

Star News

#01 Winter 2019

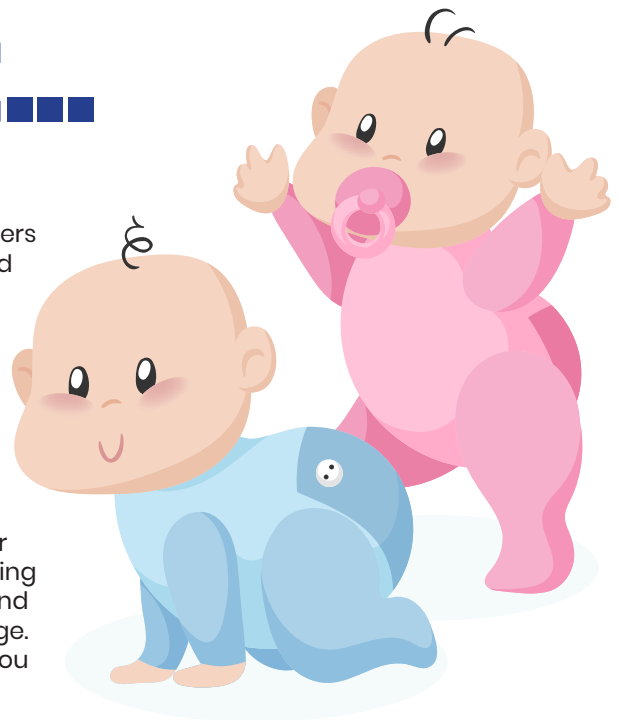
Check It Out...

This is the first edition of our new style newsletter.

 Our previous Star News was mostly filled with our plan of activities and a few lovely pics of the children and parents. We've been producing our own calendar of events and info that we've been posting out and emailing to parents for the past number of months. But, we felt something was missing. We missed having the chance to share our news with you, to show off some of the lovely photos and we still wanted to share information that we hoped might be useful for you. So, we have revamped our newsletter and here it is in all of its 8 pages of glory!!!

We plan to do two newsletters each year, but will still send out the list of activities to all of our parents every couple of months by post and email. There are a number of articles from staff in the project to tell you about the services we offer in Star.

We'll be posting the newsletter out to you all, as well as sending out to other services and organisations in Banbridge. So, you never know where you might see it...



Star News Desk

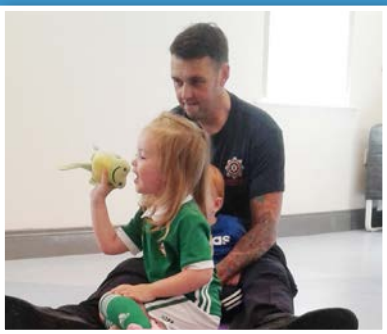
-  Well done for Danielle and Wendy, our Family Support staff, who both successfully completed their Level 3 Diploma in Health & Social Care Skills in June. Every day is a school day in Star!
-  We are delighted for Maria, our Occupational Therapist on the happy arrival of her little baby boy. Maria will be on Maternity Leave until the summer.
-  Congratulations and farewell to Jayne, Health Visitor who left Star in August to take up a new post in the Belfast Trust.
-  Wedding bells were sounding in Star for Nicole, our Speech and Language Therapist who recently got married.
-  A big round of applause for the Early Years staff for successfully completing the registration process with the Early Years Social Work service in the Southern H&SC Trust. All that hard work has paid off and it's an endorsement to the high quality of the services they provide through the Sure Start Developmental Service for 2-3 year olds and the Crèche.
-  5 Star rating for Star - Star has been awarded the highest Food Hygiene Rating level of 5 by the local Environmental Health Department from ABC Council.
-  Dorota, our Early Years Deputy has successfully completed her Level 5 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development in October. Well done - it's an achievement to be proud of.
-  Star Sure Start continues to sparkle brightly with a range of new services, thanks to the commitment of its staff to keep training and embrace new skills. We now can offer Baby Swim, Hypnobirthing and Family Mediation services.

Star's Baby Swim Programme



Toddle, Tumble & Talk

Jake discovering how to make snake bubbles in Toddle, Tumble & Talk



Darcey & Bryson having fun with Dad at Toddle, Tumble and Talk



Crafty Mums

An enjoyable evening spent with the Crafty Mum's



Summer Sensation Tots Zone

Chloe and her mum having fun at our Summer Sensory Sensation



★ Our very first Baby Swim classes were launched in September 2019 and were a huge success! These classes take place in Banbridge Learner Pool, which is exclusively for our use during class times. This offers us our own space to create a private and intimate atmosphere. Baby Swim is the perfect opportunity to introduce your baby to the water, whether you as a parent are a keen swimmer or a non-swimmer. These relaxed classes take on a kind, gentle and effective approach following the Birthlight philosophy, which promotes gentle techniques and a baby led swimming experience. Throughout the duration of our baby swim course you and your baby are introduced to techniques of safe holds and water body balance. You have the opportunity to interact closely with your baby while following their cues for progression. In addition to this, we also promote the importance of nurturing ourselves as parents while following some lovely

relaxation techniques. Our classes are delivered by our very own Star staff members who are currently completing their Birthlight Baby Swim Level 1 and 2 Certificates. This qualifies them to deliver lessons to babies between the ages of 8 weeks and 2 years old.

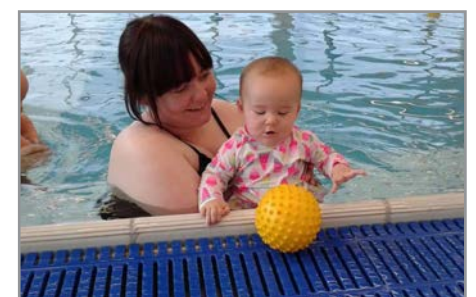
Parent's feedback:

'The venue was nice and private, away from the main pool which was great.'

'I have learnt a variety of safe holding techniques and swimming activities.'

'Calm and relaxed classes, very well supported by swimming teacher and the team.'

'Exceeded my expectations, it was the highlight of our week, we will definitely miss it.'



Savvy Shopping Tips for Christmas Gifts

Most of us look forward to Christmas as a time of giving. But very often, all we give ourselves is a headache with additional expenses and worry about how to manage our everyday bills alongside the Christmas expenditure! It's all too easy to go overboard and overspend – especially with the offers and pressures to buy. That is why planning, budgeting and organising are so important to prevent you from getting into debt at Christmas and beyond. Here are some helpful tips on how to help you stress less at Christmas;

1

Your Presence is Present Enough

Rather than spend money on a gift you can't be sure other people will like or be able to enjoy, why not organise a get together for everyone – organise a day with family or other families you would usually buy for so as everyone is able to enjoy the experience at a fraction of the price. For example; invite everyone round for a Christmas movie with popcorn, wrap up warm and enjoy a festive stroll collecting any pinecones you spot as you walk along, go for an evening walk in the towns or cities to marvel at the trees, lights and decorations, perhaps even stopping off for a hot chocolate! You could maybe even host an evening creating your own salt-dough Christmas tree ornaments which will keep for years and be a lasting memory.

Think too about gifts that truly sparkle – babysitting for new parents, helping elderly family with jobs around their home, or taking a grandparent out for a drive followed by dinner at your house. If you have the time and are feeling creative, handmade gifts not only save money, but they come from the heart which can put a real sparkle in someone's eye! Keep an eye on our newsletter for 'Crafty Mums' – the perfect opportunity to get creative while having a chat with other mums.

2

Secret Santa

If you find that within your family or group of friends you are buying a lot of individual presents, why not suggest doing Secret Santa? In doing so, each person will only buy 1 present which save you time, hassle and money! Everyone taking part must stick to a set budget. If you do not see everyone regularly enough to pick a random name out of a hat in top secret conditions, it can be done online (google online secret Santa generator). Lots of small presents could be combined into one large family present

3

Allow for the Christmas Gift Exchange

It can be very hard to buy gifts for others, yet it can be easy to feel offended when you don't see your friends or family using the item that was bought for them! Give people the option to exchange your present for something they would prefer. When purchasing a present, ask for a gift receipt. This makes the returns process easier for the recipient of the gift and ensures they will receive the full value price when exchanging rather than the sale price! Also check out the returns policy for shops – if you are buying your gift in advance, it might be out of the allowed timeframe after Christmas for your loved one exchange it.

4

Christmas Gift List

Plan early & create a list of the gifts you want to get. Take another look at the list and consider whether you really need to get everyone on it! Finally, set a budget and stick to it! As you buy presents, mark them off your list so as you don't buy for the same person twice.

5

Planning Ahead

If you're ordering a present online, make sure there's plenty of time to have it delivered, bearing in mind the postal workload and possible bad weather. Otherwise, you could end up buying another gift while the other one is stuck in transit doubling the expense!

6

Shop Around

Compare the price of the same / similar items in different stores to find the best deal. If you are dealing with a sales assistant, ask them for some discount! If you don't ask – you don't get!

7

Try not to put Christmas on Credit

It can seem that the run up to Christmas goes on forever but it's worth remembering that it only lasts one day! Remember too, if you receive payments early in December, it is important to prioritise your everyday bills such as rent/mortgage, electric, food etc. Signing up to credit agreements to purchase gifts can leave you paying off a great deal more than the original cost over several months, even years! If your spending runs out of control, you can soon find that debt is not only a problem at Christmas, but can become a way of life. If this is the case, do not suffer in silence – seek advice!

Our Family Support Workers in Star can provide you with a Christmas budget planner and help you work through your finances as you start to think about preparing for Christmas.

Christmas Jam Cookie Sandwiches

(13 jam cookie sandwiches)
Preparation time: 25 mins
Cooking time: 10-12 mins

Ingredients


115g unsalted butter, softened
55g golden caster sugar
180g plain flour
¼ tsp ground cinnamon (optional)
1-2 tsp milk
13 tsp jam

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180/fan oven 160/gas 4. Line 2 trays with greaseproof paper.
- 2 Put the butter and sugar in a bowl and beat together with a wooden spoon until the mixture is pale and creamy.
- 3 Mix the flour and cinnamon into the bowl, add the milk and mix until a dough forms.
- 4 Sprinkle a little flour over the table and rolling pin. Split the dough into 4 pieces.
- 5 Roll out each piece until it is about the thickness of a pound coin.
- 6 Using a star shaped cookie cutter cut out 13 cookies and using a small round cutter cut out the centre of each star.
- 7 With the remainder of the dough cut out another 13 cookies.
- 8 Bake for 10-12 mins. Leave to cool on trays for a couple of minutes before transferring to cooling racks.
- 9 When cooled spoon a little jam onto the biscuits that don't have holes in them, then top with those that do.
- 10 Press down gently to make a delicious festive jam sandwich!



Thanks for the “thumbs up”

Star Parent Survey results showed high levels of satisfaction with Sure Start services.

 Last year we asked parents to take part in an on-line survey to hear what you thought of our services. This was part of a wider evaluation we were conducting to help with our planning for the next 3 years.

We were really grateful to the numbers of you who took time to complete our survey, not to mention how delighted we were with the positive feedback we received.

The results gave us strong evidence of how helpful parents have found the range of services accessed through Star, right from the start of pregnancy through all of the different stages on to when the little ones are well up on their feet and getting ready for school. 95% of responses showed our services were given the highest rating of “extremely helpful.” The results also showed amazingly high levels of satisfaction with Star’s child care services. In particular, the Sure Start Developmental Programme for 2-3 year olds had 100% of respondents rating their experience of the service as “extremely satisfied.”

We also asked in the survey about reasons parents weren’t accessing services or were there areas we needed to improve on. Again, thanks for the feedback as it has been really helpful with planning what we can improve. Parents identified the timing of activities and returning to work as the main reasons for not getting involved with Star services. We have been thinking about this and are trying to offer more activities that are in the evening and on Saturdays. You also told us about the frustration the limited catchment area of the Project causes. While there is very little we can do about this as it is a government policy, we have been improving the information available for families living outside of our catchment area on what services they can access locally.

Another area for improvement was the range and accessibility of services for 2nd and 3rd time parents, so we have introduced Toddler Café, are now able to run more crèches and now offer more services in families’ homes when it can be hard to get to groups.

When it came to telling us the best things about Star, there were a few themes that came up time and time again in the responses. The Star Sure Start staff team were identified as a key asset in the Project, with parents emphasising the importance of the inclusive, welcoming and non-judgemental approach they experienced within Star. Parents also appreciated how easy it is to access sound advice and support from Star. But it is not just the staff that made the difference - lots of respondents valued the opportunity to meet other parents and make new friendships that carry on outside of Star.



So, thank you again – not just for the great feedback and encouragement, but also for the care and support you are giving to each other. We will continue to work on the strengths you have told us about as well as the things we can improve on.

PS - Please don’t wait for the next survey to let us know what you think. There are lots of ways you can give us feedback at any time – talk to us, email us, ring us, send a message through Facebook, complete our evaluations, come along to our Parents Forum or pop a comment into our comments box in the hallway in our building. We are always keen to know your views.

Coming to a group is not everyone's cup of tea...



★ We understand that for some families, the idea of coming to a group is just not for them. Sometimes there can be practical reasons that make it difficult, such as getting out of the house in time or the school runs for other children. We know that for some parents who are back to work, they just can't get the time to come when a group is running. Or sometimes parents can only get to a few of the sessions and worry about taking up a place from someone else.

We recognise that for some people, groups can be a bit uncomfortable; it can be the idea of not knowing anyone and being expected to make small talk or speak in the group. For

some, it can be the feeling of embarrassment if their child misbehaves in front of others. And sometimes, it can be that niggling feeling of worry any of us can have that maybe we don't fit in.

At Star, we recognise that a group is not the right fit for everyone all of the time. So, rather than have you and your children miss out, we offer a wide range of home based services to all of our families.

The staff in Star can visit you in your home to give you the opportunity to try activities such as baby massage or baby yoga on a one to one basis. They can also introduce you and your child to different types of play activities for different age groups to help with their development.

If you have a query or worry about your child's behaviour or development, you can ask for a visit from the Health Visitor, Speech and Language Therapist or Occupational Therapist. The Family Support staff can also offer a listening ear and ideas to help manage children's behaviour, set boundaries and routines, get good sleeping habits established, support toilet training and understand the emotional needs of young children.

In addition, our staff can work alongside you at times when you would like some extra emotional support. This could be for a range of reasons, perhaps because of low mood, anxiety, birth trauma, relationship tensions, financial worries

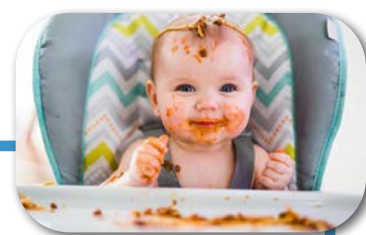
and family worries. We offer confidential, non-judgemental support that allows you to stay in charge of your choices and support you to make change. We also work alongside a range of other organisations that can offer more specialist support and advice – we can help you to make the connections to these other services so that you get the support that is the right fit for you.

If you would like to know a bit more about the types of services we can offer in your home or to arrange a visit, please contact the office, private message through Facebook or email us.

Top Tips: Finger Feeding from 6 Months

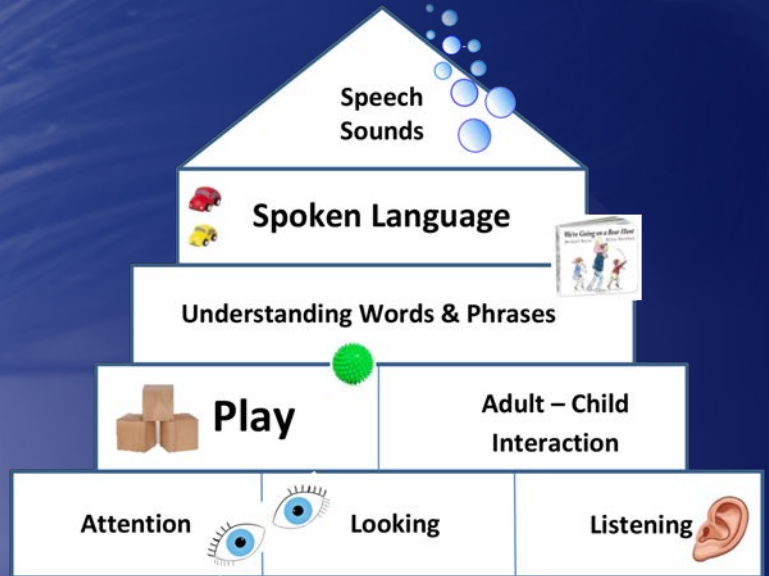
FEEDING IS FUN BEFORE BABY IS ONE

-  Leave the skin on fruit so it's easier to pick up or coat slippery foods in finely crushed cereal
-  Use a crinkle cutter for fruit and veg so it's easier for baby to grip
-  Overcook rice so it's sticky and roll into a ball for baby to hold
-  Make porridge thicker so baby can scoop it up in their hands
-  Stay relaxed about the mess
-  Don't overfeed with milk before food, just give enough to take the edge off baby's hunger and keep them interested
-  Allow plenty of time for feeding
-  Introduce a variety of colours and textures
-  Remember babies don't need teeth to eat finger foods!
-  Eat together as a family at the table, without distractions like toys or television
-  Don't become anxious if baby refuses food—just clear away with minimum fuss and offer food at the next meal or snack time
-  If food is refused, do not force feed. Just leave it a few days before offering your baby the food again



The Journey of Language Development

Learning to talk and communicate is a complex skill for children to develop as it involves lots of different processes which are all interlinked.



★ The pyramid shows the building blocks for speech, language and communication development... all the skills that develop before 'talking'. Before children learn to talk they need to develop their early communication skills which are the bottom two layers. These include looking, joint attention and listening. Children need to develop attention skills before they can fully develop those other skills needed to communicate. To encourage attention and listening skills your baby/toddler may benefit from the following –

- ★ Distraction free environments – Turn off the TV or radio so they can hear what you are saying and focus on you.
- ★ Regular periods of special time with key people where listening and responding to each other are a priority.
- ★ Adults who link into what the baby/toddler is interested in
- ★ Sing songs & rhymes that your child enjoys. Watch really carefully to see if they are anticipating or responding in any way i.e. waiting to get tickled in 'Round and Round the Garden'.

Let's play

Play is one of the most important ways that your child learns about the world around them. Play is beneficial for developing a range of skills and helps your child learn words! And it's FUN! Joining in with your baby/toddler when playing is how they learn and develop their skills – they may not play with toys

in the way you expect but "go with the flow". Let them explore toys in their own way and see where this takes you. The most important thing is that you are taking this time to communicate with them and enjoy play together.



Help me understand

Your child will be beginning to develop their understanding of words from as young as 6 months. This is an important step in language development – children must be able to understand the meaning of a word before they can use it. For example, your baby will begin to understand 'bye' when someone gets up to leave or understand 'drink' when Mum appears with a cup of milk. Children learn words by associating what they hear with the objects/situation they see.

Hello I'm talking to you

Once your child is able to understand words they may begin to say these words, firstly by imitating a word when heard and then beginning to use it on their own. At first their words may not be clear, for example saying 'dat' for cat or 'nana' for banana. Learning to talk takes time! Your child may need to hear a word many, many times before trying to say it. Remember – young children need more time to plan what they want to say. Some need as long as 10 seconds so if you ask a question wait for a response. You might be surprised! It is really important to pause and give your child time to think. From 18 months your children should be beginning to join two ideas together, this could be 2 words or 1 word plus a gesture. For example, waving to communicate bye and saying 'dada'. To encourage this, your child will benefit from adults modelling simple phrases so they can begin to copy, for example, 'more juice', 'cars gone'.

Listen carefully to what I say

Babies from 5 months usually make babble patterns which typically don't have meaning. As time progresses these babble patterns turn into early words and their speech sounds begin to develop. When your child is 2½ they should be understood by their close family. At the age of 3 a child's speech should be understood by familiar adults outside of the family home but will still not be perfect. The development of speech sounds is a gradual process and will vary for many children.

A New Choice for Parenting Apart

Google the list of the top 10 most stressful life events for adults and getting divorced and separation come in at number 2 and number 3.

In fact, google anything on divorce, separation or parenting apart and there is an endless list of results within microseconds. The content of these results is immediately overwhelming. There are websites, articles, books and academic research, not to mention the adverts from solicitors.

So, for parents, who have for whatever reason, reached the end of a close intimate relationship with someone – especially someone that they have had kids with – it's a huge time of change and uncertainty for parents and children. Asking family and friends for advice can be overwhelming too. Just like a Google search, lots of this information can be helpful, well intended and sound a bit similar to your experiences. While family and friends are invaluable, their viewpoints

can sometimes lack the detail that applies to your life. So how can parents find a path that reflects their own journey of separating, to find new ways to successfully parent apart that will work for them and importantly their kids?



A choice now available for parents registered with Star Sure Start is Family Mediation. This is a new service provided in partnership with Family Mediation Northern Ireland. Mediation is a voluntary process in which a Professional Family Mediator helps family members to communicate more effectively and to make their own arrangements for the future.

Mediation can reduce the conflict, improve family relationships and help avoid long, painful and expensive legal battles.

Mediators do not take sides, make judgements or give guidance, but support people to make their own decisions about the future. Family mediation supports parents, children, grandparents and the wider family through change, particularly as a result of separation, divorce or family restructuring.

Family mediation is for all sorts of people: married, cohabiting, single, parents, grandparents and step-parents can all participate in family mediation. It can help at any time if communication becomes difficult or breaks down. This may be during or any time after a relationship breakdown, as a result of families re-forming, such as step-families, or when there are difficulties with communication or practical arrangements that need to be resolved.

If you are interested in finding out if mediation might be the right path for you, please contact Shirley at the Star Office, PM through our Facebook page or by email at star.surestart@southerntrust.hscni.net

It's Ok not to be Ok

Does any one of us ever really know what being a 'Mum' or 'Dad' ever really meant? You've read the books, downloaded pregnancy apps and been to antenatal classes on how to care for a baby. Not to mention you've bought loads of baby items! However, nothing actually prepares you for being a Mum or Dad.

Everyone assumes that having a baby is a time of joy, when you embrace parenthood with open arms and feel a wave of warmth and love as you hold your smiling and cooing baby in your arms. Instead, you may be petrified and struggle. But not wanting to seem like a failure, you may smile and play the part of 'happy' Mum

or Dad, afraid that anyone would find out how you really feel. And yes, that includes Dads too!

In reality, feeling exhausted and trying to manage a colicky, crying baby for example, can mean we don't even want to step foot out through the door. And while it's okay for us to feel like that sometimes, it's also not okay if it's taking over our lives. So, it's important to know what to look out for and where to get help.

Emotions can be all over the place, especially during the first week after birth when up to 80% of mums get the 'baby blues'. This is usually when mums can be quite sensitive, and might cry, be

irritable, feel anxious or have mood swings. These usually go away within a few days.

If symptoms go on longer than 2 weeks, or you start to experience others; fear, panic, chest tightness, heart palpitations or poor sleep; it could be a sign of postnatal depression, so have a chat with your GP or Health Visitor. If you think your partner or baby would be better off without you, or have any thoughts of suicide, you should contact a health professional immediately.

Star Sure Start can also offer support through home visiting and other programmes such as 'Walking & Wellbeing' and 'Time For You'.

IT'S
Okay
NOT TO
BE OKAY.

Support for Mums NI
(Facebook)

Support 2gether Tel 07835
040086 (Facebook)

Getselfhelp.co.uk (Online
Programme)

MoodGYM (Online
Programme)

Aware-ni.org (Support
Groups and Programmes)

Zest For Life (Counselling)

Samaritans Tel 116 123

Lifeline Tel 0808 808 8000

ABC council 'Fit &
Well' Physical Activity
programme (GP or HV
Referral)

Stay & Play

Children, parents and grandparents enjoying the first Stay & Play session of the Developmental Programme for 2-3 Years Old.



Outdoor PLAY

Autumn is here and it's starting to get colder and darker – but it's still a great time for getting children of all ages outdoors. We just need to EMBRACE the weather!

“
There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.
- Ranulph Fiennes”



Mud, Mud, Mud
Rainy weather creates mud...children are often drawn to muddy puddles and dirt as a part of their play. Make mud pies, paint with mud or jump in muddy puddles.



Jumping Puddles
Put on raincoats, water boots and splash or jump in puddles, another childhood must!

Babies & Toddlers
Young babies and toddlers love to use their bodies to wriggle, crawl, walk, run, jump and climb and the more opportunities that they have to be physical and burn off energy, the more content and happier they will be. Afford babies and toddlers the opportunities to play outdoors just like older children – lay a rug on the grass and let your baby kick, roll or crawl, let your toddler explore their outdoor surroundings by letting them toddle alongside you rather than being in a buggy, or visit a local park where they can toddle around and play in a safe environment.
Being outside with your child offers all sorts of play opportunities. Recreate some of your childhood play memories and make some time to play each day.




Rainy Walk
Don't let the rain put you off. Take umbrellas and head off for a walk in the rain. There is something about umbrellas that toddlers and children love...using them as a walking stick, twirling them around above their heads or use them as broomsticks to fly through puddles.

Star's Developmental Programme For 2-3 Year Olds

