



# KEY TO LEARNING @HOME SUCCESS GUIDE



Welcome to the most extraordinary program on earth for 3 to 6 year-olds - we are delighted you've started on this journey with your child!

## FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES

We're sure you have these already but, just in case, here's the essentials list:

- ❖ Access to a good colour printer – almost all the printable resources need to be printed in colour.
- ❖ Lots of paper clips/small zip lock bags/A4 clear leaf pockets for organising the prepared resources before and after the sessions (find what works for you!).
- ❖ Blu Tack or similar for quick display of work or pieces for a game.
- ❖ A pair of good, comfortable scissors for the adult, for ease of preparation of the resources.
- ❖ Plenty of coloured paper and card in various sizes, as well as pens, crayons, a glue stick and so on.
- ❖ Imagination – if you have it, great! If you don't, relax, let yourself get into your child's world through the given activities, and you'll have it well refined by the time you have finished a few sessions!

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Each month you will receive some sessions for each of the modules that are in the version of the program you signed up to. The exact number varies, but it is organised so that you get an average of 21 sessions each month. The idea is that you do one session a day, say five days a week, but of course it's not a problem if you miss a day or two and then do an extra session on a couple of other days to catch up.

You must follow the sessions within each module in order – this is very important. Within any given month it doesn't matter whether you do the Artographics session or the Construction session first, for example, but you mustn't do say Construction Session 5 before Construction Session 4.



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## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION continued

You should give your child time between sessions from the same module to assimilate naturally their learning. This means that you shouldn't do sessions from the same module on consecutive days – for example, not doing Story Grammar Sessions 1 and 2 one after the other, on the same day or over 2 days. Vary the module sessions so that each day your child is doing a session that they haven't done for at least a couple of days.

Ideally, the same person should lead the Key to Learning sessions with your child, so as to provide consistency and because the person doing it should be fully familiar with the intricacies of what your child has already done and understood so far.

Many of the original Key to Learning sessions involve a social aspect, which can be a challenge to recreate in your own home. In schools, to get the greatest benefit, the sessions are done with groups of 7–12 children at a time, following Vygostky's findings about when social interaction and learning through peer interaction is at its peak. Therefore we recommend that you encourage siblings and any other parent/adult in the house to join in – under your guidance so that they don't take over of course, as the child(ren) that you bought this for need(s) to be able to take the central role. You could also do some of the activities when friends come over.

For some sessions, we have indicated the use of teddies and dolls to help encourage your child's participation in a group scenario, or to give them 'somebody' to share ideas with, or speak on behalf of, to increase the amount of verbal interaction happening. Of course, if you have other family members that can join in instead, you can leave out the soft toys!

Keep all the resources that you prepare carefully organised when your child has finished with them – you never know when you might want them again because your child asks to repeat a game, or you start the program again with another child! Remember you can have access again for free for another child at any time – you only have to request it from us. But keeping the prepared paper-based resources now will make the preparation even easier next time around.

We've used the words 'child' and 'they' to keep the text and instructions simple and unambiguous. However, we do realise of course that some of you will be doing the program with 2 or 3 children at a time. If you are one of those people, you only need to ensure that each of the children gets a turn at the activity or that they get their turn to speak, to share their ideas and so on. For any activity where the child has to create something, you should ensure that all children get the same opportunity to do that. All the activities are suitable for doing with more than one child.



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## SESSION NOTES

There is a key to the icons used in the session notes on the next page.

When you plan the sessions, we suggest that you highlight the speaking parts and key steps, for easy, quick and discreet reference while playing.

It is important that you stay on track with the activity to get the benefits, but that doesn't mean you can't follow your child's lead too when appropriate – after they've 'finished', just go back to where you were and carry on. It's a fine balance between leading your child through the activities and allowing them to contribute spontaneously and sometimes go 'off track' – be open to doing whatever it takes to keep your child interested and motivated to participate, but at the same time ensuring you achieve the aims of the session.

Words for you to actually say out loud, except the stories that are written on a separate page, are in italics.

To keep each session as concise as possible, we have only listed in each the key learning aims/abilities. There are many more for most sessions, however!

In some sessions, you need to be careful not to let your child see the teaching notes as some have images in them to help you – but your child seeing them would give the game away!





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## SESSION RESOURCES

We provide printable images for anything that can be paper-based, and that is needed for the sessions. However, if you happen to have any real toys that match what is needed for a particular session, feel free to use them instead of course. For example, a Mathematics session that uses 7 small cut-out animals – if you have small animal figures already for example, then you can happily use those instead.

Give your child the option to play with the resources that you've made after the session is over, either with or without you. Keep them and leave them out, so that they can choose to re-enact a scenario and/or play with them in another way. We also recommend that, for relevant sessions, you stick the pieces onto a sheet of paper and display them at the child's eye level on a wall or board for a period of time afterwards.

If you're missing things that you need you can either make or find an alternative, buy them or leave them out of the session (we don't recommend the last option of course!).

Try to follow and maximise on your child's interests wherever you can. For example, if there is a session with rabbits and carrots, but your child is more interested in robots or Jedi knights, it's not a problem to change the pieces – you would just have to invest a little bit more time in making what you need. Feel free to make these kind of changes, as long as you don't switch anything that would affect the objectives of the session.

We are based in Europe, so paper sizes are written in the A format – A4, A3, A2 and so on. We have tested that the resources also print correctly for people using letter-size paper, so you shouldn't have any issues with this.





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## KEY TO THE ICONS

used in the session notes



Caterpillars level



Butterflies level



Average time in total that the session will take to do the main activity and the additional activity



Instructions of what to do with your child to achieve the aims



Resources provided for you that you need to print or can view on screen for the session



Additional activities to do with your child for reinforcement or extra play, to achieve the aims



Resources of your own that are needed for the session



Tip(s) or ideas for you to add to the session or to make it as enjoyable as possible for your child



Main aims of the session



Learning outcomes of the session - what your child should be able to do by the end of the activity



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## GENERAL NOTES AND TIPS

The sessions should be fun, entertaining and enjoyable for both of you. You need to choose a time to do the sessions when both you and your child are feeling positive, so that you can create a pleasant atmosphere to work together in and maintain their interest.

**Make every session as fun as you can – use face paints, accessories like silly hats, dressing up clothes and glasses for different roles, involve their favourite toys/teddies/dolls as ‘participants’ or as an audience, use exaggerated speech, movements and so on – whatever will keep your child most motivated and make the session as enjoyable as possible for you both.**

Your child doesn't need to know anything except that you are playing with them. Depending on your child and your circumstances (e.g. whether you have a homeschooling routine or not), there are many ways to handle this. For example, you can say that you've got a new game you'd love to play with them, or create a dedicated play time each day where *you* choose the 'game'. Alternatively, you don't say anything ahead of time but for a particular session have everything laid out ready for them as a surprise – when they see it, they will probably be fascinated by what you've set up and willingly participate without feeling like they are 'doing an activity'. You can choose a permanent, quiet place at home and fixed time to do the sessions, which can help children to feel secure as it becomes part of their daily routine. Find whatever suits you and your family best!

**Although there are objectives for each session, never feel pressured for your child to achieve something in particular. Let them explore, guide them with your questions and knowledge, and let them take what they can from you and the experience. Any session can be revisited a few days or weeks later if you feel your child didn't achieve the objectives, but in many cases, the next sessions consolidate the learning from the previous ones anyway.**

You shouldn't drill your child to remember names or other information – just keep using the correct words yourself and give them the opportunities to use these in their own dialogue, being prompted by you if necessary.

**If your child isn't participating well, lacks the language skills to do it or just as a gentle way to prompt them, ask yourself questions out loud and then pretend that you are considering and figuring out the answers. This way you are modelling the thought process for them.**

At the beginning it might take you a while to get used to everything in the program. We've strived to make it as easy and as straightforward as possible for you. Once you get into it, it will all become really clear and you will be absolutely fine!



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## GENERAL NOTES AND TIPS continued

Every time that your child produces something, for example a drawing, painting or construction model, afterwards 'evaluate' together, through conversing, what they are happy with, what they like, what they might do different next time (if appropriate).

Always reward their effort, attitude and perseverance with specific words, rather than just a 'well done' - which doesn't help them to recognise what they did that was good. When appropriate, finish with the sentence: *You must be really proud of yourself!* (instead of I'm really proud of you, for example) to encourage their 'intrinsic', rather than 'extrinsic', motivation. If you are not familiar with these terms, it means that a child should not learn to do something only to get recognition from someone else. They should learn to do things for their own reasons, and not become addicted to getting praise from others for their work. This is a small subtlety in the use of language that will make an enormous difference to their life-long self-esteem and motivation.

As your child gets used to the games and activities, they may insist on helping you set them up too. You can prepare the sessions together if you think it would be appropriate. Just don't give away any part of it that they shouldn't see beforehand!

Some sessions that appear simple can be deceptive - they are much more complex in terms of what they will achieve for the child than is initially apparent. Don't be tempted to skip sessions that 'look' too easy or that you think you've covered before! The process is not nearly as obvious to children as it is to us.

Try not to skip any sessions at all, for that matter! If your child doesn't take to one of the sessions, you can store it for later and re-visit it in a few days. Consider changing the angle of how you introduce it, varying the story to something that they would be specifically interested in or make it part of another topic that you are already doing with your child.

Give your child the chance to explain to someone else what they have done, whenever possible. For example, if a grandparent visits, you could suggest to your child that they show them an activity that they have done and explain it in their own words. This will also allow you to see how extensively your child has absorbed the vocabulary and different concepts, and whether they've taken on board the learning objectives.

Don't expect immediate 'results'. This is an investment that you are making in your child's overall development, and you will notice the various benefits at different stages along the way.



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## GENERAL NOTES AND TIPS continued

If, at the start of a session, your child says that they know about the content/topic presented already, whether they do or not, you should always still do it regardless – as there are many objectives and outcomes for each that are not just about the gaining of knowledge. These will be clear to you from the objectives listed at the start and the outcomes listed at the end of each session. To overcome any such resistance from your child, try to find ways that work for your child and to motivate him/her to participate in spite of this reluctance. For example, choose a favourite doll or teddy and then play ‘school’ – whereby you guide your child and their teddy/doll through the session, saying that the teddy/doll will need a lot of help as they don’t understand these things about the world yet.

**Give your child plenty of opportunities to share their own ideas through demonstration and by talking about them, as well as letting them explore different possibilities as they wish.**

There is no need to do more than the activities that are explained in each session – they really are enough to get the results that you want for your child. However, you can link relevant sessions to holidays, events, outings, other topics that you are learning about and so on, as you see fit – to make it an even more rounded learning experience for your child.

**Make sure that your child feels comfortable making mistakes. If you see something that they have done incorrectly, use the ‘Socratic approach’ – that is, ask gentle and conversational questions to lead them to discover the mistake(s) for themselves. Any mistake is always a great opportunity to discuss other possibilities or to analyse why something didn’t work, and supports their acceptance that making mistakes is part of the natural process of learning.**

With Key to Learning you act as the facilitator/mediator of the learning process for your child, rather than playing the traditional role of teacher. Let them work out what they can and solve problems for themselves whenever appropriate. The Key to Learning approach is also different conceptually – first the child plays, explores, experiences and only then does he/she recognise the concept (by receiving input from the facilitator). This is an important difference to the approach usually taken in schools, where the teacher gives the concept first and after that children do many different activities to try to make sense of it.

**There is a specific introductory document for each module that needs to be read before starting that module. This will be provided in the Membership Area before the first session of each module.**



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## EXTRA NOTE FOR PRE-BUTTERFLIES

As you know, the content of the Key to Learning program is divided into two levels, Caterpillars and Butterflies. You will start with what we have called 'Pre-Butterflies', which is a collection of the most critical sessions of the Caterpillars level – the ones that will give your child the best foundation for developing their mental abilities – and then you will move on to the full Butterflies level of the program.

Because of the age of your child, some of the earlier sessions in Pre-Butterflies may seem too easy (as they are taken from the Caterpillars level which is for 3+ age) but please don't be tempted to skip them. The content of the session is not the important part in most cases – it's about the process which forms part of the foundation for the development of learning abilities. If we've included a session in Pre-Butterflies, it's because it is essential for building this foundation. If your child has any issue with the perceived simplicity of any of these sessions, you can overcome it by doing the session more quickly and then having your child 'lead' the activity in the some way for some of their teddies/dolls or a sibling, like playing 'school' for example.

## QUESTIONS?

You can find detailed answers to most, if not all, of the other questions that you might have here: [www.keytolearningathome.com/faq/](http://www.keytolearningathome.com/faq/)

However, if you are still unsure of anything at all, please email us at:  
[katie@keytolearningathome.com](mailto:katie@keytolearningathome.com)

Or, post your question/comment in our Facebook group so that others can benefit from seeing the answer:

[www.facebook.com/groups/ThePreschoolRevolution/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/ThePreschoolRevolution/)