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# EAL and language acquisition in early childhood Workshop for Parents



# Contents of our workshop

- 1. How children learn and acquire language
- 2. Learning through play
- 3. Communicating with young children- Praising, labelling and intrinsic motivation
- 4. Conclusions and questions



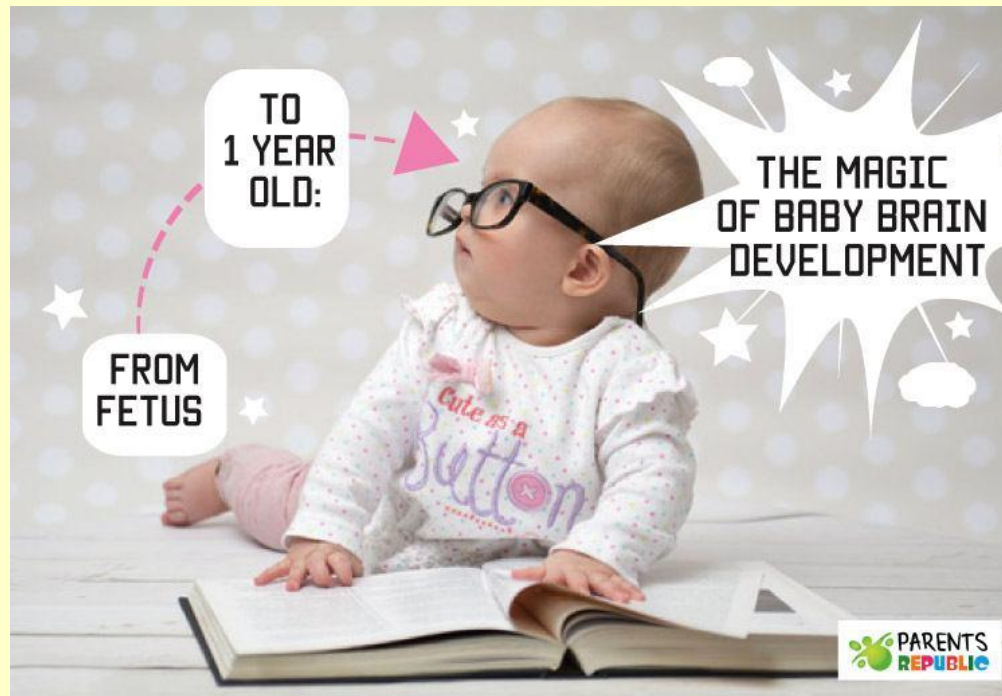
# 1. How children learn and acquire language

How far do you agree with the following statements about child development and learning?

- Babies understand language about twice as fast as they speak.
- Children can't really learn a language if they are playing.
- An adult's brain is far more active than a three-year-old child's brain.
- Children learn best when they are interested in something.
- Children pick up languages best if there is a context and reason to use it.
- Never force a child to speak. They will speak when they are ready.

# How baby brains develop

- <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/health/2014/09/25/sgmd-gupta-baby-brain-development.cnn>



# How children learn best? group discussion



# How children acquire language

- <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/english-in-early-childhood/8/steps/464235>



1.14  
From 5.07



## 2. Learning through play

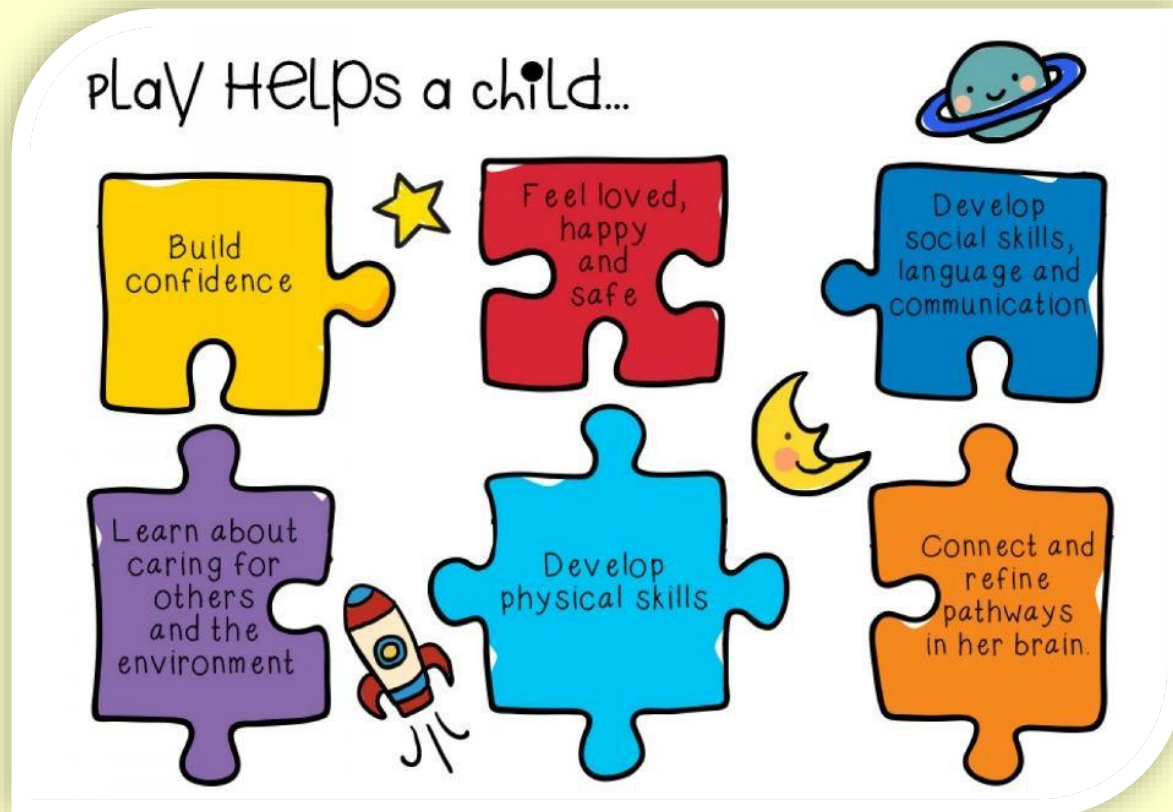


Tell me about your most favourite games when you were a child and your children's ones: what did you learn through those games and what skills are your children developing when they play their most favourite games.



# The importance of play (J. Nottingham)

- <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/english-in-early-childhood/8/steps/464246>
- 2.6





# Common doubts and concerns

What advice would you give these people? Have you experienced similar problems when talking to young children in English?

- "I hear the children say things in English, but I'm never quite sure what I should say next."
- "When a child says something that's just a word or two, like for example 'car,' what should I reply? I just end up saying 'car' back to them. It's not much of a conversation."
- "I feel like I know how to say things in English, but I'm not 100% sure. And I don't want to set a bad example or say something that's not correct."
- "I worry that when the children are playing together, they're not speaking English."





# Advice for developing language

- **Offering the child new options.** For example, when a child points to a car and says “car” you can extend on this by saying “yes, a car. Is it mummy's car?”
- The adult can also **comment on what the child is doing, adding interest and inputting language** at the same time.
- The child isn't expected to respond by saying anything, but they're hearing language that's connected to what they're doing, and **being encouraged to reflect** on things as they play.
- **Don't worry if you're not 100% sure if what you're saying is correct.** The most important thing you can do is to **show interest and even join in with the children as they play.** Joining in is also a way of encouraging them to switch to English as they play.
- **If the children are playing shops, you could pretend to be another customer--** “I’d like an apple please.” “How much are these bananas?” You could ask them what they want. “Do you want an apple? Or a pear?”

# 3. Communicating with young children

- Video (J. Nottingham) Praising children

3.4



# Group discussion

Were you ever compared to anyone as a child?



"Good boy/girl"



"Lazy child"



"Naughty child"

# The Healthy Linguistic Diet

by Dr Dina Mehmedbegovic and Dr Thomas H Bak

The Healthy Linguistic Diet (HLD) approach is based on an analogy between physical and mental health. Regular physical activity and a healthy diet are important factors in maintaining physical health. In the same way, the learning of languages and their regular use provide essential mental exercise, leading to a better brain health and an increase in “cognitive reserve” resulting in a later onset of dementia and an improved cognitive outcome after a stroke.

