

A large white circle is centered on the page, containing the main text. It overlaps with a smaller, solid orange circle at the bottom right.

**YOU CAN  
WORK IT OUT**  
ENGLISH AND MATHS TIPS  
FOR EARLY YEARS WORKERS

We have produced a set of pocket-sized resources offering literacy and numeracy tips to different groups of workers. This one is aimed at UNISON members working in early years settings.

It's an update of a resource that UNISON originally developed with the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), now Learning & Work Institute (LWI).

**Design:** [www.the-design-mill.co.uk](http://www.the-design-mill.co.uk)

## Contents

Communicating with children	4
Communicating with adults	5
Every Child Matters	6
Initials and abbreviations	7
Useful words and phrases	8
Recording observations	10
All the ways to say 'well done'	12
Planning	14
Sample planning sheet	15
Asking questions	16
Writing reports	17
Measuring medicines	19
Converting from imperial to metric	21
Multiplication table	22
Resources	23

## Communicating with children

- Get down to the child's level
- Make eye contact
- Use your face to show what you mean: smile, frown etc.
- Use gestures to support your communication, i.e. point to objects
- Make sure your voice is clear and use vocabulary that they can understand
- Listen to what they have to say

## Communicating with adults

- Stay relaxed and find a suitable place to talk.
- Use a clear voice when talking and ask questions if you are unsure.
- Use their name during the conversation (ask them to remind you if you can't remember it).
- Take turns in the conversation.
- Allow them to ask questions and don't interrupt while they're talking.
- Listen carefully and note down important information.
- Avoid using terms and abbreviations they may not understand.

## Every Child Matters

The Every Child Matters framework has guided services for children and young people since 2003. It is designed to help children and young people achieve five outcomes:

- being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect
- enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- economic well-being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

## Initials and abbreviations

<b>APGAR</b>	Scoring system used to assess a newborn baby
<b>ADHD</b>	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
<b>BCG</b>	Vaccine against tuberculosis
<b>C-Section</b>	Caesarean Section
<b>ECM</b>	Every Child Matters
<b>ELG</b>	Early learning goals
<b>EYFS</b>	Early Years Foundation Stage
<b>OFSTED</b>	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapist
<b>SENCO</b>	Special Educational Needs co-ordinator
<b>SAT</b>	Standard Attainment Test
<b>SIDS</b>	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

## Useful words & phrases

accident

allergy

assessment

asthma

attachment

behaviour

bilingual

bonding

confidentiality

communication,  
language and literacy

convulsion

creative development

diarrhoea

discrimination

diversity

exercise

improvement

independent

independence

information

immunisation

knowledge and  
understanding

language

milestone

numeracy

objectivity

observations

personal, social  
and emotional  
development



## Useful words and phrases

physical  
communication

problem solving,  
reasoning and  
numeracy

progress

recognise

routine

safely

settled

suitable

successful

successfully

supervised

supervision

vaccination

weaning

## Recording observations

You may have to observe children to record their development and plan the next steps for the child's learning. To do this, you can:

- make notes of conversations
- make checklists / tick sheets
- compile written records of what the child knows / can do / understands.

If you would like to take photographs to record a child's development, you must ensure this is covered within your early years setting's photography policy; that the child and their parent / carer understand why you want to take the pictures and how you will use them; and any images are stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

## Recording observations

When recording observations, remember:

- observations may be formal or informal
- children can change when they are being watched
- it's hard to be accurate when observing
- observations are confidential and should only be shared with parents and staff.

## All the ways to say 'well done'

achieved a lot today

absolutely

brilliant today

always keen

brilliant

coped very well

couldn't have  
done any better

did very well indeed

eager

excellent

fabulous

fantastic

faultless

flawless

getting better

all the time

good progress

great improvement

happy session

improving all the time

improving slowly

improving quickly

impressive keeping  
a steady pace

knockout

lovely

magnificent

maintaining effort

marvellous

making great strides

no problems

## All the ways to say 'well done'

perfect

progressing in  
leaps and bounds

smashing

splendid

super

superb

showing promise

terrific

top quality

tremendous today

tries hard to  
understand

undaunted

very competent

wonderful

● From 200 Ways To Say Well Done (Basic Skills Agency)

## Planning

When working in a nursery or with young children, you will have to plan the activities that you will complete with the children. Your planning should be based on your findings from the observations you have carried out to support their development.

Planning can occur around themes for young children. A setting is usually expected to have both long-term and short-term plans. Planning should be available for parents to read.

## Sample planning sheet

<b>Date</b>	<b>Group or children</b> Yellow group, aged 5
<b>Curriculum areas of learning</b> Physical development	<b>Aims of activity</b> To learn how to skip
<b>Resources</b> Skipping ropes Space	<b>My role</b> To demonstrate how to skip To help children to skip To ensure they all stay safe
<b>Environment</b> Outside grassed area	<b>Safety and inclusion</b> Remind children of the boundaries Ensure all children are in a space Support children who find it difficult
<b>The activity</b> Take children on to field Explain the rules Demonstrate how to skip Get children into a space Allow children to practice	<b>Evaluation</b>

## Asking questions

Closed questions (that can be answered with 'yes' or 'no' or with a very specific piece of information) have their place but using open questions will help you get the best from children.

Use open questions that give children a chance to explain or inform, e.g., 'What happened?' 'What do you think?'

Asking how a child arrived at the answer can be useful for the child to reflect on their learning and for the rest of the group or class to learn from their methods.



## Writing reports

### Fact, opinion and third-party information

When you write reports, be clear about the different kinds of information you are using. There are three types of information to think about:

- A **fact** is a piece of information that you know to be true and have observed for yourself, e.g., Sunil was able to use a spoon to eat his yoghurt unaided.
- An **opinion** is your point of view, e.g., Sunil didn't seem himself today.
- **Third-party information** is when you are writing about what someone has told you but you haven't observed it yourself, e.g., Sunil's key worker says he often speaks up in circle time.

## Writing reports

### Writing reports: past, present and future

When you write reports, you need to make sure that you use the right tense:

- **past tense** is for things that have already happened, e.g., Chen wasn't in playgroup yesterday
- **present tense** is for things that are happening now, e.g., Chen is very settled
- **future tense** is for things that are going to happen, e.g. Chen will need a rain jacket for the trip.

## Measuring medicines

Check that any details provided by parents / carers are the same as the instructions on the medicine's container.

The safest and most accurate way to give medicine to a child is to use a medicine spoon. If you need to estimate measures in millilitres (ml):

- 2.5ml is half a teaspoon
- 5ml is a teaspoon
- 10ml is a dessert spoon
- 15ml is a tablespoon.

## Measuring medicines

Conversion chart from fluid ounces (fl oz) to millilitres (ml)

<b>floz</b>	<b>ml</b>
<b>1 fl oz</b>	<b>28 ml</b>
<b>2 fl oz</b>	<b>56 ml</b>
<b>3 fl oz</b>	<b>84 ml</b>
<b>4 fl oz</b>	<b>112 ml</b>
<b>5 fl oz</b>	<b>140 ml</b>
<b>6 fl oz</b>	<b>168 ml</b>
<b>8 fl oz</b>	<b>224 ml</b>
<b>10 fl oz</b>	<b>280 ml</b>
<b>12 fl oz</b>	<b>336 ml</b>
<b>16 fl oz</b>	<b>448 ml</b>

## Converting from imperial to metric

You can use your smartphone to convert between imperial and metric.

- 1** Visit **[metric-conversions.org](http://metric-conversions.org)**
- 2** Select the type of conversion you need (e.g., weight).
- 3** Type the weight you need to convert in the left hand box (e.g., 11 lb).
- 4** That generates a list of conversion options (e.g., pounds to kilograms).
- 5** Click on the conversion you want.
- 6** Copy or make a note of the result.

**NB** You can also download the Metric Conversion app for your smartphone (Apple / Android).

## Multiplication table

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
3	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
4	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40
5	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
6	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60
7	7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70
8	8	16	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80
9	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
10	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

## Resources

**ESOL Nexus** Resources to help you improve your grammar, vocabulary and English for work when English isn't your first language. **Click here**

**Skills Builder** Bite-sized modules to help with reading, writing and numbers. **Click here**

**Numeracy Challenge** 10-minute assessment to give you an idea of where you are with your maths skills and where you might go next. **Click here**

**SkillCheck** Quick online assessment modules in English, maths and ICT. Recommends next steps when you've finished. **Click here**

**Wranx** Quick, fun, daily drills to help you improve your English, maths and much more. **Click here**

To find out more and how to join  
contact: **UNISONdirect TELEPHONE**  
**0800 085 7857** textphone users  
**FREEPHONE 0800 096 7968**

Lines open 6am to midnight Monday to  
Friday and 9am to 4pm on Saturday

<https://learning.unison.org.uk>  
Follow us on Twitter: @unisonlearning

