



# The Foundation Years at Home

[www.reflectionsonlearning.co.uk](http://www.reflectionsonlearning.co.uk)  
[enquiries@reflectionsonlearning.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@reflectionsonlearning.co.uk)  
Tel: 01732 225850

## Exploring mirrors with young children

Young children are fascinated by mirrors and from a very early age will spend time concentrating on their reflection in a mirror, puzzling out who it might be. They are curious about what they see in the mirror and will want to touch the mirror to try to figure out whether they are real people. If the mirror is free standing they may even try to look behind it to see who is there.

Young children enjoy looking at their reflections and seeing the reflections of others. Having mirrors at different levels and in different places around the house encourages children to be aware of their bodies and how they move. You will find that you and your child can have interesting and amusing conversations using a mirror, with plenty of opportunities to mimic expressions and movements.

As well as helping children to build up their understanding of what they look like physically, mirrors can help your child to develop his or her sense of identity and awareness of him/herself as an individual.

Safety is always an important consideration when thinking about mirrors that are suitable for use by young children. Glass mirrors firmly attached to the wall will be safe, but for mirrors that children can handle themselves we promote the use of reflective acrylic in a foam or wooden surround frame. This makes the mirror lightweight and safe for children to play with.

### Try using mirrors in these different ways:

- Add a small mirror to a collection of toy figures or animals. This creates interesting viewpoints, encourages counting and may start a conversation about what is 'real' and 'not real'.
- Position two mirrors at an angle to one another and look at the interesting multiple reflections that are created.
- Look through a kaleidoscope which has three mirrors arranged in a triangle to fascinating patterns.
- Encourage your child to try positioning things while looking at the objects in a mirror. This is a challenging thing to do and involves lots of problem solving as well as trial and error.
- Moving objects around in front of a mirror will help to develop spatial awareness and an understanding of position. – up down, over, under, beside.
- Look at your reflection in a curved mirror – a large metal spoon works well. Look into the bowl of the spoon and try moving close up and then further away. What happens when you turn the spoon over?
- Place a mirror tile on the ground outside and look down into it to see an unusual view of the sky, the clouds and the underside of the trees.
- You could create a spotlight by using a mirror to reflect a light, or the sun, onto a wall or the ceiling. Be very careful NOT to shine the light directly at anyone.
- Look out for mirrors or reflective surfaces when you are out and about. Shop windows, metal lamp posts, clean cars can all act as mirrors.
- Water that is very still can act as a mirror, but as soon as the surface is disturbed the reflection disappears.