

PRIMARY-AGE ACTIVITIES

These ideas to explore the theme of **'Growing Together'** are designed for primary-age children. They can be adapted for use in-school, for home-schooling, online lessons or independent learning.

To differentiate or extend the content, refer to our secondary-age group activities.

Below are a few teaching points to consider and discuss with children before engaging in **'Growing Together'** activities.

WHAT IS 'GROWING TOGETHER' AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Human beings change and grow– we do it all the time and in many different ways. Physical growth is easy to see as we grow from babies to children, teenagers to adults. But growing emotionally is also an important part of our development.

Things that upset us when we were younger may no longer overwhelm us as we grow and learn to cope with life's ups and downs. Challenges and set-backs can help us to grow and adapt. Trying new things can help us to move beyond our comfort zone into a new realm of possibility and potential. However, emotional growth is often a gradual process that happens over time, and sometimes we might feel a bit 'stuck'. At these times we are reminded of how much we need others in our lives to help us to keep growing.

We need our parents and carers, our teachers, our friends and others to support us to grow, especially when things get tough. We often need others to help us to believe in ourselves, to keep going, and to try doing things a bit differently. Even when we have experienced really difficult challenges in our lives, with the right support, we can continue to grow and flourish.

TEACHER TIPS FOR THE THEME 'GROWING TOGETHER'



- Use books that children may already know to explore ideas around growth and change
- Use the growth of plants and trees as a metaphor – but keep the focus on personal growth as much as possible
- Use different media to explore the theme of growth, for example art, music, group discussion, displays etc.
- As appropriate, share your own experiences of how you have changed and grown over the years – and how you continue to do so.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

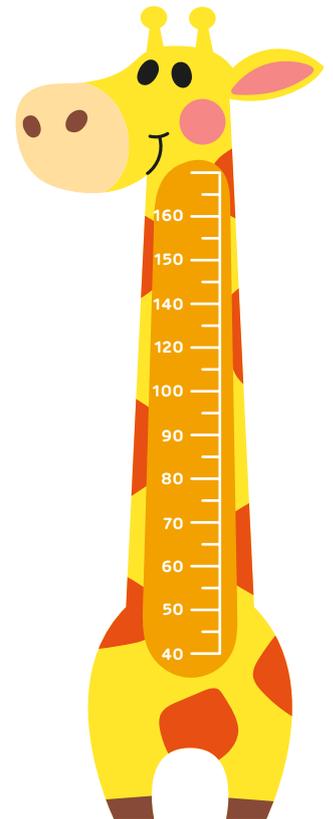
LOOK HOW WE'VE CHANGED!

Read your class a story or poem about growing and changing, such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Eric Carle) or *The Ugly Duckling* (Hans Christian Andersen).

- Ask the children about some of the changes the characters went through.
- Can the children think about changes they have been through themselves – for example, have they always been able to walk, write their name, make friends etc?
- Ask the children to think about what they would like to be able to do when they are older.
- Encourage the children to think about whether they might need help at first to do those things, and who might help them.

You may need to explain that children develop and are able to do things at different ages – we all develop at our own pace. Focus on all the amazing things they can do now, particularly when we think of how little babies can do when they are born.

Follow-up activity: Create outlines of butterflies or swans (depending on which story you used). Decorate with pictures or words depicting things that the children have learnt to do e.g. draw, write their name, count to 10, do a handstand, etc.



REACH FOR THE STARS

Get inspired and uplifted by playing, singing or dancing to 'Reach' by S Club 7.

- Talk to the children about having goals – things that we want to work towards.
- Talk about how we often need to take small steps towards reaching our goals.

Invite each child to create a large star and write a goal on the star that they would like to reach. Encourage setting goals around emotional growth, for example, learning to cope with a difficult feeling like anger; learning to say sorry when you have hurt somebody or learning to speak up for something you believe in.

You could make a display of the children's stars for them to refer to throughout the week.

Follow-up activity: How will they reach their goals? Invite the children to create ladders to help them reach their stars. On each rung, put a small step towards the goal that they've set. Discuss how they can praise and encourage each other when they see classmates take small steps towards their goals.

TIME TO GROW

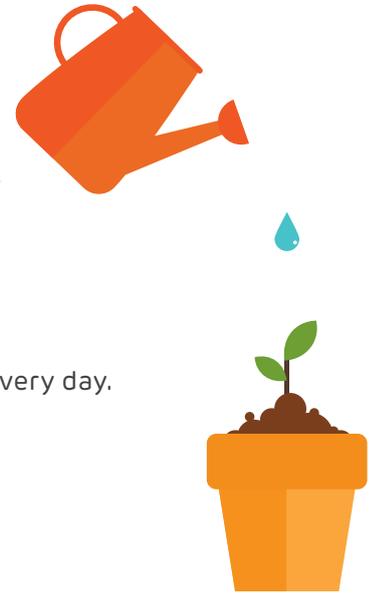
You will need some cress seeds, and a pot to grow them in.

- Talk to the children about what the seeds might be – what will they grow into?
- What will they need to help them to grow? (water, light, warmth)
- Can they think about how long it might take before they see any growth?
- Do they know how tall they might grow? What might they look like?
- Ask the children to take a photo of, or draw, how the seeds grow and change every day.

Discussion points:

- We can't always see growth immediately – sometimes it is very slow.
- We don't always notice that something is growing – but it is.
- Things can grow in unexpected ways.

Link these discussion points to our personal growth. For example, has it ever taken them longer to learn a new skill than their siblings or classmates? Have they ever had the experience of thinking they are getting nowhere and then all of a sudden things 'click into place'? Do they have a talent that few people know about? (Think fun stuff - like being able to stand on their head, finger knitting, or rolling their tongue etc!)



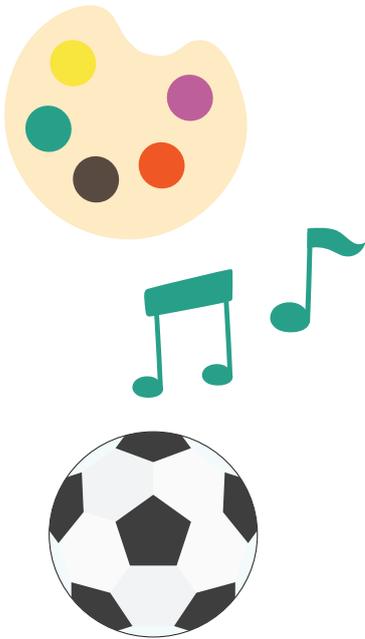
STEP BY STEP

Ask the children to consider a skill they currently have. For example, baking, riding a bike, reading, dancing, swimming, learning an instrument etc.

- What steps did they take to get there? e.g. learning how to use a knife safely to chop vegetables; from starting to learn to ride a bike with stabilizers to being able to do a wheelie.
- What went wrong? e.g. their cake burnt, or they fell off their bike.
- What helped them to keep going?
- What did they learn from that experience?

Encourage children to draw and write a comic, or create a simple book, describing the development of their skill over time – including when things went wrong.

Ask each child to add a final square or page, and draw a picture of what could happen if they continued to develop this skill (e.g. a picture of them in the BMX Olympics, in the Great British Bake-Off or writing their first novel!)



CREATE A GROWING TOGETHER WALL

Talk to the children about the growth you have noticed in them since September. Ask the children to comment on their own and other children's growth.

Encourage the children to write or draw something that they have learned, achieved or found out about themselves or others. This could be academic, in sport, music, art, in a friendship. Remember to include things that other people may not notice e.g. 'I found someone else to play with when my friend was absent', 'I read aloud in class, even though I felt really nervous', 'I walked away rather than shouted when I felt angry' or 'I tried something new for lunch'. These can then be displayed on a 'growing together wall'.

Teachers – don't forget to add yours too! Did you lead an assembly for the first time, or teach something in a different way, or help another teacher in some way?

WELLBEING WELL

Watch Jessi, who is autistic, talk about what helped her to cope with her worries about moving on to secondary school: [bbc.in/3owivPr](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-58111111) 

Ask the class about who or what helps them when they feel upset, angry or worried.

Ask the children to write a brief sentence about what helps them to feel ok and to draw a picture of it. For example, "listening to my favourite music helps me to feel calm" or "remembering a silly joke my grandad told me makes me feel happy" etc.

Create a 'wellbeing well' - *this could be a box, basket or even a display in class* - where children can place their ideas.

Remind the children they can go to the 'well' for ideas, or try some of them out together.

SUPPORT BALLOONS

Who supports you to grow?

Watch this two minute video tutorial from our Art Room team: bit.ly/3m2R9ib 

Encourage pupils to create their own 'Support Balloons' and consider the people in their lives who help them to grow. Who might they turn to when things get tough or they need support? This may include their parent, carers, siblings, teachers, coaches etc.

Be aware that some children may feel they don't have much support in their lives - so this will need to be built up over time. Make sure you plan in extra support for children who feel isolated.



OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK



- 1 Hold a '**Dress to Express**' day to raise vital funds for children's mental health bit.ly/3C9RAwM 
- 2 Tune in to our free '**Growing Together**' virtual assembly during your form or registration time [Available from Monday 7 Feb]
- 3 Watch our series of '**Growth Stories**' featuring some famous faces, and even be inspired to create your own [Available from January]
- 4 **Share our tips** for parents and carers with your school community bit.ly/3C8wHC7 
- 5 **Spread the word** by sharing how you plan to take part on social media! Don't forget to use #ChildrensMentalHealthWeek

