

## Rechargeable Mini Mobile Phones (EY11835)



Practitioner Notes (Ideas & Inspiration)

## Supporting Personal, Social and Emotional Development



When we think of technology, many of us picture children using screen-based items such as iPads. However, when used collaboratively, screen-free technology devices such as the Mini Mobile Phones can support children's personal, social, and emotional development.

### Building Confidence and Independence

For children who like to be close to, or seek the reassurance of an adult, Mini Mobile Phones can provide valuable support by facilitating connections/conversations with other children and staff from a distance. They can gently encourage children to gradually become more independent while still maintaining reassuring contact with an adult.



The docking station that comes with the Mini Mobile Phones promotes independent access and ensures that the phones remain easily accessible, always charged, and ready for use during play.

This also teaches children valuable organisational skills by giving the resources a designated home. This helps them know where to find and return them, giving them a sense of responsibility.



## Supporting Communication and Language



**Mini Mobile Phones can serve as a motivational tool, encouraging children to engage in cooperative play and practise turn-taking with their peers. The phones can stimulate meaningful conversations among children, providing valuable opportunities to enhance their communication and language skills.**

**Turn Taking** - When using the phones, children quickly start to understand that communication is a two-way street. Each child must press a coloured button to initiate a conversation or respond when someone else calls them from another coloured phone. This straightforward action teaches them the concept of turn-taking in a friendly, engaging manner. As they eagerly await their turn to connect and converse, children develop patience and understanding, foundational qualities that facilitate smooth and effective communication.

### **Recall and Response/Active Listening**

As conversations unfold, children have to remember what the person on the other phone said to respond appropriately. This memory-based interaction encourages active listening as they strive to maintain the flow of the conversation.

### **Observations on Verbal Communication**

When interacting, we often rely on non-verbal communication to express ourselves as much as the words we speak. Some children communicate effectively with gestures such as pointing to what they want. However, when using the Mini Mobile Phones, the absence of non-verbal communication encourages children to articulate their thoughts clearly. This allows practitioners to observe and assess things such as pronunciation, use of vocabulary, and fluency, without the influence of non-verbal communication.



# Technology



**Using screen-free devices such as Mini Mobile Phones can introduce children to basic communication technology, helping them become more comfortable in today's world, using the technology appropriately.**



Mini Mobile Phones can provide excellent opportunities to teach young children about the responsible and safe use of technology. They can learn valuable lessons, such as the importance of refraining from using devices when crossing a road, driving (or in their case while riding a bike!), or in situations requiring concentration or social etiquette, like in a cinema or at the dinner table. You may wish to have conversations around the safe use of technology such as answering calls to a stranger (links to cyber safety) and to know that although we are unable to see the person during a phone call, we still need to think about the words that we use and how we use them.

Practitioners can also emphasise how devices like Mobile Phones can be used when face-to-face interactions are not possible. They can highlight that face-to-face conversations with family, friends, and peers are invaluable and support our need for human connection whilst technology can be a great tool for connecting with people who are further away or when we need to call for help in an emergency.

# Technology Continued



## The Story of Communication

Share with children the tale of how communication has evolved over the years. Discuss how people relied on various means to connect with each other before mobile phones.

A great way to lead into conversations about handwritten letters, messenger pigeons, and even smoke signals.

The children may also wish to speak to different family members to find out how they communicated.

## Telephones Through Time

Introduce them to the telephone's invention by Alexander Graham Bell. Share with them images of the earliest telephones – the bulky, hand-cranked contraptions with a single receiver and transmitter. If possible, show them examples of different telephones from various eras, such as rotary dial phones and cordless telephones. Let them touch, feel, and examine these artefacts to gain a deeper understanding of how technology has evolved.

## Hands-On Exploration

While the children are playing with the Mini Mobile Phones, encourage them to compare them to images (or real-life examples) of phones from the past.

Pose questions such as 'What is the same, what is different?', or 'I wonder who would have had a telephone like this?'

Discuss the differences in size, appearance, and functionality, highlighting how far we have come in the world of communication.



# Hide and Seek with a Twist



Transmission range - 50m+ when in line-of-sight. At least 20m when indoors. This can accommodate two internal walls.

## Getting Ready:

- Select three children to be the hidiers and one to be the seeker, equipping each one with a charged Mini Mobile phone.
- Seeker closes their eyes and counts to an agreed number while the others go and hide.
- These Mini Mobile Phones will serve as their secret communicators during the game.

## The Activity:

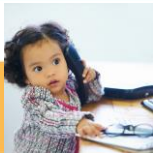
- The hider's job is not just to hide but to call the seeker to describe their location using the Mini Mobile Phones. This helps them to expand their vocabulary and practise using descriptive language.
- The hidiers call the seeker to send them clues. These can be simple descriptions explaining what is around them or can be more complex clues like riddles.
- The seeker, accepts the calls and using the clues given, tries to find the children hiding.
- Who can give the best clues?

## Skills Developed:

- Teamwork
- Collaboration and co-operation (collaborative play)
- Language and Communication (positional and descriptive language)
- Active listening
- Expressing themselves clearly.



# Role Play Across Provision



Transmission range - 50m+ when in line-of-sight. At least 20m when indoors. This can accommodate two internal walls.

## Getting Ready:

- Place the Mini Mobile Phones in a central accessible location or in different areas of provision like the home corner or construction area.
- Ensure each phone is fully charged and ready for use.
- Provide notepads, sticky notes, and writing materials to encourage children to write lists or messages.

## The Activity:

- Encourage and model to children how to use the Mini Mobile Phones for role-play scenarios across different areas of the provision.
- These scenarios may include Mum making a phone call to her children in the construction area to ask what time they will be home for dinner, ringing the emergency services on 999, or calling someone in the outdoor area informing them that there is space at the creative station. It may include leaving messages or coordinating pretend tasks like grocery shopping.
- Promote creative storytelling and communication among the children as they interact using the phones.

## Skills Developed:

- Communication and language skills – e.g., through conversations and message-taking, etc.
- Cooperation and collaboration skills as they engage in cooperative role-play scenarios.
- Creative thinking and problem-solving as children invent various narratives.



# Phone A Friend



## Getting Ready:

- Ensure each participant, including the person asking the questions (e.g. practitioner, teacher, or child), has a Mini Mobile phone ready for the activity. This activity can be adult or child-led.
- Familiarise everyone with how the phones work and make sure they are charged and ready to go.
- Set up an appropriate space for the activity e.g. around a table, sitting on the carpet, etc.

## The Activity:

- Designate one person as the questioner (like the host in a game show).
- The questioner asks questions to different participants in the group by calling them on their phones.
- Participants must listen for their phone to ring to hear the question and respond. If they don't know the answer they can 'phone a friend' by ending the call and calling another participant who they think might have the answer. For added excitement and if appropriate, this call can be timed so that the participant has to communicate clearly and promptly.
- The 'friend' can then help them answer the question collaboratively before calling the questioner back with the answer.

## Skills Developed:

- Teamwork and collaboration skills.
- Active listening – listening carefully for the call and to the person asking the question.
- Critical thinking and problem-solving.





# Scavenger Hunt



Transmission range - 50m+ when in line-of-sight. At least 20m when indoors. This can accommodate two internal walls.



## Getting Ready:

- Prepare a list of items for the scavenger hunt (practitioner or child-led), ready for the children to find. You may wish to give the children a list (early phonics), a picture list, or give verbal clues over the phone.
- Each child or team should have a charged mobile phone so that they can hear the clues and communicate with their friends playing the game.
- Hide the items (if needed) around the setting (indoors, outdoors, or both, depending on the space available).

## The Activity:

- Depending on the number of children playing, this game can be played individually or in teams.
- Provide each team or individual with a list of items they need to find, along with a charged Mini Mobile Phone.
- Send children off in different directions with their Mini Mobile phones to look for the hidden items.
- Encourage the children to communicate with each other through the phones, sharing information about what they've found and where to find it.
- Incorporate positional language by hiding items that require them to describe the position, such as 'underneath the bench', 'on top of the tree stump', or 'inside the wooden tunnel'.
- Some clues can incorporate other areas of learning such as Maths or Literacy by adding amounts, colours or descriptive language e.g. finding a certain number of green leaves.
- Allow some clues to lead to multiple locations, e.g. find a spider's web, as this will promote problem-solving and critical thinking

## Skills Developed:

- |                                   |   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Communication skills            | • Positional and descriptive language   | • Following and giving instructions. |
| • Collaboration and teamwork      | • Critical thinking and problem solving | • Directions and spatial awareness.  |
| • Number recognition and counting | • Active listening                      |                                      |



# Who you gonna call...?



## Getting Ready:

- For this activity, you may choose to have a map that can be used to represent the various locations where the children's family and friends live.
- Get families involved by sending home questions for them to discuss with their child before this activity.

## The Activity:

- Discuss the importance of communication and ask the children about the phone calls made at home. Encourage them to share stories about people they connect with like family members, friends, or even professionals such as the dentist or doctor.
- Ask children to take turns sharing information on who they call, why they call them, and where the people are. For example, they may mention calling grandparents in another country or friends in a nearby town. As they share their experiences, help them locate and represent these places on the map.
- Engage in discussions about the diversity of people and places they connect with, fostering an appreciation for different cultures and locations.
- This may lead to questions and interactions that promote empathy and understanding of each other's lives and backgrounds.

## Skills Developed:

- Communication skills.
- Developing an understanding of people, families and communities.
- Home-school links can be developed.
- Empathy.
- Understanding of similarities and differences.



# Chinese Whispers with a Twist



## Getting Ready:

- Choose four children to play the game, giving each a Mini Mobile Phone along with instructions on how to play the game and which colour phone to call.
- Gather the children in a designated area, maintaining an appropriate distance.
- Prepare a simple phrase or sentence that will be whispered from one child to another.

## The Activity:

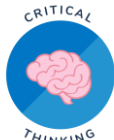
- Start by explaining the game of Chinese Whispers to the children, emphasising the importance of listening carefully and speaking the phrase or sentence clearly into the phone.
- Each child chooses a location from which to play the game.
- The facilitator (teacher, practitioner, or child) whispers the chosen phrase or sentence into the ear of the first child, who will listen carefully and pass the message on to the next child using their Mini Mobile Phone.
- Each child speaks the message to the next person using their phone to communicate, one by one.
- The last child to receive the message, calls the others to arrange a meeting place where they will share it with everyone by speaking it out loud.
- Compare the final message with the original phrase or sentence and see if it is the same or has changed during the game.
- Discuss the importance of effective communication and listening, highlighting how messages can sometimes become distorted if we are not careful.

## Skills Developed:

- Being able to express themselves clearly.
- Cooperative play and social skills.
- Teamwork.
- Active listening.
- Following instructions.
- Colour matching and recognition.



# Problem-Solving



## Getting Ready:

- Have different questions about using the Mini Mobile Phones.
- Ensure that the children have access to charged Mini Mobile Phones.

## The Activity:

- Give children the opportunity to investigate and experiment with the phones. Ask children the following questions to find out the best ways to use them:
  - Can they hear the message through the phone? If not, can they work out why? Have they switched it on? Is it the right way up? Are they in a good place to have a conversation? If not, think about why and where would be a better location.
- Challenge the children to find out how far they can go before losing the signal. Can they measure the distance in some way? Do walls and other objects make a difference?
- If a child is having difficulty using the phone, can someone use their knowledge to help and troubleshoot?

## Skills Developed:

- Problem-solving skills and critical thinking.
- Teamwork when solving the problems.
- An awareness of technology.
- Develops curiosity.
- Investigative skills.

# Benefits of Mini Mobile Phones



- Helps develop communication and language skills.
- Supports personal, social and emotional development.
- Encourages children to play outdoors.
- Builds confidence and independence.
- Screen-free technology.
- Can be used to teach about good communication and roles and responsibilities.
- Provides an alternative way to observe children's language skills.
- Opportunities to incorporate all areas of learning.



If you have any brilliant ideas of how to use the mini mobile phones, we would love to hear from you.