



Hampshire  
County Council

Educational  
Psychology

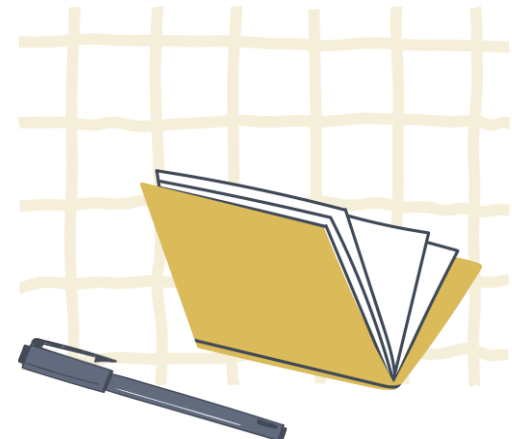
# Development in young children

**What to expect**

**Dr Rebecca Thompson**

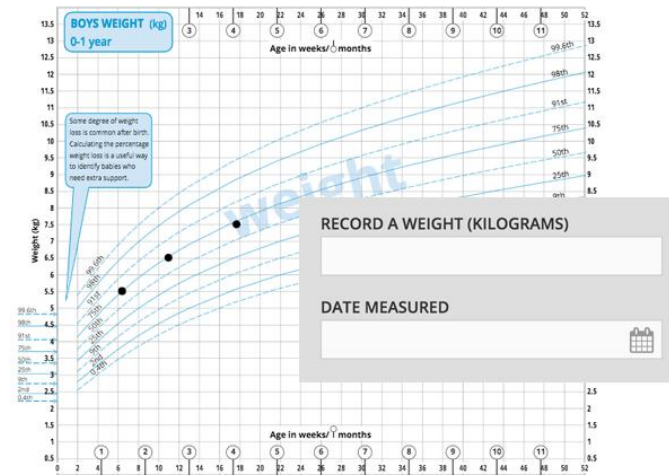
# Aims

- Be more familiar with what to expect and when
- Know who to chat to with any worries
- Be kind to yourself!



# Developmental expectations

- We record and track weight and height
- We can see how they compare to other babies the same age.



Record and View Your Baby's Weight

# Sorting activity (emotional)



7, 8, 9, 10, 11

- ?

# Sorting activity (emotional)



Aged 7

- Developing a clear sense of identity.
- Increasing understanding of others' thoughts and feelings;
- Feels more secure in coping with real-world situations
- Prefers order and routine
- Shows strong attachment to teachers
- Needs clear explanations
- Generally, accepts changes like a new baby
- May reserve 'worst behaviour' for close family.



# Sorting activity (emotional)

Aged 8

- In a transitional stage between dependence and independence.
- Strong emotions and idealistic views (e.g., firm resolutions)
- May struggle to manage feelings.
- Family and routine are very important;
- Still needs guidance with decisions, boundaries, and reassurance;
- Values adults listening to fears and worries.
- Forms same-sex friendships



# Sorting activity (emotional)

Aged 9

- Family provides secure base.
- Growing independence but still impulsive.
- Needs support expressing thoughts and fears.
- Beginning to question authority and understand social groups.
- Play and friendships remain important.
- Developing understanding of death.
- Shows interest in sexual matters.
- Some experience anxiety about growing up 'normal'.



# Sorting activity (emotional)

Aged 10

- Rules of life feel more complex.
- Greater independence.
- Thinking becomes broader and more reflective.
- More aware of social ranking and cultural differences.
- Feels pressure to succeed.
- Seeks balance (peers and parents)
- Friendships and hobbies provide emotional distance from family.
- Increasing concern with fairness and justice.

# Sorting activity (emotional)



Aged 11

- Increasing independence.
- Developing personal interests.
- Still need parental support.
- Adopted children may become curious about birth parents.
- Forming ideas about gender roles
- May seek older peers to feel grown-up.
- Girls' friendships can involve frequent 'best friend' changes.
- Boys' friendships are often activity-based.

# Any examples?

## Nod if ...

- You see ongoing struggles with managing feelings
- You see anxiety about wanting to be 'normal'
- May reserve their most extreme behaviours for those they love the most /feel safest with.



# Helpful strategies?

**Discuss: What works well in your home?**



# Helpful strategies?

## Emotional Regulation and Understanding

- Validate their emotions
- Visuals (emotions)
- Wondering aloud about emotions
- Modelling emotions and strategies
- Safe space / calming activities
- Regulate, relate, reason, repair - Know their calming strategies
- Reduce talking (“hug, walk, talk?”)
- Water play / bath / drink
- Movement breaks
- Transition and support objects
- Snacks

- Connect before correct
- Predict to prevent

## Communication and Instructional Strategies

- Visuals (routines, make something else the memory prompt)
- Say things in the order you want them completed
- Not too many instructions at once
- Take up time
- Time warnings
- Timers
- 2 choices – autonomy




# Helpful strategies?

## Behaviour support and reinforcement

- Reinforce the behaviours you want to see
  - praise
- Reward charts SPECIFIC
- Pick your battles
- Ignore secondary behaviours
- United front
- Avoid avoidance
- Distraction techniques

## Learning and Skill Development

- Social stories
- Backward chaining
- Puppets and toys to externalise and explore problems
- Adult Modelling

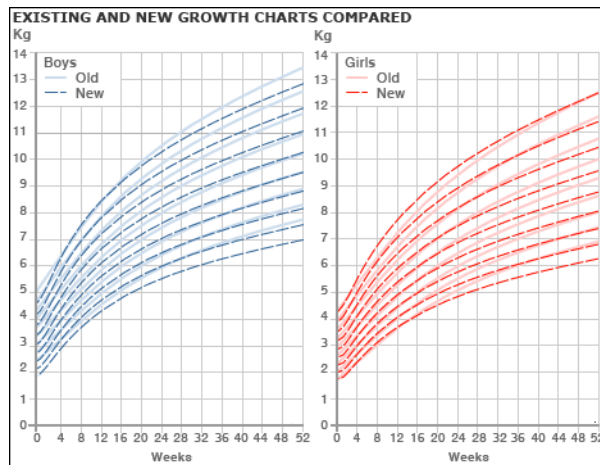


Adults need  
downtime after  
a busy / tricky  
day too.

# But what if ...



my child is falling significantly outside of our 'graph'



- Speak to school (**class teacher first**, then SENCo, parent support worker)
- [The Solihull Approach | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council](#)
- GP appointment
- Children's services Early Help Hub  
<https://www.hampshirescp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ehh-leaflet-digital.pdf>
- Hampshire parent carer network  
<https://www.hpcn.org.uk/>

Free online courses for ALL parents, parents-to-be, carers, grandparents and teens living in Hampshire. Plus courses for professionals working with children.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD



SOLIHULL APPROACH

## Solihull Approach

Welcome to Hampshire County Council's partnership with the Solihull Approach. These free online courses offer advice and practical tips to boost your confidence as a parent, help you navigate family life and strengthen your relationships. Whether you are a mum, dad, foster parent or grandparent, there is a course for you.

Developed by psychologists and professionals, they have been designed to help you understand your child's feelings, development and behaviour, as well as focus on your own feelings as you grow as a family.



# Listening and Attention

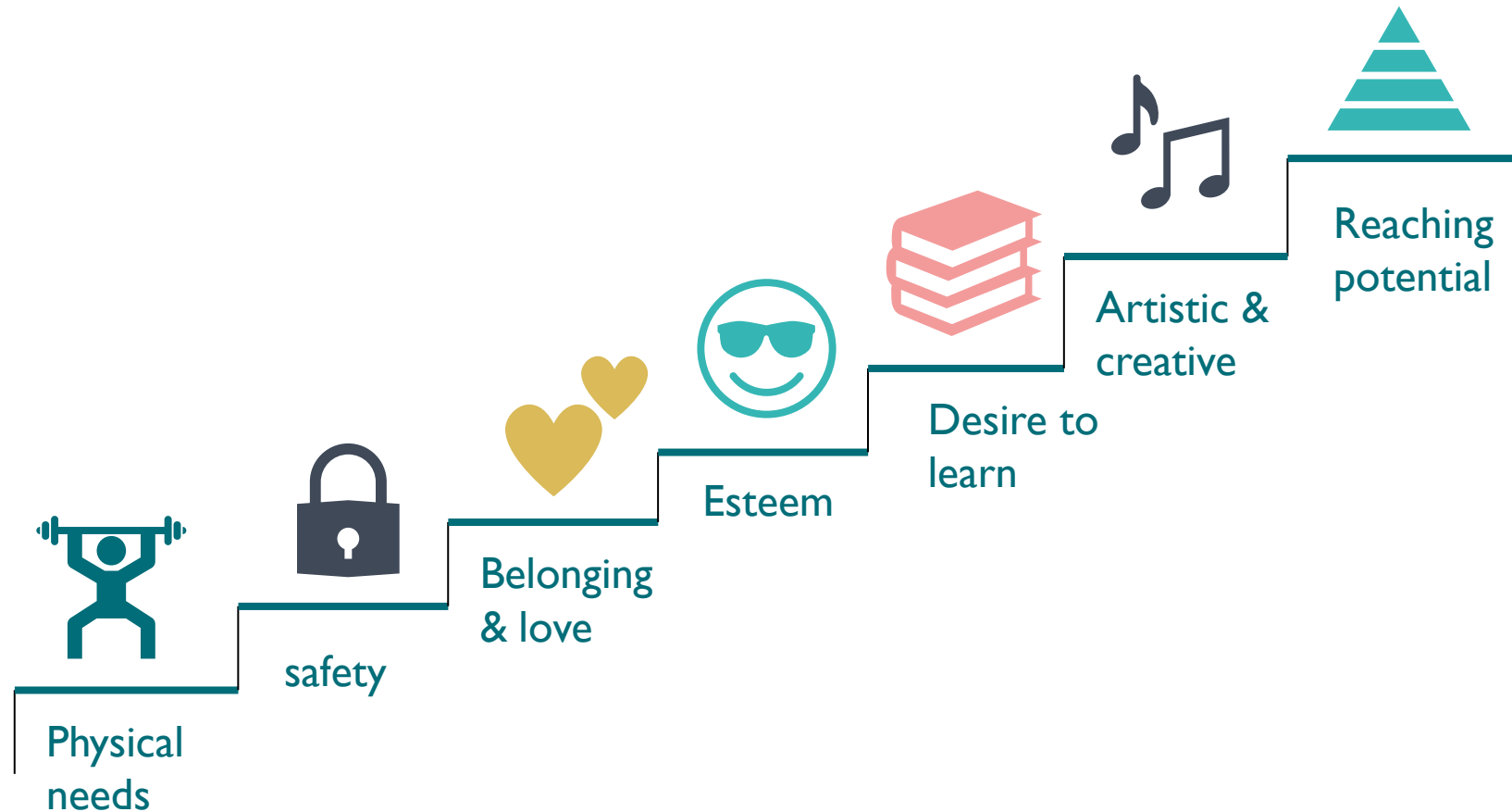
- When do you see your child attending well (e.g., YouTube, areas of interest)
- When do you see your child struggling to sustain attention?
- How easy is it for you to gain their attention?



# What can impact attention & listening?

Child	Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amount of sleep or tiredness</li></ul>	Busy/noisy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Illness</li></ul>	Smells
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nutrition/hydration</li></ul>	Lights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developmental needs (e.g. understanding of language; learning)</li></ul>	Layout of classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding of social norms and expectations</li></ul>	Task design and expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strength and exercise tolerance</li></ul>	Peers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motivation</li></ul>	Neurotypical expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emotional challenges (e.g. grief)</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of exposure to skill development opportunities</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neurodivergence</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English as an Additional Language</li></ul>	

# What else is competing for attention?



# What can we do to support listening and attention?

- Ensure you have their attention before speaking – use their name.
- Not too many instructions at once
- Take up time
- Say things in the order you want them done. “When you have ..., then you may ...”
- Be specific



# What can we do to support listening and attention?

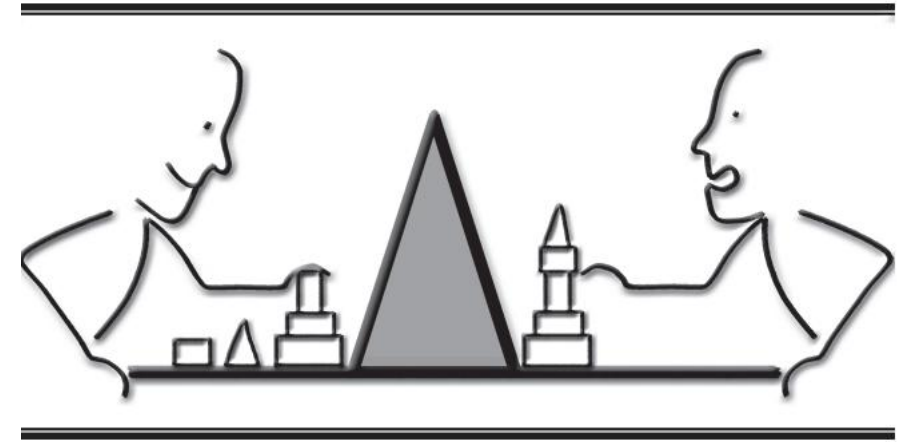
## Listen and do

- Grandmother's steps
- Sound lotto where children match sounds from the farm, transport, home and people to illustrations on their game boards.
- Finding different environmental sounds (e.g. a ticking clock).
- Screen/barrier games

## Listen and remember

- Simon Says
- I went shopping and.../I went to the zoo and...
- Who am I?
- Take messages





- Colouring
- Placing pieces (e.g., battleships/ treasure map)
- Lego
- Dress up
- Co-ordinates

# What can we do? Continued

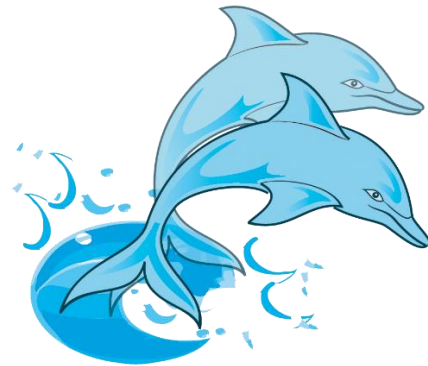
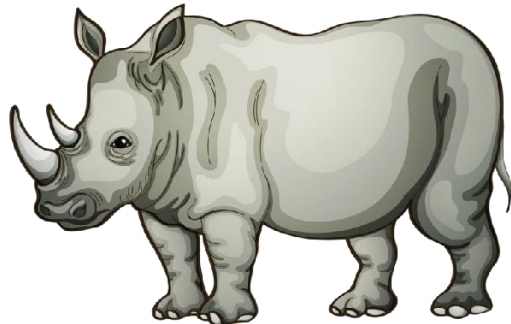
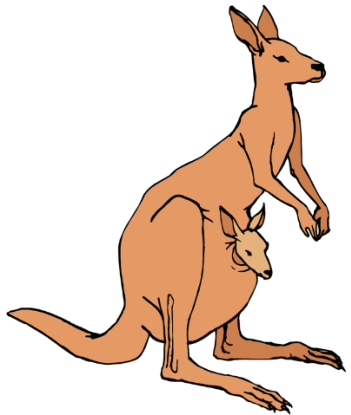
## Stories



- Listening to audio stories where the child has to pick up an object when it is mentioned in a story
- Listening to stories where they have to make decisions about the next step.
- Listening for particular words in a story and marking that in some way, e.g. putting counters in a pot when they hear the word
- Spotting the wrong word in a story e.g. Goldilocks and the three tears.

# New Maudsely Animal Model

Behavioural responses to a child's struggles



All parents and carers show these reactions, and they are all normal.

# New Maudsely Animal Model

Emotional responses to a child's struggles (plus we've added the deer)



All parents and carers show these emotions, and they are all normal.

# New Maudsely Animal Model

Emotional responses to a child's struggles



All parents and carers show these emotions, and they are all normal.

**Thank you!**