

look say sing play

Look, Say, Sing, Play standalone session plan

Please note that the following session plan is only a guide and it will need to be adapted to fit the age of the children, the size of group and the needs of the parents.

The aim of the session is for it to look and feel:

- **Approachable and genuine** – we want parents to feel that we're celebrating their role as a parent and supporting them.
- **Authentic** – reflecting the realities of parenthood, including that parent's lives are busy, can be messy and have their highs and lows.
- **Non-judgemental and strengths based** – celebrating the amazing job parents are already doing and the huge impact they have on their child's development. The session should give a sense that they already have everything they need to be a great parent.

Setting up the session

Designate Look, Say, Sing, Play stations around the room. Each station is accompanied by an activity sheet and resources to encourage parents/carer interactions and play with their babies.

Look: Activity sheet, safe toys, mirror

Say: Activity sheet, toys/tub (anything that a child can practice putting in/taking out)

Sing: Activity sheet, musical instruments, shakers, nursery rhyme books/printed lyrics

Play: Toys that make a sound, coloured cloth/scarf (parents could also use muslins) for peekaboo.



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Brief introduction about Look, Say, Sing, Play and why it's important:

Below are the key concepts which you might want to introduce to parents before starting the activities so that they understand a bit more about LSSP and why it is important.

You may sometimes have access to technology and wish to show the group some videos explaining the core messages of LSSP. We have therefore included some suggestions of video clips. However, you don't have to show these if it doesn't feel right for your group or the technology doesn't allow it.

Below is a suggested script that you can use and adapt:

- Look, Say, Sing, Play is an NSPCC campaign which helps parents with building their babies brains.
- To understand how our babies brains are growing and developing it is useful to use the 'brain architecture' metaphor.

Brain Architecture

- The first three years of a child's life are so important for how your child's brain grows and develops.
- We can think about this using the metaphor of building a house
- Like the construction of a house, the building process happens in a sequence – first laying the foundations, shaping the rooms and later wiring the electrical system.
- These things have to happen in the right order.
- Early experiences in the first 3 years literally shape how the brain gets built.
- A strong foundation in the very early years, starting from birth, increases the chances of positive health and learning later on.

Here is a video to illustrate the metaphor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLoqQyccMJU> (2:40mins)

- The great news is that you will already be doing lots of things in your everyday interactions with your baby to help build a 'strong foundation' in your child's brain.

One way to do this even more is just to remember 'Look, Say, Sing, Play'.

Look at what your baby's focusing on and how they react

Say what you're doing and copy the sounds your baby makes

Sing along to your favourite tunes or make up your own

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Play simple games and see what your child enjoys

But it's not about just singing or talking at your baby. Brain-building happens when you and your little one are interacting with each other. When interacting with one another it can be helpful to remember the serve and return metaphor.

Serve and Return

- A vital ingredient in a young child's brain development, especially from ages 0 to 5, is the 'serve and return' interactions that they have with their caregivers.
- Like the serve and return rally in a good game of tennis, young children naturally reach out for interaction with adults through babbling and imitating facial expressions (Serving).
- It's important that the adult **returns** that interest by getting in sync with the child using eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and words, which will ramp up the child's enthusiasm and they do the activity again.
- These positive interactions encourage children to use that particular brain circuit again which will lead to a sturdier brain architecture.
- 'Serve and return' interactions repeated throughout a child's early years are the bricks that build a healthy foundation and will help develop important language, cognitive and social skills.

Here is a video to illustrate the metaphor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3otmWWFrZ4> (2.46mins)

Here is a video demonstrating a 'serve and return' rally between a father and his son: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yn8j4XRxSck>

Watch how dad is talking to his son. They are having fun and interacting. Look at how they smile at one another, watch their eye contact. Hear how he uses his voice to mimic his son, engage with her. Watch as his son mimics back, they reflect one another's interactions. Watch how this encourages her to continue to 'talk' – this will develop her speech, and helps develop their relationship, attunement and attachment.

Here is a video clip demonstrating what happens if the serve and return rally is broken: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOR7jld8wYk>

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Now that we have talked a bit about what 'Look, Say, Sing, Play' is and why it is so important we can get to the fun bit and start to practice some easy brain-building activities you can incorporate into your daily routine at home.

We have set up some stations around the room that will give us all a chance to try some easy, fun activities that will help to develop our little one's brains even more. Spend some time at each station, try and activity and have some fun.

Remember it's really important to read your baby's cue – if they are not up for playing right now – that's OK.

Before the parents start to engage in the activities, you can quickly move around the different stations modelling some of the activities. If this is not possible you can move around the room alongside the parents and offer encouragement and ideas.

End of the session

- Bring everybody back
- Remind parents that the first three years of a child's life are so important for how their child's brain grows and develops. That by regularly interacting with their baby in the way that they have today that they will be setting up a strong foundation in order to increase the chances of positive health and learning in the future.
- Inform parents that they can get more activity ideas from the NSPCC website and provide them with the leaflet on who they can sign up for weekly ideas on different game and activities they can do their child.
- Give out the Look, Say Sing, Play activity flash cards if available.

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