasise the strong influence of observation, imitation and modelling on children’s behaviour (in contrast to behavioural theory, which emphasises the role of reward/reinforcement). In his famous ‘Bobo’ doll study, he found that children who had watched an adult behave aggressively with the Bobo doll were likely to play with it aggressively themselves, compared with children who had watched an adult play with it non-aggressively. Bandura investigated many other social influences, including self-efficacy and moral agency. [See ‘self-efficacy’]
Bilabial trills Blowing bubbles or blowing ‘raspberries’. Babies’ very early language skills are linked to their ability to make complex and co-ordinated mouth movements – moving their mouth, tongue and lips together.
(CL Finding a voice | CL Becoming a talker)

Bilateral co-ordination and Midline:

- **Bilateral co-ordination** is the ability to co-ordinate the two halves of our body effectively.
  (HPD Building a brain | HPD Developing balance and co-ordination)
- **Midline** This describes the imaginary line that we have down the middle of our bodies which separates right from left. In the brain, the right side (hemisphere) controls the left side of the body and vice versa. It is important that movements cross the body’s midline in order to encourage communication between the two hemispheres of the brain. This enables us to co-ordinate the two halves of our body effectively (bilateral co-ordination).
  (HPD Building a brain | HPD Musical movements | HPD Developing balance and co-ordination)

Blend (oral blending) The process of merging sounds together to form words, e.g. ‘c’-‘a’-‘t’ = “cat”.
(EL Wonderful ways with words | EL Environmental print | EL Becoming a reader)

Bonding describes the strong positive emotions and connection that a parent or primary carer can feel for their baby/child. This normally begins to form during pregnancy and usually strengthens with the birth of the baby, helped by hormonal processes. Bonding describes the relationship from the parent’s/carer’s perspective [compare ‘Attachment’].
(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Knowing me, knowing you | CL The very first language | CL Musical moments | CL Musical interactions | HPD Early sensory experiences)

Bowlby, John see ‘Attachment’

Bronfenbrenner, Urie see Social ecological theory

Bruner, Jerome (1915-to date) Bruner is well known for his theories on scaffolding and the spiral curriculum. Scaffolding is when an adult (or sometimes a more knowledgeable child) helps a child to learn something or do something. The spiral curriculum is when each subject or skill area is revisited at intervals, at a more sophisticated level each time, moving up the ‘spiral’. Bruner also proposed that children stored memories in three stages that merged together as they got more knowledgeable – enactive (action), iconic (images) and symbolic (language) stages. [see also ‘Scaffolding’]
(PSED Strand Key Ideas)

Cardinal principle see ‘Principles of learning to count’

Cephalocaudal growth pattern This describes a baby’s physical growth and development from the head to the feet. The fastest growth is at the top of the body and it gradually works down. For example, a baby’s head is proportionately largest at birth, weighing 25% of the baby’s body weight.
(HPD Babies on the move)
The definitions relate to how the terms are used in the learning together programme. The topics in which they appear are listed below the definition, along with the strand: CL = Communication & Language, PSED = Personal, social and emotional development, EL = Early Literacy, EM = Early Maths, HPD = Health and Physical Development.

Cognitive  The ability of a child to think, understand and form concepts. It is closely linked to problem solving, reasoning and decision-making.

(CL Imaginative play with puppets | CL Musical interactions | CL Thinking and talking | CL Things to do and talk about together | CL Talking and listening with children | EL Exploring stories through play)

Communicative musicality  The rhythmic and musical basis of early communication used in the sing-song speech that parents often instinctively use with their baby, and the way in which the baby communicates with its parents. Colwyn Trevarthen and his colleagues suggest that communicative musicality enables coordinated companionship to develop long before the baby can communicate with words.

(CL Musical moments | CL Musical interactions | EM Maths in songs and rhymes)

Constructivism  see Piaget, Jean

Containment  Wilfred Bion (1897-1979) suggested the term containment to express the idea that a person can receive and understand the emotional feelings of another without being overwhelmed by these feelings. For parents, this can be explained as them making their baby/child feel safe – so the baby/child knows that their parent is strong enough to cope with the child’s ‘difficult to manage’ feelings, and responds or reflects them back in a way that’s easier for the baby / child to tolerate. Being contained helps the baby to feel more calm and relaxed.

(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Knowing me, knowing you | PSED Helping children to understand and manage their feelings)

Continuum line  This is a group facilitation idea that can be used to stimulate discussion during Peep talk time. It is useful for exploring how individuals feel about a variety of tasks/activities/situations without necessarily valuing one of the tasks/activities/situations more than another. To use this facilitation idea:
- Create a line using ribbon or tape on the floor or wall. Use Blu-tack or equivalent to keep it from moving around.
- Have cards with words and images that express the continuum, e.g. like 😊 / don’t mind 😏 / dislike 😞.
- Use blank cards or paper for parents/carers to write their ideas.
- Ask parents/carers to place the cards along the continuum. This will provide a useful starting point for discussion from which you can explore why parents/carers find some things easier or preferable to others.

(EM Exploring early maths | PSED Making the most of routines)

Corpus Callosum  A band of nerve cables which connects the left and right sides (hemispheres) of the brain. This allows both halves to work together and forms the complete brain.

(HPD Building a brain | HPD Babies on the move)

Cued Modelling  Cued modelling is when a practitioner explicitly draws parents’ attention to something that they (the practitioner) are doing – and to why they are doing it, so that the parent/carer feels encouraged that it is something that THEY can do at home. It is a step beyond simply modelling, which can (unintentionally) encourage parents to see the practitioner as the ‘expert’.

(all topics)
Cues These are the physical actions, verbal and non-verbal responses that babies and young children use, to let other know how they are feeling and what they need.

(HPD Musical movements | PSED Knowing me, knowing you | PSED Helping children to understand and manage their feelings | PSED Making the most of routines HPD Exploring food | HPD Making the most of food and mealtimes | HPD Babies on the move | CL Finding a voice)

Decode The ability to sound out words, using a knowledge of letter-sound relationships. The reverse process (referred to as ‘encode’) is the ability to spell words using a knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

(EL Becoming a reader | EL Making the most of favourite books and stories)

Dialogic reading A way of sharing books, where the adult becomes an active listener, and prompts the child to talk about the book, building up vocabulary and story language. This is a useful method for parents/carers to use with their child which will help them to develop the skills they will need for reading and writing.

(EL Becoming a reader | EL Storytelling)

Digits and numerals A digit is a single symbol used to represent a number. We use ten digits – 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Digits are combined to make numerals which is our way of writing or talking about numbers, e.g. the numeral 876 is made up of three digits – ‘8’, ‘7’ and ‘6’. Numerals can be written using symbols (e.g. 12, 876) or words (e.g. twelve, eight hundred and seventy six) to represent the names of the numbers. NB: A single digit, e.g. 7, can also be a numeral.

(EM Strand Key Ideas | EM Exploring numbers | EM Numbers, numbers everywhere)

Dispositions Lillian Katz (1932 – to date) describes a disposition as being the unconscious response that an individual has towards a specific situation – a tendency to respond in a particular way. Dispositions are patterns of behaviour that are repeated frequently, consciously and voluntarily – they can be positive (e.g. being curious, creative, cooperative, persistent, friendly, etc.) or negative (e.g. being unfriendly, intolerant, selfish, impatient, etc.). Children develop or ‘acquire’ their dispositions from everyday interactions and experiences with important people in their lives, who model them. Positive dispositions are important for children’s learning and for helping them to make sense of their world. They are often seen in the way that children persist, question, collaborate, are resourceful and take responsibility. Adults can encourage these by responding positively to children when they exhibit them.

(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Helping babies feel good about themselves | PSED Helping children feel good about themselves | PSED An introduction to ORIM | PSED The importance of support and encouragement | PSED Treasure baskets: babies making choices | HPD-HL Exploring nature)
The definitions relate to how the terms are used in the learning together programme. The topics in which they appear are listed below the definition, along with the strand: CL = Communication & Language, PSED = Personal, social and emotional development, EL = Early Literacy, EM = Early Maths, HPD = Health and Physical Development.

EAL (English as an Additional Language) This term describes adults and children who are already fluent in their home language(s) and are learning English as an additional language. Other terms and acronyms are also used in different organisations/contexts, e.g. English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Second Language (ESL) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Electronic devices This refers to any equipment or gadget that can be used to access games, apps, programmes, music, films, or display any other types of images, sounds or words. For example, a television, computer, DVD player, CD player, mp3 player, mobile phone, tablet, electronic book reader, radio, games console etc.

Electronic media This refers to any type of image, sound or words (e.g. games, apps, programmes, music, photos, videos etc.) that can be displayed or accessed using electronic devices such as a television, CD player, computer, mobile phone, tablet, games console, etc.

Emotional literacy The ability to recognise, understand and respond appropriately to emotions. This includes emotions that children feel themselves, as well as those that are evident in others. Being able to do this helps children learn to regulate their feelings and behaviours that occur as a result of their emotions. Two year olds can generally recognise basic emotions, e.g. happy or sad, but they may confuse anger with fear. By the age of four years, children learn that it is possible to feel mixed emotions, and that others may feel differently about the same thing.

Environmental print Print in the everyday environment, for example, shop signs, posters, street and road signs, food labels.
The definitions relate to how the terms are used in the learning together programme. The topics in which they appear are listed below the definition, along with the strand: CL = Communication & Language, PSED = Personal, social and emotional development, EL = Early Literacy, EM = Early Maths, HPD = Health and Physical Development.

**EPPE/EPPSE Project and the Home Learning Environment** The Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) research project ran from 1997 to 2003. It was extended to encompass three further studies/projects:

- Effective Pre-school, Primary and Education 3-11 (2003-2007)
- Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education 3-14 (2007-2011)
- Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education 16+ Project (2011-2013)

These research studies are referred to collectively as the EPPE/EPPSE Project.

The EPPE/EPPSE project is a large-scale, longitudinal study of children from pre-school to post-compulsory education. It investigated the effects of family characteristics, Home Learning Environment and pre-school provision on children’s progress and attainment. In 1997, 3000 children, then aged three, were assessed and their development has been monitored at key points from when they entered school until they reached 16 years of age. The project has been led by Kathy Sylva from the University of Oxford and Ted Melhuish from Birkbeck College, London. The project defined the “Home Learning Environment” (HLE) as a seven-point index which could be measured, consisting of the things that parents could do with their young children which had the greatest impact on their educational outcomes. The seven elements are:

- reading with the child
- teaching songs and nursery rhymes
- painting and drawing
- playing with letters and numbers
- visiting the library
- teaching the alphabet and numbers
- taking children on visits and creating regular opportunities to play with friends at home.

The EPPE/EPPSE research has provided many insights about why some children do better than others socially and intellectually as they progress through school. It found that the quality of the HLE has a significant and independent influence over a child’s attainment at three years of age – and that this positive influence lasts throughout primary school to the age of 16.

The EPPE/EPPSE project also found that, although children from disadvantaged backgrounds generally did less well at school, this effect was less when there was a higher quality of HLE. One of the main conclusions from the study was that “the quality of the HLE is more important for intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income. *What parents do is more important than who parents are*” (Sylva and others, 2004).

(PSED Lots of ways to play and learn | PSED An introduction to ORIM)

**Expressive language** The ability to put thoughts and ideas into words.

(CL Strand Key Ideas | CL Becoming a talker | EL Books for babies | HPD Making sense of the World)
Eye contact & joint attention:

**Mutual eye contact**  Refers to the point at around two or three weeks when a baby will stare into another person’s eyes. This usually results in a positive response from the parent/carer which in turn helps to promote secure attachment, as well as reinforcing the feelings and connections that a parent/carer has for their baby (bonding). Mutual eye contact also forms an important part of early conversations and social exchanges. Babies can signal their desire to end social interactions by breaking eye contact.

**Shared eye gaze**  This is when babies or very young children look at the same thing as another person by following the direction of their gaze.

**Joint attention**  Refers to the ability of two or more people to share a focus on something, for example, shared time spent by parents and their baby using eye contact, eye gaze, gesture (such as pointing) or words to focus on an object or pictures in a book etc. The focus of attention may shift between the caregiver and object in a meaningful way.

(All 3 terms in: CL The very first language | ‘Mutual eye contact’ in: HPD Early sensory experiences | ‘Joint attention’ in CL Becoming a listener)

**Fiction / Non-fiction**  Books which contain factual information or a true story are referred to as non-fiction, e.g. biographies, ‘How-to’ books, encyclopaedias or books about pets, crafts, nature, travel etc. Story books (i.e. books that are from imagination rather than fact) are referred to as fiction, e.g. fantasy or make-believe books.

(EL Sharing books with toddlers and young children | EL Our world in books | EL Home-made books | EL Becoming a reader | EM Maths in books, toys and games | ‘non-fiction’ in: EL Lots to read and write about)

**Fine and gross motor movements/skills**

- **Gross motor**  Refers to the use of the large muscle groups or whole body which enable babies or young children to sit up, crawl, walk, run, climb or kick a ball etc. Gross motor skills, i.e. the control and co-ordination of gross motor movements, are needed before babies and young children are able to fully control the smaller movements using their hands, fingers, feet and toes.

- **Fine motor**  Refers to the use of the small muscle groups, such as moving feet and wiggling toes, or using hands and fingers to develop the skill of being able to grip a pencil.

(PSED Treasure baskets: babies making choices | PSED Lots of ways to play and learn | EL Sharing books with babies | EL Sharing books with toddlers and young children | EL Becoming a writer | EL Mark making | HPD Exploring food | HPD Making the most of food and mealtimes | HPD Exploring nature | HPD Exploring movement | HPD Musical movements | HPD Developing balance and co-ordination | HPD Making sense of the world)

**Gestation**  Describes the carrying and development of a foetus inside a mother’s womb from conception to birth. In humans, the gestation period is around 40 weeks.

(HPD Early sensory experiences | CL Strand Key Ideas)
Goldschmied, Elinor (1910 – 2009) Elinor Goldschmied was an educationist and one of the pioneers of early childhood care and education. She was responsible for:
- the development of treasure baskets for babies who are not yet mobile
- heuristic play for children of around two years old (group activity)
- the key person system whereby each child in a setting has an individual staff member who is responsible for establishing a special relationship with them in order to support that child’s care, learning and development.

(PESED Treasure baskets: babies making choices | PESED How children play)

‘Good enough’ parent(ing) This term was first used by the psychologist Donald Winnicott (1896-1971). Winnicott believed that the vast majority of parents/carers provide ‘good enough’ parenting. He defined the term to convey the idea that parents/carers do not need to be perfect to meet their child’s needs. He was concerned that many ‘good enough’ parents were undermined by unhelpful and unrealistic expectations.

(PESED Strand Key Ideas | PESED Knowing me, knowing you)

Grammar This is a set of rules within a language that defines the way in which words are put together so they make sense.

(CL Thinking and talking | CL Things to do and talk about together | CL Talking and listening with children | CL Becoming a talker)

Grapheme A way of writing down an individual speech sound (‘phoneme’). A grapheme can be a single letter or number of letters in written form that represent individual speech sounds (phonemes). There can be more than one grapheme for each phoneme, e.g. the sound ‘ee’ can be represented (spelt) using several different graphemes: ‘ee’, ‘ea’, ‘ie’, ‘e’, ‘ie’ etc.

(EL Becoming a reader | EL Environmental print)

Hand-eye coordination is the way that physical movement is coordinated and controlled between the hand and the eye. This is necessary for simple things like picking up toys, but also more complex movements, such as catching a ball.

(HPD Exploring food | HPD Making the most of food and mealtimes | HPD Making sense of the world | HPD Developing balance and co-ordination | EL Mark making)

Hannon, Peter / Nutbrown, Cathy Peter Hannon, Cathy Nutbrown and Jo Weinberger developed the ORIM framework (Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction, Modelling) from research into working with parents carried out at the University of Sheffield in the early 1990s. Peter Hannon first defined the framework itself in 1995 in a book entitled Literacy, Home and School. He and Cathy Nutbrown went on to evaluate its use as part of the Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) project (1997-2000). The ORIM framework has been used within the Learning Together Programme from the outset.

(PESED An introduction to ORIM)
Hemispheres  This term refers to the two sides of the brain, referred to as the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere. The right hemisphere controls the left side of the body and the left hemisphere controls the right side. Each hemisphere tends to have specialist functions. For example, the right hemisphere is generally associated with emotions, colour perception, creativity and intuition, whilst the left hemisphere may process language, logical thinking, maths and reasoning.

(HPD Building a brain | HPD Babies on the move)

Heuristic play  This type of play was defined by Elinor Goldschmied (1910-2009). It describes an approach which encourages exploratory, experimental, spontaneous play. Children are provided with a number of containers along with a wide range of objects and recycled materials with which to explore, discover and learn, with minimal adult intervention. It is a time of discovery and investigation, which is usually how two and three year olds play.

(PSED How children play)

Holistic  Refers to the whole baby or child and the way that their growth and learning is intertwined to encompass all areas of their personal, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.

(EL Becoming a reader | EL Lots to read and write about)

Infant directed speech, ‘motherese’ and ‘parentese’  Refers to the way parents or significant carers tend to talk to their baby, in higher pitches and tones. The adult typically adjusts their speech, sounds and facial expressions in response to their baby. For example, showing delight at a smile, imitating and repeating their baby’s cooing or babbling, commenting, asking questions and giving feedback by way of non-verbal exchanges during interactions.

(All 3 terms in: CL Musical moments | CL Early conversations | CL The very first language | CL Finding a voice | PSED Helping babies to feel good about themselves | ‘Motherese/Parentese’ in: HPD Babies on the move | PSED Knowing me, knowing you)

Intentionality  This refers to infant sounds made deliberately and consistently as part of an early ‘conversation’. The baby is likely to make eye contact, use gesture, persist and become more insistent or modify sounds to gain attention.

(CL Early conversations)

Intonation  The rise and fall of spoken language that can indicate meaning. For example, in spoken language, the phrase “You are hungry” is a statement or becomes a question depending on the intonation.

(CL Musical moments)

Joint attention  See ‘Eye contact & joint attention’

Kinaesthetic  A way of learning through the use of physical activity or by touching, holding, moving and exploring physical objects in order to support understanding. Learning in this way uses a different part of the brain than is used when just looking/watching (visual learning) or listening (auditory learning).

(EM Number names | EM Exploring numbers | EM Toddler numbers | EM Let’s count | EM Numbers, numbers everywhere | EM Shapes and patterns everywhere)
Marked mirroring  This describes the process by which a baby begins to understand his or her own behaviour or feelings with the help of a sensitive parent/carer. Marked mirroring is when the parent/carer acts as a mirror to notice, change (mark) and reflect feeling states back to the baby. It occurs when parents/carers use exaggerated (marked) versions of realistic emotional expressions in order to convey to the baby that their state has been understood but that these feelings are manageable and can be moderated and regulated [also see ‘Self-regulation’].

(PSED Knowing me, knowing you)

Mastery and A sense of mastery  Mastery is when a task or action can be completed successfully without confusion or difficulty. Mastery often comes as a result of the combination of other factors including: perseverance, being resilient, high self-efficacy and good self-esteem, having positive dispositions for learning. A sense of mastery is when children are aware that they have the skills and expertise to do something successfully and feel that they fully understand and are able to achieve the task at hand. Children develop a sense of mastery through succeeding in tasks and situations which are challenging but not overly difficult for their age/developmental stage. A sense of mastery helps to strengthen children’s belief in their own abilities [see ‘Self-efficacy’].

(PSED Strand Key Ideas)

Mathematical concepts  Ideas and thoughts associated with different areas of maths such as numbers and counting; shape and space; matching, sorting and comparing; patterns; measuring size, length, weight, volume and capacity.

(All EM topics | HPD Making the most of food and mealtimes | HPD Making sense of the world | CL Talking maths)

Mathematical language  Words that are associated with the description or explanation of ideas and thoughts that are associated with maths [see ‘Mathematical concepts’] or the naming of mathematical objects. They include words such as bigger, smaller, full, empty, heavy, light, circle, round, square, same, different, add, subtract, multiply, divide etc. [Also see ‘Positional language’]


Midline  See ‘Bilateral co-ordination and Midline’

Minibeasts  A generic term for insects. Minibeasts include insects, spiders or any other type of creepy crawly that live mostly outdoors on land or in/on water. You can find them around ponds, hiding in or under logs, stones or piles of leaves.

(HPD Exploring nature | EM Mathematical adventures)

Multiple embodiment  Young children develop their understanding of mathematical ideas most effectively when they use physical materials that represent (embody) a concept so they are able to explore it, for example, handling objects of different weights and sizes to understand the concept of relative weight and size. When children experience different objects in a range of situations that embody the same mathematical concept, this is known as multiple embodiment. (EM Strand Key Ideas)
Mutual eye contact  See ‘Eye contact & joint attention’

Neurons / Neural pathways  Neural pathways are the connections in the brain that form as a result of new experiences and situations. They transmit messages that tell the body what to do or how to respond in specific situations. Neural pathways are formed between brain cells – called neurons. There are approximately 100 billion (100,000,000,000) neurons present in the brain at birth. Neural pathways strengthen the more they are used.  

(HPD Strand Key Ideas | HPD Building a brain | HPD Early sensory experiences | HPD Making sense of the world | PSED Treasure baskets: babies making choices)

Number name(s)  The spoken words that are associated with each number, e.g. ‘one’, ‘four’, ‘twenty’ etc. Knowing the names of numbers and being able to recite them is a very different skill to being able to count or understand early numerical concepts.  

(see also ‘Counting principles’)

(EM Number names | EM Exploring numbers | EM Toddler numbers | EM Let’s count | EM Numbers, numbers everywhere | EM Maths in books, toys and games | EM Maths in songs and rhymes)

Numbers:
- **Cardinal numbers**  Numbers that are used to show quantity – 2 biscuits, 3 children, 4 plates
- **Ordinal numbers**  Numbers that are used to put things in order – coming first in a game, having the second bath after the baby
- **Nominal numbers / Numbers as labels**  Numbers that are used to identify (or ‘name’) different things in everyday life. Bus numbers, house numbers, numbers on the back of football shirts, model numbers and car number plates use numbers as labels, without relating to quantity or putting things in an order.

(EM Exploring numbers)

Nutbrown, Cathy  see Hannon, Peter

Object permanence  Understanding that an object does not actually disappear when it is covered up or removed from sight. This is an important stage in early development as, once they have grasped the concept of object permanence, babies and young children will begin to become more observant and notice things about objects. This leads to them being able to sort and classify things later on.

(EM Maths in books, toys and games | EM Mathematical babies)

One-to-one correspondence /One-one principle  This is the ability to match one object to a number or another object, e.g. one spoon for one teddy, or counting fingers and using number names as you do it. It is knowing that each object that is counted represents one more thing. When counting several objects, children also have to remember which objects they have counted and which they have not.  

[see also see ‘Principles of learning to count’]

(EM Exploring measures | EM Maths in songs and rhymes | EM Exploring numbers | EM Number names | EM Numbers, numbers everywhere | EM Toddler numbers | EM Let’s count)
**Open and closed questions**  Closed question usually require a simple or factual answer, often “yes” or “no”, e.g. “Did you have a nice birthday cake?”. Open questions tend to require more detailed responses, and encourage children to express and extend their thoughts, feelings, opinions, ideas etc, e.g. “What was your birthday cake like?” or “What would you put in, if you were making a magic birthday cake?”.

*(CL Things to do and talk about together)*

**Order-irrelevance principle** see ‘Principles of learning to count’

**ORIM** Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction and Modelling (ORIM) are four ways that all parents/carers support their children’s learning at home. The Learning Together Programme uses ORIM to help practitioners to:
- notice how parents/carers already support their children to learn
- explain to parents/carers the value of what they are already doing
- think of ways to help parents/carers to extend the ways that they encourage learning at home and during day-to-day activities.

The ORIM framework was first articulated by Peter Hannon (1995) from the University of Sheffield and was used by Peter Hannon and Cathy Nutbrown as a key element of the Raising Early Achievement in Literacy Project (REAL) (1997-2002).

**Palmar grasp** This is when a baby or young child uses their whole hand/fist to grasp things by wrapping all of their fingers around the object. When holding and using mark-making materials, the baby or young child tends to move their whole arm in order to make marks rather than just their wrist and hand.

*(EL Mark making)*

**Phoneme** The smallest unit of sound in spoken language. In English there are approximately 44 of these individual ‘sound’ pieces. This number is only an approximation due to the different accents within the English language. (Note: ‘Graphemes’ are the way in which these speech sounds (phonemes) are written down using one or more letters. There can be more than one grapheme for each phoneme. See also ‘Graphemes’.)

*(EL Wonderful ways with words | EL Becoming a reader | EL Environmental print | CL Becoming a talker)*

**Phonics** The complex relationship between sounds, letters and words. It is about being able to match individual letters, e.g. a, b, c, or groups of letters, e.g. ‘oo’, ‘ee’, ‘th’ (‘graphemes’) with individual sounds (‘phonemes’) that the letters represent. This knowledge/skill is an important part of being able to read, write and spell words (along with reading for meaning and understanding).

*(EL Key Strand Ideas | EL Becoming a reader | EL Becoming a writer | CL Becoming a talker)*

**Phonological awareness** The ability to hear and understand that words are made up of individual sounds (‘phonemes’), and to be able to distinguish one sound from another. This comes from an awareness of sounds and sound patterns in language such as rhyme, and repeated letter sounds at the beginning of words (‘alliteration’). This is an important stage of development which supports early reading and writing.

*(EL Key Strand Ideas | EL Becoming a reader | EL Wonderful ways with words)*
Phonology This is the study of the way sounds function within a particular language to encode meaning. Children’s awareness of the sounds used for language, and that form speech, also support their early reading and writing.

Piaget, Jean (1896–1980) Piaget was a Swiss psychologist who originally worked on intelligence tests in France, and went on to develop theories about how children develop according to their age. He suggested that children would only understand certain concepts, such as conservation of mass, when they reach a certain age, and not before. This is often referred to as an ‘age and stage’ theory. Although a lot of his theories have been tested and proven, there is still some criticism of his work. This is because he paid less attention to cultural, environmental and social influences on children’s development, and because he was reasonably inflexible about children achieving at earlier ages. Piaget is also responsible for theorising the way in which we learn. He suggested that learning occurs by actively constructing understanding and knowledge through reflecting on experiences of real world situations; this theory is referred to as constructivism.

Pincer grip The ability to use the thumb and the tip of the index finger to pick up or grasp small objects. It is an important part of developing the fine motor skills that will enable the child to hold and manipulate a pencil for writing.

Play categories The sociologist Mildred Parten (1902-no recorded death) developed six play categories from her observations of the social behaviour of pre-school children. She suggested that the last two (Associative and Cooperative play) offered opportunities to develop communication and language skills as part of the social interaction typical of those play categories.

1. **Unoccupied behaviour** The child may be stationary or making random movements for no apparent purpose, and does not seek contact with others. This type of play is often seen in very young infants.

2. **Solitary independent play** The child is focussed on playing alone with no interest in what others are doing around them. This type of play is usually seen in infancy.

3. **Onlooker behaviour/Spectator play** The child seems content watching other children engage in activities. They may ask questions or talk with other children. This type of play occurs across the stages of development.

4. **Parallel play** The child plays alongside another child, often with similar things, but doesn’t interact or actively engage with them. This type of play is usually seen in toddlers.

5. **Associative play** The child may copy and begin to interact with other children as part of their play but there is no organisation or common purpose. This type of play is usually seen in early pre-school years and is the first category that involves social interaction.

6. **Cooperative play** The child interacts with others to organise their play. This includes sharing, taking turns, discussing ideas for their play. This type of play is mostly evident in later pre-school years.

© Peeple
Play (types of) There are many different types of play which incorporate a wide range of activities that support babies’ and young children’s development. There can often be more than one type of play evident in a single activity. Types of play may include, but are not limited to:

- **Exploratory play** Babies and young children use their physical skills and senses to explore objects or materials in order to assess their properties and/or features. Activities might include handling and exploring unusual or everyday objects or toys, experiencing materials such as water, mud, gloop, grass, sand etc.

- **Physical play** Babies and young children use their whole body or large movements with arms, legs and feet (gross motor skills), as well as smaller movements using finger and toes (fine motor skills) to explore their world.

- **Symbolic play** Young children use a toy or an object to represent something else during their play. For example using a Lego brick as a phone or a car, a stick to represent a light sabre or a play mat to represent a road layout etc.

- **Imaginative/pretend play** Young children use their imagination to pretend that other things represent events from their everyday lives. For example, pretending that their teddies are babies which they can feed, change their nappies and put to bed. **Symbolic play** is often seen alongside this type of play as children use objects to represent other items that they may not have, e.g. using a teddy to symbolise a baby, or a hanky as a nappy.

- **Role play** Young children use their imagination to pretend to be someone or something else by using previous experiences as a basis for acting out roles, such as being a doctor, shopkeeper, parent or cat.

- **Dramatic play** This is when **symbolic play**, **pretend play** and **role play** combine. It might include the creation of imaginary worlds, characters and make believe roles, e.g. acting out a story using props to represent objects and pretending to be one of the characters.

- **Socio-dramatic play** When two or more children interact to plan and negotiate their **dramatic play**.

- **Creative play** Young children engage in activities which encourage them to use their imagination and bodies to explore and try out new ideas using a variety of equipment and materials. This might include craft activities with paint, glue, scissors; or dancing to music and using musical instruments etc.

- **Constructive play** This type of play may incorporate a wide range of materials or toys that young children can use to build things. This may include toys such as Lego or Duplo, recycled materials such as cartons, tubes, boxes etc. or twigs and leaves etc.

- **Small world play** Young children use small-scale representations of real things as part of their play. For example, using a farm set, dolls house, train set, cars and road mat etc.

- **Games with rules** This may include a variety of activities, such as playing Peep-o, setting boundaries as part of their pretend play, playing games or activities which involve turn-taking, etc.

- **Language play** Babies and young children use their voices to explore sounds and words through patterns of sounds in music or rhyming and nonsenses words in books, songs and rhymes.

(CL Play and language | PSED Lots of ways to play and learn | PSED Helping children to understand and manage their feelings | ‘Socio-dramatic play’: CL Imaginative play with puppets | EL Storytelling | CL Things to do and talk about together | CL Talking and listening with children | ‘Creative play’ is in: CL Making the most of technology | EL Literacy and technology | ‘Small world play’: CL Talking maths | EL Exploring writing through play | HPD Movement and language | ‘Imaginative play’: CL Imaginative play with puppets | EL Exploring stories through play | CL Things to do and talk about together | CL Talking and listening with children | HPD Looking after ‘me’)

The definitions relate to how the terms are used in the learning together programme. The topics in which they appear are listed below the definition, along with the strand: CL = Communication & Language, PSED = Personal, social and emotional development, EL = Early Literacy, EM = Early Maths, HPD = Health and Physical Development.
**Positional language**  Words which describe where something or someone is in relation to something else, e.g. under the chair, inside the box, on the table, through the tunnel, around the corner etc. They also include directional language: i.e. left, right, north, south, up, down etc. These words and concepts are best learnt from experiencing them in meaningful contexts.

**Pragmatics**  These are the rules that establish how language is used socially and in different contexts. For example, adults talk to their friends differently from their baby, and we use language differently at work and at a party; we learn conventions such as “please” and “thank you”, and when to use these phrases. Rules can vary across cultures and between different groups within a culture.

**Principles of learning to count**  Gelman and Gallistel (1978) suggested that there are five concepts which need to be mastered when learning to count. They defined these as five counting principles – the first three are considered to be ‘how to count’ principles, whereas the last two are ‘what to count’ principles:

- **One-one principle** (sometimes referred to as one-to-one correspondence): being able to assign one counting word to each of the items being counted. To do this, children have to allocate one counting word to each of the items and also remember which they have counted and which they have not.

- **Stable-order principle**: knowing that words used for counting follow the same order and don’t change. i.e. the same counting words will follow whether you start at ‘one’, ‘five’, ‘three’, etc. This relies on a child being familiar with the normal sequence of number names.

- **Cardinal principle**: knowing that the last number spoken (or held in mind) when counting a group of objects, represents how many there are in that group. A child who re-counts a group of objects when asked how many there are, immediately after counting them the first time, has not yet mastered this principle.

- **Abstraction principle**: knowing that numbers can be used to count anything and not just similar/identical objects. Young children often count tangible objects; however they also need to learn that non-physical things, such as sounds, can be counted too.

- **Order-irrelevance principle**: understanding that numbers don’t belong to particular objects; knowing that you can count a number of objects in any order, as long as every object is counted only once.


**Private speech** and **inner speech**  Young children often talk aloud to themselves using private speech when they play. The psychologist Lev Vygotsky suggested that they use spoken language to support their thinking and their developing understanding of the world. Children move from private speech to inner speech, as they learn to internalise language to become thought.
**Proprioception**  This is the body’s system of understanding where its body parts are in relation to the environment around it. This is achieved through a number of receptors (proprioceptors) located in the skin, muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints and inner ear, which send messages about the movement and position of the various parts of the body. Knowing where your body is in relation to the external environment allows you to do things like sit down in a chair without turning round to look, or run up stairs, or brush the back of your hair.  

(HPD Strand Key Ideas | HPD Understanding our ‘place in space’)  

**Proto-conversations**  Early interactions that involve communication between caregiver and baby, using words, sounds and gestures. The term was defined by Mary Catherine Bateson in the 1970s. These conversations generally follow a ‘serve’ and ‘return’ pattern of appropriately timed verbal and non-verbal interactions between the caregiver and baby.  

(CL Musical moments | CL Early conversations | EM Maths in songs and rhymes | PSED Helping babies to feel good about themselves)  

**Proximodistal growth pattern**  This describes a baby’s physical growth and development from the centre (trunk) of the body out towards the extremities. For example, a baby can sit and hold their head up before being able to use their fingers or hands meaningfully.  

(HPD Babies on the move)  

**Receptive language**  The ability to understand spoken or written language.  

(CL Strand Key Ideas | CL Becoming a talker)  

**Reflective function(ing)**  A person’s capacity to be aware of and reflect on his or her own mental states, the mental state of others, and how these mental states are translated into behaviour. For parents, it is their ability to think, wonder and imagine what their baby is feeling. Encouraging reflective functioning during pregnancy can promote the relationship between the mother and baby. Once the baby is born, it can help to promote secure attachment and support the development of positive relationships for years to come.  

(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Knowing me, knowing you)  

**Resilient / Resilience**  A child’s ability to recover from the ups and downs of life. It is also about the ability to bounce back from setbacks or in the face of adversity. The extent of the challenges that babies and young children face varies greatly – this can range from mild (e.g. being frustrated by not being able to complete a puzzle) to severe (e.g. experiencing domestic violence, war or poverty). Resilience is influenced by many factors including: genetics, the child’s temperament, health, environmental factors. Resilient children are more able to cope with or adapt to difficult and stressful situations. Being able to identify, understand and respond appropriately to emotions (emotional literacy), as well as being able to manage and channel their feelings into socially acceptable responses and behaviours (self-regulation) is helpful for building children’s resilience.  

(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Helping children to understand and manage their feelings | PSED The importance of support and encouragement)
Scaffolding/Scaffold  The psychologist Jerome Bruner used this term to describe the positive way in which adults can support children’s learning through helpful structured interaction. This is useful when the child’s independent efforts prove unsuccessful, or when they do not have the knowledge or ability to succeed. Scaffolding can be seen as a way to build on what the child already knows to help them achieve a particular goal or acquire a certain skill. Once they have mastered this, the ‘scaffold’ can be removed as it is no longer required. [See also ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ defined by Lev Vygotsky, which is a similar concept.]
(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED An introduction to ORIM | PSED The importance of support and encouragement)

Schemas / Chris Athey  (1924-2011) The term schema was initially defined by the psychologist Jean Piaget. He suggested that babies and young children construct their knowledge of the world by building and adapting their understanding in response to new experiences. He used the term schema to describe both the process by which children create and adapt their knowledge, as well as the category of knowledge they are applying it to. Chris Athey expanded the work of Piaget and defined schemas as repeated patterns of behaviour often shown by children who are exploring and making sense of their world. Athey identified a number of different types of schema with specific patterns of behaviour. Although there are many others, the most common schemas are:
- connecting: joining and separating things
- enveloping and enclosing: covering things up or putting things inside something else
- rotation: things that go round and round
- trajectory: things that move in a line
- transporting: moving things from one place to another
(PSED Schemas: making the most of play patterns)

Secure attachment see ‘Attachment’

Segment  The process of separating sounds (‘phonemes’) within words e.g. “cat” = ‘c’-'a’-'t’. This is a useful skill for being able to spell words.
(EL Wonderful ways with words | EL Environmental print | EL Becoming a reader)

Self-confidence / confidence  Feeling comfortable with your own personality, skills and abilities, and having realistic expectations of what you can achieve. It is a feeling of security and trust in your own abilities, but may not be transferable to all areas of development. For example, a child may be confident about their singing but not their appearance. Self-confident individuals tend to remain optimistic and retain a positive view of themselves even when some of their expectations are not met.
(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Helping babies feel good about themselves | PSED Helping children feel good about themselves | PSED The importance of names | PSED The importance of support and encouragement | PSED Treasure Baskets: babies making choices | PSED-P How children play | HPD Looking after ‘me’ | EL Home-made books | EL Storytelling | EL Sharing books with babies | EL Exploring stories through play | EL Making the most of favourite books and stories | EL Becoming a writer | EL Exploring writing through play | CL Making the most of technology)
Self-efficacy  is how much a child believes in themselves and their ability to succeed. Children develop self-efficacy as a result of experiencing and managing setbacks or failures. A child with higher self-efficacy will tend to view tasks and activities as learning experiences – this will enable them to rise to the challenge, be self-motivated and more accepting of setbacks. They are more likely to have good self-esteem, and learn how to persevere when they don’t succeed the first time – this gives them a greater ability to bounce back (‘resilience’). It can also help them to develop skills and expertise more easily leading to a ‘sense of mastery’. The opposite of all these things is true for children with lower self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an important aspect of social cognitive theory and the work of ‘Albert Bandura’.

Self-esteem  How you value yourself - your self-worth. It can be thought of as ‘inner self-respect’. This will affect children’s behaviour, thoughts and actions.

Self-regulate / Self-regulation  This is when children are able to manage the feelings caused by their emotions and channel these into socially acceptable responses and behaviours. The innate temperament of the baby/child is an important factor – some are quite calm whereas others can be more highly-strung and harder to soothe. When adults notice and respond calmly to babies’/young children’s feelings and behaviour, it lets them know that others understand and can provide comfort. Babies and young children learn appropriate behaviours and responses from seeing them being modelled by others. Being able to self-regulate builds resilience. [see also ‘Emotional literacy’]

Sense of agency  Refers to a child’s awareness that they are independent individuals who are able to actively participate in and affect their world, i.e. they have a ‘voice’. Children often demonstrate a sense of agency in social situations when they make known their own interests or ask adults to act on their behalf.

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Sense of self  This consists of the things that are most important to us as individuals; this includes our personal identity, attributes, behaviours, values, beliefs and relationships with others. These are strongly influenced by environmental and cultural factors as well as responses from others (which help us to form the way in which we see ourselves). A significant part of our individual identity is our sense of belonging to different groups, such as our family, peer group (e.g. football team), or religious group (e.g. mosque). It takes time for babies and very young children to develop the awareness that they are completely separate individuals. They become self-aware between the ages of 15-24 months - this may be seen in their ability to recognise that it is themselves they see in the mirror.

(Sensed Strand Key Ideas | PSED Becoming ‘me’ | PSED Helping children feel good about themselves | PSED The importance of names | PSED The importance of relationships | PSED Understanding and managing behaviour)

Sensitive periods  These refer to the optimal times (but not the only times) during development when the brain is more receptive to learning particular things.

(HPD Building a brain)

Sensory integration  This is when all of the senses (including vestibular and proprioception) work together in the brain to interpret the external world. For example, catching a ball means seeing it, knowing where to put your hands and how hard to grasp when you catch it.

(HPD Building a brain)

Sequencing  This can be used in different contexts and refers to the ability to know what comes next based on previous experience or by understanding the correct order of things. For example, it might be:

- knowing what comes next as part of a familiar bedtime routine
- putting the parts of a well-known story in the right order
- using the correct number sequence when counting.

(PSED Making the most of routines | EM A sense of order | EM Exploring early maths | EM Maths in songs and rhymes | EM Mathematical adventures | EM Mathematical babies | EM Maths in everyday routines | EM Maths in books, toys and games)

Shared eye gaze  See ‘Eye contact and joint attention’

Social constructivism  See ‘Vygotsky, Lev’
Social ecological theory - Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) Bronfenbrenner was a social learning theorist who focused on the impact of environmental and social factors on child development. He suggested that children are nested within a number of subsystems that they interact with, which influence their development. He believed that the people and the influences closest to a child have the greatest impact on their development. He expressed this graphically as concentric circles, with a child situated at the centre. The radiating circles represent social influences on a child, extending from parents, to school, to wider communities and finally culture and demographics. He termed it a social ecological systems theory.

The subsystems are:

- **Microsystem**: represents the child’s direct family, siblings and others that they interact with on a regular face-to-face basis. These interactions tend to have the strongest impact on the child.

- **Mesosystem**: this represents the wider environment or settings within which the child participates, as well as the people they interact with directly. This may include pre-school, extended family, peers, health care services, cultural or religious settings etc.

- **Exosystem**: includes places and people which the child may not directly participate or interact with. They are beyond the child’s control but still affect their lives, e.g. the employment or workplace schedules of their parents/carers, community-based resources such as libraries etc. It also includes organisations who support children’s specific needs or rights – these may still affect the child without having direct contact.

- **Macrossystem**: this is the culture and demographic area where the child lives – their attitudes and ideologies.

- **Chronosystem** (added later): represents the impact on the individual of changes that happen over time, such as starting school, siblings leaving home, etc.

This theory is useful for considering the relationships between a child, their immediate families, communities and the broader society. [PSED Relationships]

Social referencing is when babies or young children look at their parents/carers to gauge their reactions and emotional responses to new or unfamiliar events, situations, objects etc. They also use it to seek their parent’s/carer’s approval if they are trying out something new or exploring. Babies and young children will look from the object they are unsure of to their parent/carer - they then ‘read’ their parent’s/carer’s tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions etc. to find out whether something is safe or approved of. They also use these reactions to learn what to do and how they should react or behave in specific contexts, environments and cultures. This concept reinforces the importance of positive adult role modelling, in that babies and young children will learn how to behave and respond as a result of their experiences and interactions with others. [PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Treasure baskets: babies making choices]

Spatial awareness This is knowing where your body is in space, in relation to other objects and the world around you. You need this to be able to move around without bumping into things. It also helps you to do things like judge distances and know how far to stretch your muscles in order to reach an object. [HPD Exploring movement | HPD Understanding out ‘place in space’ | HPD Movement and language | HPD Musical movements | EM Maths in books, toys and games | EM Maths in songs and rhymes | EM Mathematical adventures | EM Mathematical babies | EM Maths in everyday routines | CL Musical moments | CL Musical interactions]
Spatial orientation  This is the ability to maintain our body positioning and/or posture in relation to the surrounding environment when we are either still or moving. It is about our sense of direction as well as knowing which way up our body is, i.e. upside down or upright! (HPD Developing balance and co-ordination)

Speech  The ability to produce sounds that form words. Speech requires precise movement and physical coordination of the parts of the anatomy involved in making sounds, such as the tongue, lips, palate, jaw and lungs. (CL Finding a voice)

Stable-order principle  see ‘Principles of learning to count’

Story bag  This is a large bag or sack which contains a story book along with a variety of items related to the theme of the book which can be used to support learning and development. Items might include props, toys and/or puppets to support the story, an information or factual book related to the story content, a game, an activity and usually a leaflet for adults with suggestions for how to use the contents and extension ideas. (CL Imaginative play with puppets | EL Exploring stories through play | PSED Lots of ways to play and learn | HPD Developing balance and co-ordination | EM Exploring early maths | EM Maths in books, toys and games | EM Maths in songs and rhymes | EM Maths in everyday routines | HPD Building a brain)

Story language  The language and words used to write or tell stories. This generally has a different structure and style to normal spoken language, for example “Long, long ago in a magical land...” or “The middle-sized billy-goat trip, tramp, tromped over the rickety rickety bridge...” etc. (EL Sharing books with babies | EL Sharing books with toddlers and young children | EL Storytelling | EL Exploring stories through play | EL Making the most of favourite stories | EL Wonderfully ways with words | CL Imaginative play with puppets)

Symbolic representation  When young children use an object to represent something else, e.g. using a cup or bowl as a hat. This is an important stage which occurs before children can use symbols in writing - i.e. the marks on paper (letters and numbers) that represent sounds, words and ideas. (EL Exploring stories through play | EM Numbers, numbers everywhere)

Symbolic thought  Thinking in images and symbols, using symbols to stand for people or things, for example writing, role play, drawing and speaking. (CL Play and language | CL Imaginative play with puppets | EL Exploring stories through play)

Symbolism  A picture or written mark, letter or word used to represent an object, an action or an idea. (EL Strand Key Ideas)


**Symmetry**  There are two different types of symmetry:

- **Rotational symmetry**: This is when a shape can be turned so that it fits onto itself exactly, e.g. a square can be turned 4 times to fit exactly onto itself.

- **Reflection (or line) symmetry**: This is when a shape can be halved in one or more ways so that each part is a mirror of the other, e.g. rectangle can be half in two ways so that each halve is the mirror image of the other.

*(EM Shapes and patterns everywhere)*

**Theory of mind**  The recognition that others have different ideas, beliefs, attitudes and thoughts to those of our own. It is the understanding that others experience and view the world in different ways. It is not until their second year of life that young children begin to recognise that others may not want the same things that they do, nor have the same opinions. Developing awareness that others might feel differently to them and have different mental states, is an important factor that needs to be grasped by children before they are able to empathise with others.

*(PSED Strand Key Ideas | PSED Becoming ‘me’ | PSED Helping children understand and manage their feelings | CL Imaginative play with puppets | EL Our world in books)*

**Toxic stress**  This refers to a baby’s or child’s exposure to severe, long term stress with the absence of a protective relationship. Toxic stress can have a detrimental effect on the baby’s or child’s developing stress response system and ability to control and regulate their emotions and responses (self-regulate). It can also result in excess levels of cortisol which may inhibit the formation of neural pathways, resulting in developmental delays, behaviour issues and learning difficulties.

*(HPD Building a brain)*

**Transitions**  Times when babies or young children experience change to which they have to adjust. This may be moving house, starting nursery or pre-school, moving from a cot to a bed, family disruption, a new baby etc.

*(EL Making the most of favourite books and stories | PSED-B Making the most of routines)*

**Treasure baskets (Elinor Goldschmied [1920-2009])**  Treasure baskets are low sided, sturdy baskets or containers with soft edges that are filled with every day, recyclable and/or natural objects such as wooden brushes, metal spoons, fruit, fir cones, fabric, etc. These items are large enough not to cause a choking hazard, but small enough for babies to handle. They are safe for babies to hold, bang, shake, suck, make noises with and roll. Treasure baskets are particularly good for babies who can sit up but are not yet on the move. Items in the basket should be changed and added to on a regular basis. Goldschmied saw treasure baskets as an opportunity to offer babies the experience of making choices, and recognised the importance of allowing them to act on their preferences. Babies’ brains grow and develop in response to the rich sensory experiences they have from exploring items in a treasure basket. These experiences will be built on once the baby becomes mobile and begins to develop language.

*(PSED Treasure baskets: babies making choices | PSED Helping babies feel good about themselves | PSED An introduction to ORIM | HPD Early sensory experiences | HPD Building a brain | CL Play and language | EM Mathematical babies)*

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### Glossary - Peep Learning Together Programme

**Turn-taking** (as a communication and language skill) Turn-taking develops when a mother or carer responds to their baby’s early gestures or noises. The baby quickly learns that making another noise or gesture is likely to stimulate another response. Babies and young children learn about turn-taking through: games; everyday interactions which involve eye contact; vocalisation and gestures; and watching or taking part in conversations. Turn-taking is a vital communication skill which underpins positive interactions with others.

(CL Strand Key Ideas | PSED Helping babies feel good about themselves | CL-EC Early Conversations)

**Two-dimensional (2D) and Three-dimensional (3D)** Two-dimensional (sometimes referred to as 2D) is used to describe a shape that has only two dimensions, such as height and width; and which has no depth or thickness to it. E.g. circle, square, triangle etc. Three-dimensional (sometimes referred to as 3D) is used to describe an object or shape that has three dimensions, such as height, width and depth. E.g. sphere, cube, pyramid etc.

(EM Shapes and patterns everywhere)

**Verbal / Non-verbal** These are ways in which babies and young children communicate their needs and emotions as well as perceive the needs and emotions of others. Verbal interactions include: sounds and the spoken word, along with clarity of speech and tone of voice. Non-verbal interactions include: gestures, eye contact, eye gaze, nodding, facial expressions, body language (stance and posture), physical contact (touch) etc. Verbal and/or non-verbal interactions may occur through face-to-face interactions or via the telephone, radio, television or other media.

(CL Early conversations | CL The very first language | CL Talking and listening with children | CL Musical interactions | CL Finding a voice | CL Things to do and talk about together | CL Becoming a listener | EL Sharing books with babies | PSED Helping babies feel good about themselves | PSED Helping children feel good about themselves | PSED Knowing me, knowing you | PSED An introduction to ORIM | PSED Treasure baskets: babies making choices | PSED Helping children to understand and manage their feelings | EM Maths in songs and rhymes | HPD Exploring food | HPD Early sensory experiences | HPD Making the most of food and mealtimes)

**Vestibular system / Vestibular awareness** The vestibular system supports our sense of balance and awareness of which way up our body is (spatial orientation). It co-ordinates information from the inner ear as well as receptors around the body, which indicates the direction we are moving, how fast we are going and whether we are speeding up or slowing down. The vestibular system needs to be stimulated through the experience of different types of movement to grow and mature.

(HPD Strand Key Ideas | HPD Musical movements | HPD Developing balance and co-ordination)

**Vocabulary** An appropriate use and understanding of words and their meanings

(CL Becoming a talker | CL Talking and listening | CL Things to do and talk about together | CL Musical interactions | CL Thinking and talking | CL Talking maths | CL Imaginative play with puppets | PSED Helping children to understand and manage their feelings | PSED Understanding and managing behaviour | EL Sharing books with toddlers and young children | EL Storytelling | EL Becoming a reader | EM Exploring measures | HPD Strand Key Ideas | HPD Exploring movement | HPD Movement and language | HPD Making the most of food and mealtimes | HPD Making sense of the world)
Vocal tract The air passages above the larynx used to produce speech, including the pharynx, mouth and nasal cavities.
(CL Finding a voice | EL Wonderful ways with words)

Vygotsky, Lev (1896-1935) Vygotsky was a psychologist who is best known for his social learning theories – referred to as social constructivism. Social constructivism is a theory of learning which emphasises the role of the child’s social and cultural factors in contributing to and influencing the way that children construct their understanding of their world. Although Vygotsky had many different ideas, he is probably best known for two main concepts: ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ (ZPD) and the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO).

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the zone between the level of skill that a child is working at already and the level that he or she could be working at with some support. The adult that gives support is helping a child to reach their potential. The adult who helps (whether it is a parent, carer, practitioner or even another child) is known as the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). Vygotsky viewed the ZPD as a way to explain the relation between children’s learning and cognitive development. He believed that children’s social and cultural environment was the most important aspect for children’s development and well-being.
[See also ‘Private speech’]
(PSED Strand Key Ideas | CL Thinking and talking)

Weaning The age at which babies are introduced to solid foods – this varies between cultures and countries.
(HPD Exploring food)

Weighted doll A doll that is representative of a real baby. They are the same size and weight as an average full-term baby and are useful for demonstration purposes. The weight of the different parts (head, body and limbs) make the doll lifelike to hold, position and manipulate. An ordinary doll or soft toy will be just as effective if you do not have access to a weighted doll.
(HPD Early sensory experiences | HPD Understanding our ‘place in space’ | HPD Musical movements | HPD Babies on the move | PSED Knowing me, knowing you)

Well-being/wellbeing This is associated with the quality of life and the feeling that you can do everything that you want to do. It is an important factor which affects our optimism and aspirations for the future. There are four main components which are influenced by the way in which people interact with their world. Each of these factors is influenced by the way in which people interact with their world and are in a constant state of flux:
- Physical wellbeing
- Health
- Emotional wellbeing
- Social wellbeing
(PSED Strand Key Ideas | HPD Stand Key Ideas | HPD Exploring nature)
**Zone of proximal development (ZPD)** The psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1935) used this term to describe the ‘zone’ between what a child can already achieve on their own (actual developmental level), and what they could potentially do with appropriate help or understanding (potential developmental level). This ‘zone’ constantly changes from day to day, activity to activity and in response to the disposition or emotional state of the child at that particular point. Vygotsky suggested that the person who could provide support to help them achieve this could be either an adult or a child with slightly better skills in that area. He referred to these people as More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs). (See also ‘scaffolding’ defined by Jerome Bruner, which is a similar concept.)

*(PSED Strand Key Ideas)*