



# Movement and Navigation

## Spatial Reasoning Toolkit

Movement and navigation are key aspects of spatial reasoning. This poster outlines key developmental steps for children from birth to 7 years. You can encourage children's spatial development by providing ample time for exploration and by using spatial words during play and everyday routines. Spatial reasoning is central to everyday living and research has shown that it is also a strong predictor of future mathematical and scientific attainment

### 0-6 months

Children are learning to: **Explore space** by moving, rolling, and stretching.



**Spatial Language:**  
'too far', 'nearly'

### 6-12 months

Children are learning to: **Engage with spatial relationships, positions and directions**, using gestures and concepts like 'in', 'on', 'under', 'up', 'down'



**Spatial Language:**  
'into', 'up high', and 'over there'

### 2-year-olds

Children are learning to: **Find their way** around familiar environments, e.g. where they wash their hands.



**Spatial Language:**  
'next to', 'behind' and 'all the way over there'

### 3-year-olds

Children are learning to: **Recognise and predict familiar routes** e.g., says *garage* before they see it.



**Spatial Language:**  
'next', 'look under', 'after' 'before'

### 4- and 5-year-olds

Children are learning to: **Follow and give directions**, including *left* and *right* turns when accompanied by gestures.



**Spatial Language:**  
'forwards', 'backwards', 'sideways' and 'turn'

### 4- and 5-year-olds

Children are learning to: **Notice landmarks and use these** to find their way around familiar places.



**Spatial Language:**  
'first', 'then', 'next', 'alongside' and 'after'

### 6- and 7-year-olds

Children are learning to: **Predict the path of travelling objects**, using the language of position, direction, and orientation.



**Spatial Language:**  
'over there', 'further/nearer', 'close to', 'along', 'around', 'between', 'left/right'

### 6- and 7-year-olds

Children are learning to: **Place things at approximately correct relative distances** when creating maps or 3D models and identify representations of real-world features.



**Spatial Language:**  
'nearby', 'further away' and 'distance'

