

Family Training Resource Guide

Table of Contents

Purpose	Page 3
Early Intervention	Page 4
Developmental Milestones	Page 5-15
Example Special Instruction Summary Sheet	Page 16
Scenario	Page 17-18
Completed Example Special Instruction Summary Sheet	Page 19
Example Strategies	Page 20-21
Healthy Minds	Page 22
The Power of Play	Page 23-28
On the Move	Page 29-33
School Readiness	Page 34-40
Choosing the right toy...	Page 41
Resource Web Cites	Page 42
Definitions/Acronyms	Page 43-48
Thanks	Page 49
Miscellaneous resources	End

Purpose...

The purpose of this document is to combine a number of special instruction resources to be used by families and Early Interventionists. These resources are designed to assist families in understanding how the service of special instruction can aid in their child's development and how the daily routines and activities that they have with their child can also be teaching moments. For Early Interventionists there are examples of data sheets as well as strategies that can be used with children and recorded on data sheets to be used later by parents.

This resource guide is not meant to provide all available information on the subject of special instruction, but is a reference guide that can be used from time to time and sections can be taken out and copied for families. It is our hope that as new information becomes available it to can be added to this document.

What is Early Intervention?

Early intervention is a system of coordinated services that promotes the child's growth and development and supports families during the critical early years. Early intervention services to eligible children and families are federally mandated through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Starting with a partnership between parents and professionals at this early stage helps the child, family and community as a whole.

Early intervention services delivered within the context of the family can:

- Improve both developmental and educational gains;
- Reduce the future costs of special education, rehabilitation and health care needs;
- Reduce feelings of isolation, stress and frustration that families may experience; and
- Help children with disabilities grow up to become productive, independent individuals.

The earlier children *with or at risk* of disabilities receive assistance and the sooner their families receive support towards their children's development, *the farther they will go in life.*

Developmental Milestones: How I Grow In Your Care

The first three years of life are a time of amazing learning for young children and for the people who care for them every day. In these years, most children develop new skills in a predictable order they crawl before they walk and they point before they use words to tell you what they want.

But every child is unique.

Every child develops at his own pace and reacts to people and the world in his own way.

Every child has his own style of communicating with you.

That's why ZERO TO THREE designed the following three charts to speak to you the parent or caregiver in the child's voice. They are designed to help you see at a glance the steps involved in a child's learning during the earliest months and years of life.

Birth to 8 Months: Young Infants

I Learn Who I Am	
I learn about my body.	I suck on my fingers or hands. I study them. I discover that my hands and feet are part of me. I can move them.
I learn to trust your love.	I learn I can depend on you if you come when I cry. I feel secure when you hold me in your arms. I feel good when you smile at me. I learn my world is safe to explore when you watch over me.
I learn to comfort myself.	I may suck my fingers or hands it soothes me. As I grow, I can wait a few minutes because I have learned you will always come.
I can make things happen.	I can shake a rattle and make a sound. I can kick a mobile and make it move. I can smile and you will smile back at me.
I Learn About My Feelings	
I can show you many feelings pleasure, anger, fear, sadness, excitement and joy.	I smile and wiggle to show you I like playing with you. I frown or cry when you stop paying attention or playing with me. I laugh aloud sometimes with a belly laugh.
Sometimes I need you to help me with my feelings.	I need you to try to understand how I feel. I need you to comfort me when I am upset or frightened. I need you to protect me when I feel overwhelmed.
I share my deepest feelings. I know and trust you.	My smile is brightest for you. Sometimes I cry when you pick me up at child care. Sometimes it's because I've missed you. Sometimes I'm just fussy. I know you'll understand. I can protest strongly when I am upset. I know you will be there for me no matter what. I'll show you more of my feelings than I may show others.
I Learn About People, Objects and How Things Work	
I can tell the difference between people I know and people I do not know.	I recognize my parents' voices. I relax more when I am with you and other people I know.
I sometimes am afraid of strangers.	I prefer the special people in my life such as my mom, my dad or my grandmother. I may begin to act differently and fearful

	<p>of strangers, even at this young age. I sometimes cry if a stranger gets too close to me or looks at me directly in the eyes. I may cry or cling to you until I know I am safe with a new person.</p>
I like to be with you.	<p>I like to be held by you. I like to play with you. You are more interesting than any of my toys. I like you to talk softly and smile at me. I smile and "talk" back to you. You are the most important person in my life.</p>
I learn about how the world works.	<p>I like to look around and see new things. I like to play games with you, like peek-a-boo and hide-n-seek. When I want you to keep playing knee ride, I know I should keep bouncing up and down.</p>
I Learn To Move and Do	
At first, my body moves automatically.	<p>I search for something to suck. I turn my head when something blocks my breathing. I turn my head or close my eyes when it is too bright.</p>
Within a few months, I begin to learn to use my fingers and hands.	<p>I put my hand and objects in my mouth. I can hold something, let go, and get hold of it again. I can move an object from one hand to another.</p>
Over time, I move my body with purpose.	<p>I can hold my head up. I can roll over. I can sit without your help. I have favorite positions. But I like change! It feels good to move from being on my back to my stomach to sitting up. I can crawl by myself. I may even be able to stand up if I hold on to you.</p>
I Learn To Communicate and Relate	
I can tell you things even as a newborn.	<p>I cry to tell you I need you. I communicate through the expressions on my face and gestures. I have different cries, facial expressions and body movements to tell you I am sleepy, hungry, wet, frightened, and uncomfortable or just need a break.</p>
Within a few months, I develop new ways to communicate.	<p>I learn to make many different sounds. I laugh. I use my sounds, change the expression on my face and move</p>

	<p>around to get your attention. Sometimes I may just listen to you I love to hear your voice.</p>
<p>I learn to babble.</p>	<p>I make some of the sounds that I hear you use. Sometimes I try to imitate you. I like you to imitate my sounds too. My babbling can even start to sound like adult speech...a question, an exclamation, a request, a song...</p>
<p>I like to "talk" with you even though I don't yet speak words.</p>	<p>I may catch your eye and smile to tell you I am ready to communicate with you. I pay attention to the tone of your voice and the expressions on your face when you talk with me. I stretch my arms toward you when I want you to pick me up. I look at you when I am ready to play. When I close my eyes or turn my head away, I am telling you I need a break. I learn how much fun language can be when you talk, sing and read with me.</p>

8 to 18 Months: Explorers

I Learn Who I Am	
How I feel about myself depends on how you care for me and play with me.	<p>I respect myself when I sense that you are really listening to me.</p> <p>I feel competent when you invite me to help you.</p> <p>I feel proud of what I can do, and your praise makes me feel even better.</p> <p>I feel confident in my abilities when you let me try new things.</p>
I am showing you that my sense of self is growing stronger when I am assertive.	<p>I sometimes insist on doing things my way.</p> <p>When I say, "No!" it often means I am an individual.</p> <p>I may tell you what to do. I may say, "Sit there!"</p>
I am learning language about me.	<p>I know my own name.</p> <p>I can point to and tell you the names of one or more parts of my body.</p> <p>I begin to use "me," "I" and "mine."</p>
I Learn About My Feelings	
My feelings can be very strong.	<p>I laugh and may shriek with joy when I am happy and we are having fun.</p> <p>I can be angry or frustrated and show it by saying "No!" or "Mine!"</p> <p>I may sometimes hit, push or bite because I'm angry or frustrated.</p>
I care deeply about you.	<p>I may look independent sometimes, but don't let that fool you.</p> <p>I may smile, hug you, run into your arms or lean against you to show my affection.</p> <p>When I play, I need you to watch what I do.</p> <p>I may try to follow you or cling when you get ready to leave.</p> <p>I may get frightened when you disappear from my sight. I know now when you're gone, and it frightens me.</p>
Knowing when you will return makes me feel better and helps me learn about time.	<p>I am slowly learning that when those I love leave, they will return.</p> <p>I am learning about time and understand when you say, "I'm coming back after your nap and snack."</p> <p>A consistent daily schedule helps me know when things will happen.</p>
I Learn About People, Objects and How Things Work	
I am learning about choice and	I have favorite toys and favorite foods.

choices.	I like to choose what to wear.
I like to see and be with other children my age or a little older.	I have fun making silly faces and noises with other children. I may play out simple scenes with others such as, caring for dolls, riding in a train or talking on the phone. I do not know yet how to share but I learn through supervised play with others. You can help us play together peacefully by providing duplicates of our favorite toys.
I want to be like you.	I learn how to relate to other people by watching how you act with me, our family and our friends. I imitate things you do like petting the dog, pushing a vacuum cleaner or getting ready for work. I feel proud and confident when you let me help you with your "real work," like, scrubbing the carrots.
I learn about how the world works.	I am very interested in how the world works. I may go around a sofa when chasing a ball, knowing that it will come out the other side. If my music box winds down, I may try to find a way to start it again. I may use a stick or another object to reach a toy.
I Learn to Move and Do	
I am learning to do new things with my fingers and hands.	I can make marks on paper with crayons and markers. I can stack and line up blocks. I can feed myself with my fingers. I can use a spoon and can drink from a cup.
I am learning to move in new ways.	I can sit in a chair. I can pull myself up and stand by holding onto furniture. I learn to walk, first with help and then alone. Sometimes I still like to crawl. I begin dressing and undressing myself. I can push my foot into my shoe and my arm into my sleeve. I learn to walk forward, take a few steps backwards and try to climb stairs.
I Learn To Communicate and Relate	
I communicate through my expressions and actions.	I look you in the eye to get your attention and express feelings. I point to let you know what I want. I point to pictures of interesting objects, animals and people in books. I hope you will tell me about them. I may hit, kick or bite when I get too frustrated or angry. I need

	<p>you to help me learn how to express these feelings in acceptable ways.</p>
<p>I communicate using sounds and words.</p>	<p>I create long babble sentences. I use sounds other than crying to get your help. I may be able to say 2 to 10 or more words clearly.</p>
<p>I understand more than you may think much more than the words I can say.</p>	<p>I listen to you and watch you because I understand more than just words. I learn to look at a ball when you say "ball" in my home language. I can tell whether you're happy or upset from the tone of your voice and how much tension I feel in your body when you hold me.</p>

18 Months to 3 Years: Toddlers and Two-Year-Olds

I Learn Who I Am	
<p>Sometimes, I feel powerful. But independence can be scary.</p>	<p>I count on you to set clear and consistent limits that keep me safe. When I test limits, I am learning who I am and how I should behave. I am not trying to "get you" even though it may feel that way at times.</p>
<p>I feel good about myself and where I come from when my culture is reflected in my child care setting.</p>	<p>I feel I belong when you speak to me in my home language. I feel proud when I see pictures of my family and other people like me hanging on the wall. I feel safe when I see adults who care about me working together.</p>
<p>I sense how you feel about me. Your feelings help shape how I feel about me.</p>	<p>When you respect me, I respect myself. I know when you think I am good or bad, pretty or ugly and smart or dumb. I tune in carefully to your tone and words when you talk about me. Please don't talk about me as if I can't understand.</p>
<p>Sometimes I want to be big. Sometimes I want to be a baby again. And sometimes I want to be both at the same time. This is one of the reasons why my behavior is sometimes hard for you to understand. I don't understand it myself.</p>	<p>Sometimes I will walk. Other times I want a ride in the stroller. Sometimes I insist on doing things my way. Other times I want you to do things for me. Sometimes I push you away. Other times I want you to hold me close. It's O.K. - I still love you.</p>
<p>I am learning more self-control.</p>	<p>I understand more often what you expect of me. Sometimes I can stop myself from doing things I shouldn't. Sometimes I can't. I learn to control my behavior best when you give me only a few simple, clear rules to follow and are there to help me in case I forget them.</p>
I Learn About My Feelings	

<p>My feelings can be very strong.</p>	<p>I feel proud of things I make and do. I can get very frustrated and angry. I may hit, push or bite to express myself. I may be afraid of the dark, monsters and people in masks or costumes.</p>
<p>I am learning to control my feelings.</p>	<p>I am learning to use words to express my feelings. I sometimes practice how to express my feelings when I play. You show me how to treat others by the way you treat others.</p>
<p>I know you have feelings too.</p>	<p>I may rub your back to comfort you or pat your cheek. I learn how to care for others by the way you care for me. I sense when you are happy and truly there for me. It makes me feel good. I can tell when you are very sad, scared or upset. Sometimes it makes me feel sad, scared and upset too!</p>
<p>I Learn About People, Objects and How Things Work</p>	
<p>I am more aware of other children.</p>	<p>I am aware when other children are my age and sex. I am aware of skin color and may begin to be aware of physical differences. I can tell who is missing from the group when I see who is present.</p>
<p>I like to play together with other children.</p>	<p>I may pretend we are going to work or cooking dinner. I explore our environment with them, going over couches or under tables. I build block towers with them.</p>
<p>I am beginning to be aware of other children's rights.</p>	<p>I learn I don't always get my way. Sometimes I can control myself when things don't go my way. Sometimes I can't. I am learning to take turns. Sometimes I share. Sometimes it's just too hard.</p>
<p>I am becoming aware of how you respond to my actions.</p>	<p>I know when you are pleased about what I do.</p>

	I know when you are upset with me.
I learn about how the world works.	I may be able to put toys in groups, such as putting all of the toys with wheels together. I can find a familiar toy in a bag, even when I can't see it.
I Learn to Move and Do	
I can do many new things with my fingers and hands.	I turn the pages of a book. I scribble with a crayon or marker and may be able to draw shapes, like circles. I pound and squeeze clay. Sometimes I make shapes with a cookie cutter. I can thread beads with large holes. I am learning to use scissors.
I move in new ways.	I kick and throw a ball. I stand on one foot. I am learning to stand and walk on tiptoes. I may be able to walk upstairs putting one foot on each step.
I can handle many everyday routines by myself.	I am learning to eat with a spoon and fork though sometimes I use my fingers. I can dress myself in simple clothes. I can pour milk on my cereal.
I Learn to Communicate and Relate	
I have many things to tell you.	I may know up to 200 words in my home language and sometimes in a second language. I can put them together in sentences. I can tell you about things that happened yesterday and about things that will happen tomorrow. I may get frustrated when I have trouble expressing myself. Then I need you to listen patiently. It may help me if you put into words what you think I am trying to say.
I like you to read and tell me stories.	I especially enjoy stories that are about something I know.

	<p>Sometimes I may listen for a long time. Other times I may listen for just a little while. I like it when you know the difference.</p> <p>I like to join in when you tell a story. Sometimes I like to "read" or tell you a story too.</p>
<p>I play with words.</p>	<p>I like songs, fingerplays and games with nonsense words.</p> <p>My friends and I talk together as we act out scenes about serving dinner, driving a car or building a house.</p> <p>Sometimes I use an object as if it were something else. For example, I might use a block for a phone.</p>

EXAMPLE
Special Instruction
Summary Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Who was present for visit? _____

Objectives/Strategies:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Summary: _____

Strategies the family can try this week _____

Service Coordination follow-up:

Follow-up by family:

Early Interventionist Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Caregiver's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Time in: _____ Time out: _____

Our next visit is scheduled for: _____ Time: _____

The following scenario is provided as an example

This summary reflects Kim's current status, as well as provides some background as to the conversations that occurred to arrive at the identified outcomes.

Kim Doe, who is currently 17 months of age, was referred to BabyNet by David Johnson, MD, her pediatrician, in March 2003 due to failure to thrive associated with cardiac anomalies, encephalitis, microcephaly, spasticity and seizures. Kim is followed by neurology and cardiology in addition to her pediatrician. Dr. Johnson and his medical staff have been working with Kim's family regarding her nutritional needs to ensure sufficient weight gain and eventual removal of Kim's NG tube. She is currently on NG tube feeding only at night. Kim's most recent EEG showed no seizure activity; therefore, Kim is currently being weaned off her seizure medications. Kim has been receiving supports and services through BabyNet for the past year. Catchem Early has been the BabyNet Service Coordinator. Gloria Eaten OTR and Chatty Cathy SLP have been members of Kim's team. Kim has been drinking between 10-15 ounces of Pediasure per day by bottle. She is able to drink about one ounce of liquid from a spouted cup when it is held for her. She accepts a variety of foods (different tastes, different textures) by spoon and she is able to move the food around in her mouth with her tongue. Has good lip closure. Kim takes between 5-10 spoonfuls of food per meal (mostly baby food) when seated in her adapted high chair. She does not eat the same foods that her family eats during mealtime. She is starting to make munching motions. She is swallowing liquids of varying consistencies, as well as soft foods, without choking. When new textures or foods are introduced she chokes/gags initially. It is not clear if her gagging and choking is due to oral hypersensitivity as a result of her NG tube or due to neurological concerns. She can hold a spoon and wave it when it is placed in her hand; she is not yet controlling the spoon to scoop food or bring food to her mouth or to finger feed. Kim has continued to gain weight, though Mrs. Doe reports that Dr. Johnson wants Kim to gain more weight before she can come off the night feeding tube. Kim is not able to assist with dressing due to significant challenges in moving her arms and legs. She attempts to move her arms and legs when dressing but due to stiffness (spasticity) is unable to control her movements. She enjoys bath time. Kim plays by reaching for and batting toys, touching pictures and making sounds, and watching and making sounds in response to what is happening around her. Mrs. Doe described the sound as a "guttural sound in the back of her throat". She attempts to engage in imitative sound play by making throaty sounds following sounds made by others. She does not babble or make consonant sounds, which the team believes is most likely due to her NG tube since she appears to have good movement of her lips and tongue. She sometimes uses gestures and sounds to let her mom and dad know when she wants to be picked up, when she is full or doesn't like a particular food and sometimes to make choices about which book she wants to have read to her. She cries and fusses when she is not understood (and this happens several times every day). Kim is able to support her head well when in her adapted seat, when she is held either in sitting or standing supported at her trunk, and when on her tummy or side. She is able to balance momentarily when propped in the sitting position (hands on the floor or on her knees), but is not able to regain her balance or get herself into the sitting position. She lifts her head and uses her abdominals to help get to sitting when her mom assists her by providing light assistance behind her shoulder as she guides her up toward one side. Kim is able to roll by herself from her stomach to her back and with some difficulty, but by herself, she also rolls from her back to her stomach. She moves short distances forward, sideways and backwards lying on her stomach mostly by twisting her body to inch along, though she is trying to use her hands and she does push against the floor with her legs. She is motivated to move in order to get her toys although she can't move very far. Kim enjoys being with adults and other children including the children at the Rainbow Babies Playgroup in Anywhere City, South Carolina. She watches the other children, laughs, and attempts to imitate sounds they make. Kim enjoys sound play with older children and adults. She shows a

preference for toys that make sounds (by moving to, looking at and/or smiling when the toy is presented to her), especially ones that play tunes. She shows recognition of toys and objects by looking at them when they are named. Kim is reaching with both hands and is able to move objects by swiping at them. She pats pictures and bangs toys. She is able to grasp toys and other objects that are placed in her hand, but she is not able to consistently open her hand to pick up an object by herself. She does not bring toys or hands to her mouth. Has spasticity/stiffness in both arms which impacts controlled arm/hand/finger movement for fine motor skills. Conversations about the family's concerns, priorities, and resources revolved around helping Kim continue to increase her functional skills including sitting to play, eating meals with her family, sleeping through the night, and moving around by herself.

An example Outcome for Kim:

Kim will increase her ability to communicate what she wants and needs to people she comes in contact with throughout her daily activities and routines.

Measuring Progress:

Progress toward the outcome will be measured by successful or unsuccessful attainment of strategies and activities that lead toward the outcome. Parents will share with the team any increase in Kim's ability to communicate her wants, especially when Kim indicates what she wants in multiple settings.

Our team will be satisfied we are finished with this Outcome when: (criteria) Kim is able to consistently communicate what she wants to wear, play with or do regardless of where she is while with her parents, grandparents, therapist or playgroup teacher. Parents will report greater success in matching Kim's gestures/sounds to her desires.

Strategies:

- Kim's parents, grandparents and playgroup teacher will show Kim two different toys or books, and ask her to reach for or look at which one she wants to play with or read. Whichever item Kim reaches for or otherwise indicates as her choice will be named and then played with or read to her.
- Kim's parents, grandparents and playgroup teacher will give Kim a choice of two objects/activities in a variety of settings and Kim will make a choice.
- IFSP team members will provide coaching and support, as needed, on how to encourage choices in a variety of settings.

Special Instruction Summary Sheet

Name: Kim Doe Date: 8/7/04

Who was present for visit? EI(Early), Jan (Mom), and Kim

Objectives/Strategies:

1. Present two books to Kim to encourage her to reach and to make a choice between the two.
2. Read Kims' book of choice to her to encourage imitation, imagination, pre-literacy skills
3. _____

Summary: EI (Early) arrived for SI session on this date. Ms. Doe (Mom), John (Brother) and Kim were present. Mom, John, Kim and EI sat on the floor together. Mom sat behind Kim giving her support at her trunk in a seated position. John sat directly in front of Kim and presented two of her favorite books. Kim batted at the one of the books with both of her arms. EI read the book to Kim and Mom encouraged Kim to imitate certain sounds that EI read. EI encouraged Mom to place the second book in both of Kim's hands. This will encourage Kim to use both hands together to manipulate an object (bilateral coordination). EI and John clapped when Kim was able to hold the book in both hands for a few moments (with hand over hand assistance from Mom). EI encouraged Mom and John to clap with Kim when she completes a task because hand clapping is often a good motivator for children who need practice with using both hands together.

Strategies the family can try this week: Provide different items (clothes, toys etc...) to encourage Kim to make a choice and reach for the item

Service Coordination follow-up:
Mom would like an ABC Voucher
self-arranged application

Follow-up by family:

Early Interventionist Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Caregiver's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Time in: 10:30 Time out: 11:30

Our next visit is scheduled for: 8/14/04 Time: 10:30

The following domain specific strategies are provided as examples for use during special instruction and/or to hand-out to the parent/caregiver(s).

Language/communication

1. Look at the baby while talking to him/her
2. Make simple sounds with the baby (A, O, U, I) and listen for those sounds from the baby. Imitate sounds the baby makes and wait for them to make them again.
3. Read simple colorful books with your infant/toddler, everyday. Talk about the pictures on the page. Point to and label items on each page.
4. Point to and name body parts in play. Ask the toddler, "Where is your nose, eye, etc..." Encourage him/her to touch his/her nose.
5. Ask the toddler to get a single item that may be in another part of the room.
6. Continue to label everything seen and done throughout the day. Listen to the words your toddler says and show pleasure and excitement at his/her attempts to speak. You use correct pronunciation but it is not necessary to correct your toddler pronunciation at this time.
7. Model two word phrases when the child is interested in an object, food, or toy. Such as, more milk, ball please, and thank you.
8. Expand the phrases the toddler uses i.e. "big ball" to "big red ball", "mommy go" to "mommy go to work".

Motor Development:

1. Place alert infant on mat or rug in a SAFE part of the room to allow him/her to move without getting hurt, providing "tummy time".
2. Provide a variety of toys that the infant can reach for, look at, and bat at, such as an overhead "gym".
3. Provide toys that infant can easily grasp for and place in mouth. Provide items that are easy to grasp and move from one hand to another, such as rings.
4. Put baby on hands and knees with a toy just out of reach for stimulus.
5. Provide pieces of appropriate sized finger foods such as fruit or cheerios to encourage three-finger pinch.
6. Provide puzzles and items to sort. Provide containers to encourage filling and dumping.
7. Provide sturdy furniture and/or open arms to encourage a toddler to move toward you or an object.
8. Provide toddlers with large crayons and blank paper sit with him/her and talk about what they are making.
9. Encourage toddler to climb into your lap while seated. Provide low safe furniture for toddler to climb onto.
10. Play musical games that involve jumping to rhythms. Sing songs that involve the child moving fingers with the rhythm of the song.
11. Provide child with safety scissors and paper to cut (with supervision).
12. Allow toddler time and opportunity to begin to remove clothing during daily routines.
13. Allow child time to dress without being rushed.

Social/Emotional

1. Use words, facial expressions, and maintain eye contact with baby during everyday activities i.e. diaper change feeding, etc...
2. Recognize infant's signals and be responsive to them. Recognize infant's reactions and let them know that you are there for them.
3. Provide a flexible but predictable schedule, while keeping in mind that young infants have their own schedule in mind.
4. Include books, puppets, dramatic play, and role-play to allow him/her to express their feelings.
5. Provide opportunities for small group play to encourage friendships.
6. Promote cooperative play by modeling sharing and helping others in-group activities.

Cognitive:

1. Provide baby with different objects to mouth, explore and track with his/her eyes including cloth and vinyl books, mobiles and rattles.
2. Provide a variety of items/toys that makes things happen when the baby uses them.
3. Provide pots and pans, plastic container and lids and measuring cups that nest, simple rings and plastic puzzles
4. Name objects in a storybook or photographs as toddler points to them.
5. Routinely offer familiar books, toys, songs and finger plays.
6. Encourage toddler to find matching items like shoes socks, cups and plates, hat and mittens.
7. Offer opportunities to role-play daily routines such as feeding, dressing, cooking, and using the telephone.
8. Provides blocks that vary in color and shape and encourage to sort by color and shape.
9. Encourage child to make predictions by asking "why" and "what if" questions.

Healthy Minds

Nurturing Your Child's Development



*What do we really know about how a young child develops? What can parents do to best support their child's healthy development and growing brain? Some of the answers are in this series of seven **Healthy Minds** handouts. Each handout is based on findings from a report* from the National Academy of Sciences that examined the research on child and brain development to establish what is known about the early years. ZERO TO THREE and the American Academy of Pediatrics developed these handouts based on the report to coincide with well-baby check-ups. The information we offer summarizes key findings and suggests how you might be able to use these findings to nurture your own child's healthy development.*

From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development

*The report, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, was a 2 1/2-year effort by a group of 17 leading professionals with backgrounds in neuroscience, psychology, child development, economics, education, pediatrics, psychiatry and public policy. They reviewed what was known about the nature of early child development and the influence of early experiences on children's health and well-being. The study was sponsored by a number of federal agencies and private foundations.

Key findings from the report include:

- Your relationship with your child is the foundation of his or her healthy development.
- Your child's development depends on both the traits he or she was born with (nature), and what he or she experiences (nurture).
- All areas of development (social / emotional / intellectual / language / motor) are linked. Each depends on, and influences, the others.
- What children experience, including how their parents respond to them, shapes their development as they adapt to the world.

The Power of Play

Learning through play from birth to three



From day one, children are eager and determined to understand how the world works. They do this through play, using all the "tools" they have at their disposal.

Watch your child at play, and you will see the kind of concentration, passion, and creative excitement that artists and scientists bring to their projects.

An 8-week-old learns about communication and the joy of close relationships as he smiles, coos, and gurgles when his dad talks with him. A 15-month-old uses her body and mind to learn about up and down, high and low, and how strong and competent she is on a trip with grandma to the play-ground. A 3-year-old playing pretend develops her own ideas, uses her imagination, and builds friendships.

Playing with your child is not only fun, it's one of the most important ways you can nurture her development. There are no rules when it comes to play. And you don't need fancy toys. In fact, you are your child's favorite toy.

Every child is unique. Your child may have special skills or special needs. Follow your child's lead. She'll let you know what interests her. When she sees the pleasure and delight you take in her discoveries, she'll want to play more and more. Play will benefit you, too. Being spontaneous and having fun can relieve stress and create positive memories for both you and your child. And when your child is engaged and having fun, she is learning. Play is truly the work of childhood.

Young Explorers

Birth to 12 Months

Playing with your baby begins by engaging all of his senses. His eyes, ears, nose, hands, and mouth are his tools. As he grows, he learns to use his body to make discoveries. He begins to reach and grasp (watch out for long hair and dangling earrings!), which allows him to explore toys in new ways. By the time he's 9 months, he will understand cause and effect: "I push the button to make the music play." He will also understand that things he can't see still exist. This means he'll be looking for the ball that rolled behind the couch and calling for you when you leave the room. As he approaches his first birthday, he will be a great communicator, using his gestures, facial expressions, sounds, and maybe even some "words" (such as "duh" for "dog"). Before you know it, you'll have a hard time remembering when he couldn't talk.

Close-up: Using All My Senses

Marsha's four-month-old son, Jared, loves his rattle. "Let's watch it fly," Marsha suggests. She moves the rattle through the air so Jared can see it. Jared's little arms and legs go like egg-beaters! When Marsha hands the toy to Jared, he grabs it and begins to chew. Jared then shakes the rattle and delights in the soft, tinkling noise. Soon, Jared gets tired and turns his head away. Marsha takes the rattle and continues to shake it in front of Jared's face. Jared closes his eyes and begins to wail. "Okay, I get it. Time for a break," says Marsha. She picks up Jared and cuddles him.

During this playtime with mom, Jared learns about:

- **sounds of words** and the **rhythm of language** as his mom talks with him.
- **communication** as he and his mom engage in a back-and-forth "conversation" and as his mom reads and responds to his cues.
- **his own self-worth** as he sees how much pleasure his mom gets from playing with him.
- **imitation** and **cause and effect** when he shakes the rattle like mom and hears the noise.
- **hand-eye coordination** as he reaches and grasps the rattle.
- **objects** when he hears the rattle's sounds, sees its colors, feels its texture, and even smells and tastes it.

Playtime for Babies

Back and Forth

Coo and talk to your baby. You can imitate her sounds and wait for her to respond. Encourage her to copy you, too. Show her that pushing the button makes the toy dog bark or how she can turn the pages of a book.

Peek-a-Boo

Try hiding behind your hands, a diaper, or a onesie as you dress your baby. Early on, he may show his pleasure simply by paying close attention. Then he may smile, kick his legs, and make sounds. By 9 months, he may pull your hands away from your face to "find" you.

Sing and Dance

Listen to different kinds of music and dance in different ways to see what your baby likes best. Sing a favorite song that has been passed down through your family. Don't worry about the sound of your voice -- he loves to hear you.

Play Ball

Offer a ball with different colors and textures. Let your baby explore it with all her senses. Encourage her to see what else she can do with it. This will eventually help her learn to roll it, drop it in a box, and take it out again.

Your Questions

Q. My neighbor's baby loves his mobile. He kicks his arms and legs and squeals with delight. I got the same mobile for my baby, and he hates it. He turns his head away and cries every time I turn it on. What does this mean?

A. Children have different levels of tolerance. While some can handle lots of sound and movement all at once, others find that overwhelming. It sounds like your baby is telling you that this mobile is more than he can handle. Try just letting him look at it without turning on the music. When he seems to be calm and enjoying that, try gently moving it so he can see it turn. If he likes it, you can try adding the music. Slowly and sensitively introducing him to more stimulation can help him build greater tolerance over time

Movers & Shakers

12 to 24 Months

Possibilities for play grow by leaps and bounds for your young toddler. She learns to communicate better with gestures, sounds, and words. She also learns to stand on two feet and walk forwards and backwards -- even run, jump, and climb. And she's using her fingers and hands to play with and explore objects in more complex ways. Children also have preferences for how they like to explore. Some like lots of action. Others prefer more calm, quiet play. Watch and you will see the activities your child enjoys.

Toddlers are also entering the world of make-believe. They go from imitating what they see in "real life" to using their imagination. Whether in the sandbox, in the bath, or on the kitchen floor, children use their bodies and minds to learn how this big, exciting, complicated, and wonderful world works.

Close-up: Figuring it Out *Kira, 20 months, is busy with her shape sorter. When her dad, Marcus, sees that she is starting to get frustrated, he gives a little help by putting his hand on hers. "Let's turn the yellow square this way." In it goes. "Yea!" says Kira as she claps her hands, clearly pleased with her accomplishment. Marcus encourages her to try some more, "One blue circle and one green triangle to go." Kira picks up a square, shows it to her dad, and says "boo." Marcus agrees, "Yes, that's the blue circle." Kira successfully drops it in. "Good job," says Marcus, "how about a triangle?" But, Kira is ready for something new. She leaves the shape sorter and gets a book. "Are we done playing with shapes?" asks Marcus. "Okay, let's read about animals." Kira cuddles up with her dad and opens the book.*

As Kira and her dad play, she is learning about:

- **colors, numbers, and shapes** as dad names them.
- **communication and new words** as she and dad talk together while playing.
- **imitation** as she copies what dad says and does.
- **hand-eye coordination and problem solving** as she learns how to make the shapes fit into their spaces.
- **self-confidence** as she masters a new skill.
- **the joy of reading** as she and dad explore books together.
- **building close relationships** as she experiences the pleasure of sharing her discoveries with dad.

Playtime for Young Toddlers

Running, Climbing, and Action Games

Oldies but goodies like "Ring Around the Rosie" and "London Bridge" encourage children to move, sing, listen, take turns, and cooperate. The park, playground, and back yard offer chances to run, climb, and play with other children. On a rainy day, try creating an obstacle course indoors.

Let's Do It Again ...and Again ...and Again ...

Through repetition, toddlers figure out how things fit together and work. They might fill and dump a pail over and over to learn about full and empty and in and out. They may want you to read the same book, and sing the same song, night after night. This kind of repetition helps children know what to expect. This gives them a sense of security and control over their world. It also helps them master new skills, which boosts their self-confidence.

Name That Tune

Now that your child can imitate words and melodies, he'll love to sing songs and have you read books with rhyming words. Words are easier to learn when they rhyme or are put to music. See if your toddler knows the next word in the song by pausing before you sing it. Dance to the music. This is a wonderful way to exercise those arms and legs and to experience the joy of movement. Offer musical instruments so he can make his own music, too.

Busy Hands

Young toddlers love to make things work. They use their hands and fingers for pushing buttons, opening boxes, and turning pages. This allows them to do every-thing from getting the music box to play their favorite song to exploring a treasured book. Many children also like to finger paint, color, play with play dough, or squeeze water out of a sponge.

Your Questions

Q. I love that my 18-month-old wants to play with other toddlers, but there always seems to be a battle over a toy. How can I help her share?

A. Sharing is a skill that takes a lot of time and practice to develop. Most young toddlers do not know how to share. It may seem like your daughter should share because she can do other things, like understand "no" and follow some directions. However, young toddlers do not yet have self-control. And, they are still learning about the feelings of others. You can help her learn to share over time by playing turn-taking games and also by modeling how you share things with her.

Social Butterflies

24 to 36 Months

Older toddlers, with their physical abilities, problem-solving skills, and love of language, are eager for playmates. Months earlier, they may have watched others playing, or even played side-by-side with another child. Now, they are beginning to play together... sometimes even without fighting! Children with older siblings may have had a chance to practice turn-taking and other social skills. For a first or only child, however, this can be a challenge. Your toddler will develop social skills with time, practice, and your guidance.

During this third year, there is also a big leap in toddlers' ability to use their imaginations. They no longer just use their toy broom to sweep. It becomes a dance partner or a cowboy's horse. Two-year-olds often spend a lot of time in pretend play with friends. As they approach three, they begin to make up stories and "rules" for their games. Pretend play also helps children work through difficult experiences, like saying good-bye to a parent at child care.

Close-up: Pretend with Me

Tanya is watching her almost-three-year-old daughter, Maria, play with her friend Ben. They are pretending to be kittens. Mom helped them draw whiskers using her makeup. Their tails were once stockings. Maria and Ben crawl around on all fours and "meow." Tanya sets a shoebox "bowl" of imaginary milk on the floor. "You'll have to take turns like nice kitties do." Maria and Ben giggle in between slurps. Maria then notices that Ben's tail is longer. "I want the big tail!" she shouts as she grabs it. Tanya steps in, "Stop, Maria. You cannot take

Ben's tail!" Tanya decides to redirect them by suggesting they make new tails out of paper that they can decorate. Maria and Ben happily get to work.

When Tanya joins Maria and Ben in play, she helps them develop:

- **creativity** as they make their kitty costumes.
- **language skills** as they talk together while they play.
- **sharing** as they take turns "drinking" their milk.
- **self-control** as Tanya helps Maria understand limits.
- **problem-solving skills** as Tanya helps them work through the tail crisis.
- **understanding of symbols** as they use the shoebox in place of a bowl. This will help them get ready to learn skills that require symbolic thinking like reading and math.

Playtime for Older Toddlers

Family and Friends

Invite a friend over to play. Visit the neighborhood park or a cousin's home. This gives your child a chance to play in ways that expose her to many cultures. These are also great opportunities to act as your child's coach in helping her learn to share and resolve conflicts. She can learn new skills by watching other children, too.

Say It With Music

"Statue," "Freeze," and "Hokey-Pokey" are fun musical games. They offer opportunities to listen and follow directions. They also teach about words and sounds and allow children to move and exercise their bodies. Toy playing pictures, tambourines, and other instruments add to the fun.

Quiet Play

A child's play doesn't always have to be full of action. Looking at books, listening to stories, and drawing pictures all build your child's imagination and language skills. Many children enjoy playing with sand, mud, or dough. These activities can be soothing and relaxing. Providing art supplies like paper, crayons, and paints will let them create with their hands.

Act It Out

Encourage fantasy play by providing dress-up clothes and other props. Use items like hats, scarves, backpacks, bowls and containers, music makers, and whatever else you and your child can find. Join the fun. When you get involved, you can help her expand on her ideas and also learn about her thoughts and feelings as she acts them out through play.

Your Questions

Q. My 2-year-old is so shy. He won't leave my side, talk to anyone, or try anything at our new playgroup. How can I help him open up?

A. Children are born with their individual way of experiencing the world, known as their temperament. It sounds as if your son, like many kids, needs time and support to feel safe in new situations. Try talking in advance about what the new experience might be like and inviting one of the children over to play. Once you are there, explore together, talk about what the other kids are doing, and join another parent and child in an

activity. Taking a slow and sensitive approach should help your son feel more comfortable in new situations.

What you can do:

Safety First. Remember, your little explorer will need you to keep his play areas safe. Make sure toys don't have parts that fit all the way in his mouth. Get down on his level to see what he can reach. This is especially important as he learns to move. It will mean far fewer "no's," which makes everyone happier.

Watch and Wait. See what your child is trying to do. Provide just enough support for him to achieve his goal or take the next step towards a new goal. You might bring an object your newborn is staring at closer so he can explore it with his hands. Or, you may encourage your toddler to try a different space where the puzzle piece might fit when he is getting frustrated.

Follow the Leader. Some children love lots of bells and whistles; others find a lot of noise overwhelming and prefer to explore with their eyes. Some crave lots of movement, rolling, crawling, or jumping. Others are most interested in using their hands to figure out how a toy or object works. Follow her lead, and you'll discover what kinds of activities are right for her.

Join in her play. Delight in her discoveries. When learning takes place in the context of loving relationships, children become eager, lifelong learners.

See what your child is trying to do or figure out. Think about all he may be learning, such as sinking and floating when he drops different objects into the bathtub.

Present new challenges when you see he is ready. When he's learning to crawl, move a desired object a little farther away so he can experience the power and joy of movement. When he's entering the world of pretend, suggest that his stack of blocks might also become a barn for his play animals.

Be spontaneous and have fun. Playing should not feel like work. It should be a joyful, exciting time that you and your child share. So relax and enjoy yourself. Play is good for you, too.

On the Move

The Power of Movement in Your Child's First Three Years



Young children are on the move! And it's a good thing, because movement is not just important for helping children grow **physically strong and healthy**. It is also a key factor in their overall development. Through movement, children develop **good thinking and communication skills** as they explore and interact with their world. Movement also **builds self-confidence**. Children feel competent, physically and emotionally, when they use their bodies to communicate and solve problems.

Most importantly, children **develop a close bond with you through movement**. In fact, your child's desire to be close to and connect with you is what motivates her to move.

A 4-month-old excitedly kicks her arms and legs in response to the funny face dad makes, so he does it again. An 18-month-old toddles over to the shelf and brings you his favorite book to read. A 3-year-old dances across the room on tiptoes while fluttering her arms, then "lands" in mom's lap, pretending to be a baby bird snuggling into the mommy bird's nest.

When you make physical activity part of your everyday routine with your child, you are helping him take pleasure in and learn through movement. Whether you take a daily walk in the neighborhood or dance to music on the radio, your caring responses tell your child that you understand him and enjoy being with him.

Intellectual Development:

I move, I learn.

Physical activities stimulate the connection between mind and body. Children learn problem-solving skills as they try different actions—climbing up, over, in, or through.

Nine-month-old Alexa learns about object permanence — the fact that things still exist even though she can't see them—when dad encourages her to look for the ball they were playing with that rolled behind the couch.

Movement is also essential for helping children put their ideas into action to accomplish a goal. For example, an 8-month-old wants his bottle. In order to get it, he has to have a plan and then make it happen. He crawls over to his dad and pulls on his leg. He then looks over to the bottle and starts to whine. Dad picks him up and gives him his bottle. Mission accomplished.

Communication:

Watch me, and you will know how I feel and what I think.

Movement is an essential means of communication and is one of the earliest ways in which children express their thoughts and feelings.

Sixteen-month-old Abraham takes mom's hand, leads her to the kitchen, and points to the sippy cup he wants her to get for him.

Your responses to your child's movements help him learn about the back and forth of communication. This also makes him feel loved and important. Copying his facial expressions, rhythms, and body movements will encourage him to communicate more and more.

Rocking and Rolling **Birth to 12 months**

From the moment your baby is born, she connects with you and begins to learn about the world through her body and her movements. As a newborn, she will turn her head when she hears your voice. By 4 months, she will be reaching and grasping to explore and learn how objects work. She will also "talk" to you with her body as she wiggles, bends, and reaches. For example, she'll kick her arms and legs to tell you that she wants you to keep singing to her.

By the end of this first year, your baby will learn to roll, sit up, crawl, pull himself to stand, "cruise" around holding onto objects for support, and perhaps even start to walk. As he experiences his body moving, he will be strengthening his muscles. His new physical abilities will also allow him to master important concepts like *cause and effect*. "If I shake this rattle, it will make a noise." "If I push up onto my hands and knees, I can crawl to Grandma." By watching your child, you can learn what kinds of movement he likes and how you can best support his development through movement

Your Questions

Q. My 10-month-old is like a little sitting Buddha! He's the only kid in our playgroup who doesn't move around. He just likes to sit and watch. How can I get him moving more?

A. There is wide variation in young children's activity levels. Some crawl and walk early; others do so much later, preferring to explore with their eyes and hands instead of their bodies. It is important to understand and respect your child's ability and interest in movement. The key to getting your child to enjoy moving is to engage him in more action-oriented activities, and to connect these activities with something he already enjoys. For example, if he likes to look at books, read books that encourage movement. You can pretend to move like a dog or swim like a duck. Get on the floor with your child; he will want to move if it means he can play with and be close to you. Place a favorite toy at the end of the room and have a "race" to see who can get to it first. If you continue to be concerned about your baby's ability to move, talk with his doctor.

Movement activities for you and your baby

Tummy Time: Spending time on her belly helps your baby develop coordination between her upper and lower body. This supports her muscle and motor development. Lie down with your baby face-to-face and play "peek-a-boo," pushing your hands against the floor as you lift your head. You can support your baby's chest to encourage her to push up, too. As she gets more comfortable on her stomach, she'll begin to enjoy playing with toys from this position.

Follow the Leader: Watch how your baby moves and listen to the sounds he makes. Use your head, hands, or

voice to follow his movements. Speed up and slow down, make your actions stronger or softer, as he does. Babies love to see you imitate them. It makes them feel important.

Dance Together: Put on different types of music and move to the beat with your baby in your arms. Change your actions to match the mood and beat of the music. Many babies like going from being on the floor to way up high. They also like to sway, roll, bounce, clap, stretch, waltz, glide, or turn!

Group Dance: Gather a group of friends together and make a circle. With babies in your arms, step into the middle and back out, gallop around in a circle and back again. Finish by gently swinging babies up high so they can see each other. Babies will love to see the expressions on other children's faces and hear their squeals of delight.

Ready, Set, Go!

12 to 24 months

Toddlers' sense of independence and self-confidence grow as they progress from standing to walking and running. The more they move, the more they learn.

Watching your toddler's actions will help you know what she is discovering. She learns about *size* and *shape* as she sees that she can fit her body into one cardboard box but not another. She learns about *up* and *down* on the swing. Movement helps toddlers' budding imaginations blossom. By imitating activities they see going on around them, toddlers expand their understanding of the world. For example, they may march around banging a drum like the musicians in a parade.

Toddlers also use their bodies as a tool for communicating with and relating to you. They start with simple gestures, like pointing. By 15 to 18 months, their movements will become more complex. For example, your child may take your hand, walk you to the family room, and point to the shelf where his favorite book sits. By the time your child is 24 months old, he will be a great communicator, learning many new words and phrases to add to his gestures. When you join your toddler's adventures and engage in lively discussions with him, you are building a strong bond with him and nurturing his self-esteem.

Your Questions

Q. My toddler seems to need to be in constant motion. I, on other hand, prefer quiet activities like reading and doing art projects. What can I do to keep both of us happy?

A. You've taken the most important first step, which is to acknowledge the difference and to appreciate that neither your way nor hers is right or wrong, just different. There are several things you can do to respect both your styles. Support what she prefers by, for example, letting her stand for a diaper change or getting down from her highchair when she's finished eating. Create a safe place in the house where you don't have to constantly chase after her. Invite other active toddlers over to play. You can also join in your daughter's play without being so active yourself! Clap out a beat as she runs around the yard. Make a cape out of an old sheet and color it in together. Then tie it around her and watch her prance like a flying horse, flutter like a butterfly princess, or leap around like a superhero.

Movement activities for you and your young toddler

Move & Groove: Encourage your toddler to use her body and move freely to any type of music. Watch how your child moves and what types of music she prefers. Children this age often do not change their movements to match the music, but rather will respond to their own internal rhythm.

Describe your Child's Actions: Describe the details of your child's actions as he dances to the music. "Look how you are bouncing your body to the beat. I see how you like to bob your head up and down when you dance." This not only helps him learn new words but also instills a sense of pride that his actions are noticed!

Set Up an Obstacle Course: Create a course that encourages your toddler to use a variety of skills. Set up boxes that she can crawl through, pillows that she can climb on, and blocks that she can run around. Young children enjoy using their bodies in different ways. Place yourself somewhere near or partially hidden within the course to add an element of surprise and fun. Doing the course over and over again also helps your child learn to organize her actions to reach a goal.

Engage in Finger Play: Songs like *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* and *The Wheels on the Bus* can help develop the use of fingers and hands (fine motor skills). As she grows, these skills will help her learn to write, button a shirt, and tie a shoelace.

Look at Me Now! **24 to 36months**

Between ages 2 and 3, children begin to gain more and more control of their bodies. Climbing, swinging, crawling, spinning, sliding, bouncing, and jumping are endless sources of fun that help children build strong bodies and develop an understanding about what they can do by putting their bodies to work. Through their explorations, they continue to learn all sorts of concepts -- *up and down, in and out, over and under*.

Toddler play becomes filled with complex stories. Young children include real and imaginary friends in their play, turn ordinary objects into make-believe treasures, and act out familiar scenes. Two pillows leaning together can become a triangle bridge to push the toy train up, over, and down on the way to the station. By acting out tales with their favorite adults and friends, 2-year-olds develop new ideas and learn how the world works. By adding their own imaginative details, they show what they are enjoying about their world. Activities at this age should provide children with experiences that tap into their natural curiosity and encourage creative self-expression.

Your Questions

Q. My daughter has always been very physically active, but since she turned 2, she seems to be more aggressive. She sometimes pushes and hits other children on the playground. What can I do?

A. This is a tough issue for many parents of 2-year-olds. It is important to remember that older toddlers are still more likely to use actions, instead of words, to express their feelings. Your daughter may know what she wants, but may not know the words to say it. Or she may have the words but may not yet be able to explain her feelings. Aggressive actions such as biting and hitting may be her way of expressing her frustration. You can help your child by creating safe places for physical play and for redirecting those strong feelings. Teach

her the words for these feelings. "You feel angry! Show me how angry you are in a way that isn't hurtful." Then build a pile of pillows together to roll on and punch. Kick a ball hard outside in the yard. Remember, children repeat behaviors as a way to test the results. A consistent response from you will help her learn what is not allowed and what is okay.

Movement activities for you and your older toddler

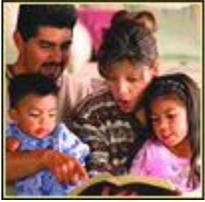
Take Me Out to the Playground: The playground is a rich learning opportunity for children. In the sandbox, offer your child different size pails and shovels to help her practice using her fingers and hands. Crawling through tunnels will teach her about in and out. She'll learn about up and down on the slide. Play with balls of all sizes. Figure out together which ones are best to kick, throw, play catch with and roll on.

Put It All Together: Play a game with your 2-year-old where he has to plan a series of actions to accomplish a goal. For example, "Can you find your blue shoes?" He has to go to his room, open the closet door, find the shoes, and bring them back to you. This helps your child learn how to put his ideas into action, which also builds his self-confidence.

Act It Out: Act out stories using movement and dance. Good themes include: animal stories; marching bands and instruments; everyday activities like taking a walk or cleaning house; nature scenes (for example, wind and rain); and fantasy images such as fairies and superheroes. Once the story is finished, select music that fits the theme and have your child create her own dance. Watch to see what parts of the story she remembers and likes best.

Name That Movement: Clap out the rhythm of your child's name as you sing hello to her. Then have her dance as you sing her name, following the flow of the sounds; or stomp her name as you clap out the rhythm.

Getting Ready for School Begins at Birth How to Help Your Child Learn in the Early Years



School Readiness

Most parents watch proudly as their 5-year-old grabs her backpack and heads out the door to her first day of kindergarten—her “official” start into the world of education and learning. Few might imagine that their child has actually been preparing for this day since she first opened her eyes.

With so much emphasis today on preparing children for school, parents are eager to know how they can help their young children learn. This booklet is designed to help you understand what you can do to get your baby or toddler off to the best start by using your **everyday interactions** to teach the basic skills she will need to cooperate, get along with others, and be an enthusiastic learner.

Children are born ready to learn. Children are naturally curious beings who are motivated to make sense of the world around them. The brain is the only organ that is not fully formed at birth. During the first 3 years, trillions of connections between brain cells are being made. *A child's relationships and experiences during the early years greatly influence how her brain grows.*

Children learn best through their **everyday experiences with the people they love and trust, and when the learning is fun.**

Remember, children develop at their own pace and in their own way. If your child's development is delayed, you can adapt the information in this brochure to meet your child's individual needs. If you are at all concerned about your child's development, consult a health care provider.

NOTE: Kindergarten teachers report that a child's social and emotional “literacy”—the development of self-control, respect for others, a sense of confidence and competence—is vital for success in kindergarten. Without these skills, children are at a greater disadvantage in school.

~ Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1994.

To become eager learners, children need to develop skills in four key areas:

Language and Literacy Skills

Language provides the foundation for the development of literacy skills. Learning to communicate through gestures, sounds, and words increases a child's interest in—and later understanding of—books and reading. **Talking, reading aloud, and singing** all stimulate children's understanding and use of language, and help them learn to become good communicators and eager readers.

Thinking Skills

Children are born with a need to understand how the world works. They start by making basic associations such as, "I call out, dad comes." As they grow, they develop more and more complex ways of figuring things out. In their everyday experiences, children use and develop an understanding of math concepts, such as **counting and sorting** and **problem-solving skills** that they will need for school. For example, a 2-year-old figures out that she needs to get one more cookie because another friend has come to the snack table.

Self-Control

Self-control—the ability to express and manage emotions in appropriate ways—is essential for success in school and healthy development overall. It enables children to **cooperate with others**, to **cope with frustration**, and to **resolve conflicts**. Young children learn these skills through interactions with others and guidance from you.

Self-Confidence

When children feel competent and believe in themselves, they are more willing to take on new challenges, a key ingredient for school success. Self-confidence is also crucial for **getting along with others** and working out the many social challenges—such as **sharing**, **competition**, and **making friends**—that children face in school settings. Self-confident children see that other people like them and expect relationships to be satisfying and fun.

Birth to 12 Months

Language & Literacy

Newborns use their gestures, sounds, and facial expressions to communicate feelings and needs such as hunger, fatigue, or joy, or to let you know that they need a break from interacting or playing. Early on, babies start to engage in "conversations"—first with back-and-forth cooing and smiling, later by using their movements and sounds to express what they feel and want.

Talk together. Copy your baby's sounds and encourage her to imitate you. She will start by making specific sounds such as "ohs" and "ahs" and progressing to "puh," "buh," "da," and "ma." At around 6 to 9 months, she may begin putting sounds together like "dada" and "baba." You can help make these sounds meaningful by repeating and attaching meaning to them. "Dada gave you a big hug!"

Share books. It's never too early to start sharing books with your baby. Let him explore them in whatever way he likes. Offer chunky board, cloth, or soft bath books for chewing and gumming. Good books for babies are simple ones with brightly colored designs and pictures of things and people that are familiar to them. They really enjoy lift-and-flap books as well. Follow your baby's lead; this may sometimes mean staying on the same page the whole time or "reading" the book upside down!

Thinking Skills

In this first year, babies are learning very important early math and logic concepts. They learn about *cause*

and effect when they push a button to make the toy car move. They learn about *size* and *shape* and how to solve problems when they figure out that one ball fits into the bucket but another doesn't. They learn about *gravity* when they drop a spoon from the high chair and watch to see where it lands. They learn "*object permanence*"—that *things they can't see still exist* when they play peek-a-boo or crawl into the next room to find you.

Encourage your child to explore objects and toys in different ways. Touching, banging, shaking, and rolling help children learn about how things work. Talk with your child about what he is doing. "You got the truck to move by pulling the string!"

Make everyday activities "teachable moments." For example, bathtime is a fun time to learn basic math and science concepts. Filling and dumping out cups help children learn about *empty* and *full*, and *in* and *out*. When your child makes the rubber duck splash in the tub, she learns about *cause and effect*. When the duck stays on top of the water, she is learning about *floating* and *sinking* and the difference between liquids and solids.

Self-Control

Babies have very little self-control. They naturally act on thoughts and feelings without the ability to stop themselves. With your sensitive guidance, they can begin learning to manage their feelings and actions.

Help your child to soothe herself. The calmer she feels, the more in control she will be. Babies have different ways of calming down. Some need lots of physical contact, such as rocking or hugging; others prefer to be swaddled or put down for a minute. *You teach your child to calm herself by staying calm yourself when she loses control.* This helps her feel safe.

Teach acceptable behaviors. Tell and show your child what he *can* do, not only what he's *not* allowed to do. If he's throwing balls around the house, give him an empty trash can to drop them into, or take him outside and show him where he *can* play with the ball. This helps him learn right from wrong and to channel his energy and interests in acceptable ways as he grows—a key ingredient in school success.

Self-Confidence

Children need a strong sense of security to develop self-confidence. Comforting your baby, responding to his cries and needs, talking and playing with him—all make him feel secure, as well as loved and important. Feeling secure also makes it easier for him to transition to school because he knows that you'll always be there for him. Another way to build your child's self-confidence is by providing him the support he needs to accomplish a task, rather than simply doing it for him.

Establish routines with your child. Most children feel safe, confident, and in control of their world when events are predictable—when they happen in approximately the same way at the same time each day. Indeed, going to school requires following many routines!

Do it again and again and again. Children need lots of practice doing things over and over again to succeed at a new skill. Think of the pride a baby feels when she can finally grasp the rattle and put it into her mouth by herself.

12-24 Months

Language & Literacy

In the second year, toddlers become more effective communicators. They use a combination of their gestures and sounds to let you know what they are thinking and feeling. They may take your hand and walk you to the sink as if to say, "Please get me a drink." Most children are learning and saying many new words, and at around 18 months they start putting a few together, such as "More milk." By 24 months, most children can say approximately 200 words.

Talk together. Point out and name the things you see together. Ask what it is, then wait a few seconds until you offer the answer. This gives your child a chance to respond and show you what he knows. Research shows that the more parents talk with their children, the bigger the children's vocabularies.

Share books together. Let him hold the book. Point to the pictures as you read together. Ask him to point to the baby, house, or dog. You can start to read stories that introduce ideas such as: *up/down* or *big/little*, *colors*, and *numbers*. Most children are also just beginning to learn to sing. Share books that can be sung, such as "Wheels on the Bus." Soon he'll be "reading"—telling you the story as he turns the pages.

Thinking Skills

Toddlers are like little scientists. They are eager to figure out how everything works. For example, they might throw a ball to the ground and see that it bounces, then throw a doll to see what it will do. They also learn to use objects as tools—for example, using a stick to try to get an out-of-reach toy. Their growing memory is also an important tool in helping them learn. For example, they imitate what they see others do. Although your toddler may not repeat what you show her immediately, she may do it at a later time.

Follow your child's lead. Toddlers can learn almost any concept through their everyday activities. If your child loves to be active, she will learn about *fast* and *slow*, *up* and *down*, and *over* and *under* as she plays on the playground. If she prefers to explore with her hands, she will learn the same concepts and skills as she builds with blocks.

One more time! Toddlers like to repeat actions over and over again. This strengthens the connections in the brain that help children master new skills. Provide interesting and challenging objects and activities that encourage her to figure something out—such as blocks, puzzles, water, and sand.

Self-Control

Toddlers have minds of their own and strong feelings that they express with gusto. "No!" becomes a favorite word and a powerful way to assert their independence. At the same time, toddlers can become easily frustrated because there are still many things that they want to do but cannot. Routines are especially helpful now since they make children feel secure at a time when they can feel very out of control.

Teach your child limits. Setting consistent limits makes children feel safe because the limits help them know what to expect. A child who has her crayons taken away when she writes on the wall learns that she either writes on paper or she can't use crayons.

Label and validate your child's feelings. Letting children know that their feelings are understood helps them calm down and regain control. This doesn't mean you give in to their demand. "I know you are mad that we had to leave the park, but hitting me is not okay. You can hit this pillow instead." Giving a child choices is also important for helping her feel in control—that she has some say in the matter. Let her make decisions about what to wear or what to eat, within reasonable limits.

Self-Confidence

Most toddlers are eager to establish their independence. But they still need to know that their loved ones are always there for them as a "safe base." This knowledge enables them to explore and learn. Accomplishing tasks "All by myself!" is also an important way children build self-confidence and are successful in school.

Let your child be the problem-solver. Be your child's coach. Give her the support she needs to solve a problem but don't solve it for her. Suggest she try other holes where the triangle shape might fit instead of putting it in for her. This makes her feel confident to take on challenges and learn new things.

Provide challenges. Watch to see what skills your child has learned and then help her take the next step. If she can easily push the buttons on the pop-up toy, offer her a new one that has more complicated ways to make the toys appear. If she is building towers with blocks, suggest that the blocks can also be a house for her stuffed animals. This helps her learn about pretend play.

24-36 months

Language & Literacy

Language development soars at this age. By 36 months, a child's vocabulary is much larger, and he is able to put together simple three- to five-word sentences. Most children are beginning to understand the meaning of stories; this is critical for learning to read and write. Drawing and "writing" also help children express their feelings and ideas in a more active way and build good writing skills later. Encourage your child to experiment with crayons, markers, and pencils. Have her help make a grocery list. This helps her to connect language with the written word.

Talk together. Talk with your toddler about everything! The more you talk, the more words she will learn. Tell each other stories. Singing with your child is also a terrific way to teach children new words and ideas. Play games by trying new words in a familiar song, "The itsy bitsy doggie..." Remember, your child will actually understand more than she can say and will follow simple instructions like, "Go to the kitchen and get your cup."

Share books together. Older toddlers begin to make connections between symbols in books and what they see in their world. For example, you may see them point to a dog outside and call him "Clifford." When reading, point to pictures and ask your toddler what he thinks is happening. Children this age love books that tell simple stories and have simple rhymes that they can memorize. Books about counting, the alphabet, shapes, or sizes—as well as those with humor and songs—are favorites.

Thinking Skills

The ability to pretend marks a big leap in the development of thinking skills. When children pretend, it means that they understand symbols—that a block can become a car, a shoebox can become a home for stuffed animals, and eventually, that a word stands for a thing or an idea. Understanding symbols is a vital stepping stone to the later ability to create ideas. This is important for the development of skills such as math, logic, and creativity. In fact, it is around this age that children are beginning to understand how things are logically connected. That's why it seems that every other word they speak is ... "Why?"

Encourage your child's growing imagination. It's important to allow your toddler to take the lead in your playtime; let him be the "director." This helps him develop his own ideas. It also strengthens his thinking skills as he makes logical connections in his stories: "The dog has to go back in his house because it's raining." Offer him props to help him act out the stories he's creating.

Incorporate math games into your everyday routines. Count as you climb the stairs. Ask if there are enough crackers for everyone. Help her put the socks in one pile and the shirts in another as you do laundry.

Self-Control

Older toddlers are often unable to stop themselves from acting on their desires. Again, acknowledging their feelings and suggesting other ways that they can express themselves is still the best response at this age. As they grow, encourage them to think about what else they can do—making music by banging on a pot instead of the table. The ability to substitute an acceptable action for one that is not is essential for functioning well in school.

Give choices. Present him with two acceptable options and let him choose: "Would you like to brush your teeth or put on your pajamas first?" If a decision is really yours, don't offer a choice. Say, "It's bed time," not "Are you ready to go to bed?"

Help your child learn to wait. Waiting helps children learn self-control. And it teaches them that others have needs, too. Make it short, and give your child something to do in the meantime. Also, playing with friends offers many opportunities to help your child learn to wait, to share, and to take turns. With your guidance and lots of practice, your child will be well equipped to work out conflicts with his school pals later on.

Self-Confidence

Two-year-olds are very capable people. Naturally, they want to do more for themselves—like brushing their hair or getting dressed on their own. This makes them feel strong, confident, and independent—key ingredients for school success.

Give your child responsibilities. Children this age love to help out and feel great pride when they can show you how they feed pets or water plants. Be specific about what you want them to do. "Please pick up your blocks," instead of, "Let's clean up the room." Also, be specific about what your child accomplished: "You put the toys in the box. Good job!" This will help him later when he is asked to perform many "jobs" around the classroom.

Encourage your child to ask for help. Let your child know that you see she's struggling and ask what kind of help she wants. "Getting shoes on can be so hard! Sometimes opening up the laces can make it easier. Can I help you loosen them?" This helps her learn to ask for help. Let her see that you sometimes need help, too.

Choosing the right toy....

AblePlay™ is a toy rating system and website that provides comprehensive information on toys for children with special needs so parents, special educators, therapist and others can make the best choices for the children in their lives with disabilities.

AblePlay web cite- <http://www.ableplay.org>

Choosing toys can be difficult. There are thousands of choices but finding just the right match for a child with varying abilities can be a challenge. Getting "beyond the box" to understand the product features, ways it can be adapted, unconventional ways to use the items, even knowing how many pieces in box can be the key to unlocking the magic of play for a child.

Professionals serving children with special needs have their expertise to guide them but oftentimes they lack the time to search for the best products. Many professionals have told us that they want to find the best toys out there, toys that are new to the market. This resource helps them find those items without searching stores or web browsers. AblePlay™ does all of the work.

AblePlay™ breaks down information into disability categories-physical, sensory communicative and cognitive - in order to help parents and professionals get more customized information. **The AblePlay Rating™ gives a snapshot of an evaluated toy. The comprehensive [AblePlay™ Product Reviews](#) give a great wealth of information about the product and its use for children with special needs.**

Developed by the [National Lekotek Center](#), the leading nonprofit authority on play for children with disabilities, AblePlay™ will provide parents, and the professionals who work with them, access to the most useful, product-specific information about the top play and learning products for children with disabilities.

Resource web cites

Department of Disabilities and Special Needs- <http://web.ddsn.sc.gov>

Training for Early Childhood Solutions- <http://sc.edu/tecs>

National Early Childhood TA Center- <http://www.nectec.org>

Able Play- <http://www.ableplay.org>

Zero to three- <http://www.zerotothree.org>

National Down Syndrome Society- <http://www.ndss.org>

United Cerebral Palsy- <http://www.ucp.org>

National Autism Society- <http://www.autism-society.org>

National Organization for Rare Diseases- <http://www.rarediseases.org>

Ready at Five- <http://www.readyatfive.org>

Definitions

Acronym: A word from the initial letter or letters of a name or series of words (see list on page 27).

Adaptive Development: Skills that children learn that allow them to take care of themselves and become independent (i.e., feeding and dressing).

Age Equivalency (A.E.): The age level, in months, at which your child is performing various tasks and activities.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ): A screening tool used with children that also contains a parent questionnaire.

Assessment: The ongoing procedures used in all five domain areas that identify the strengths and needs of the eligible child along with the family's concerns, priorities and resources related to the child, and the services necessary to meet these needs.

BabyNet Partnering Agencies: The State Departments of Disabilities and Special Needs, Health and Environmental Control/Maternal and Child Health, Education, Health and Human Services, Insurance, Mental Health, and Social Services; Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant Head Start and the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

BabyNet Service Provider (BNSP): Individuals who are staff of BabyNet partnering agencies or who are under contract with BabyNet to support implementation of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Cognitive Skills: The mental thinking process including learning and problem solving skills.

Collaboration: Working together in a cooperative manner as a team of equals toward the same objective (more than simply cooperation).

Community-Based: The philosophy that services should be available in a family's community, and that children and families should have the opportunity to be a part of their community and neighborhood.

Consultation - consult: An appointment when child and parents meet with the direct service provider and/or specialist to observe and discuss the child's progress or future goals.

Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBA): assessments of the developmental domains of gross motor, fine motor, language/communication, social-emotional development, cognition, and self-help/adaptive skills intended for interdisciplinary use and that provide detailed instructions for teaching these skills. Assessment and curriculum includes adaptations/modifications.

Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA) Provider: BabyNet Service Providers whose agency has agreed to provide curriculum-based assessments or who are contracted by BabyNet to provide these assessments.

Developmental Delay: A child's functioning level is below that of most other children of the same age.

Domains: The areas of development that address physical, cognitive, communication, social- emotional and adaptive development.

BabyNet System: A statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Eligibility: Meeting the criteria that have been established in South Carolina to qualify for Services.

Evaluation: The procedures used to determine whether a child is eligible for services under South Carolina's definition and eligibility criteria.

Expressive Language: What a child says or does to communicate with other people.

Fine Motor Skills: Small muscle development and eye-hand coordination (i.e., stacking blocks, scribbling, etc.).

Gross Motor Skills: Large muscle development (i.e., crawling, walking, climbing, etc.)

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): Both a process and a written document that considers the family's priorities, concerns and resources in regard to their infant or toddler with delays from birth to age 3. This information, along with input from additional evaluation and assessment, is formalized into a plan of services and support for the child and family in their natural environment by the IFSP's Team, which includes parents.

Informed Consent: Understanding and providing written permission for what is available and proposed, the implication(s) that services have for a child, options available to the family, family rights and consequence of consent and/or refusal of consent.

Intake Meeting: First meeting with the BabyNet Intake Service Coordinator during which child and family history, strengths, needs, information and concerns are shared.

Natural Environment: Home and community settings in which children and families without disabilities would participate.

Outcome: A statement of what family members want to see happen for their child or themselves. It can focus on any area of child development or family life that a family feels is related to its ability to enhance the child's development.

Part C Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The section of the federal law that describes how early intervention (birth to 3) services have to be provided.

Personal/Social Skills: Behaviors that indicate a child's awareness of self, others and the particular situation he or she is in; the social interaction and play skills with others.

Procedural Safeguards: Legal protection available to children and their parents to protect their rights in dealing with agencies and service providers. What the child hears and understands; comprehension of spoken and nonverbal language.

Receptive Expressive Emergent Language Scale (REELS): An informant-based test (parent or teacher supplies information about what the child does). Measure the language skills of the child between the ages of birth and 3 years.

Release of Information: Written permission signed by the parent/guardian allowing verbal and written communication between agencies, providers, doctors, school, etc., for coordination of child and family services.

Rescreen: A recheck of skill levels after a period of time to determine a child's recent growth, achievement and development

Screening: A developmental check to determine if a more in-depth evaluation is necessary.

Sensory Integration: The process of the brain organizing and integrating touch, movement, body awareness, sound and the pull of gravity. Evaluation is done by an occupational or physical therapist trained in sensory integrative theory.

Service Coordination: The activities carried out by the Service Coordinator to assist and enable an eligible child and the child's family in receiving services that are authorized to be provided under South Carolina's Early Intervention Services System and which ensure procedural safeguards and protection of rights.

Service Providers: Individuals who have met or are working to meet the state's qualification requirements and service standards and who provide one or more Early Intervention services as designated on the IFSP.

Transition: The movement of a child within and from the Early Intervention Services System. Including, but are not limited to, transitions as children move in and out of hospitals, enrollment in the school system, change of service providers, change in location or method of service delivery and relocation from one geographic area to another.

Total Communication: Using sign language, adaptive communication and spoken words to develop language skills.

Acronyms

Throughout your time in Early Intervention (EI), you will run across many acronyms through reading and verbal communication. This list contains the most common acronyms used in EI.

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ADD: Attention Deficit Disorder

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASQ-SE: Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social/Emotional

CNS: Central Nervous System

CP: Cerebral Palsy

DB: Decibel (Hearing level)

DD: Developmental Disabilities

DHEC: Department of Health and Environmental Control

DDSN: Disabilities and Special Needs

EC: Early Childhood

EEG: Electroencephalogram

EI: Early Intervention

EKG: Electrocardiogram

EOB: Explanation of Benefits

FAPE: Free and Appropriate Public Education

FAS: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

FSP: Family Service Plan

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP: Individual Education Program

IFSP: Individualized Family Service Plan

LEA: Local Education Agency

LRE: Least Restrictive Environment

OSEP: Office of Special Education Program

OT: Occupational Therapist or Therapy

OTA: Occupational Therapy Assistant

P&A: Protection and Advocacy

PA: Personal Attendant

PEDS: Parent Evaluation of Developmental Status

PL 94-103: Developmental Disabilities Act of 1975

PL 94-142: Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975

PL 93-112: Rehabilitation Act of 1973- Federal Legislation that expanded federally funded rehabilitation services to persons with severe disabilities

PT: Physical Therapist or Therapy

PTA: Physical Therapy Assistant

REELS: Receptive Expressive Emergent Language Scale

SCSDB: South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind

SC: Service Coordination

SI: Special Instruction

SLP: Speech/Language Pathologist

SSA: Social Security Administration

SSDI: Supplemental Security Disability Income

SSI: Supplemental Security Income

TBI: Traumatic Brain Injury

TTY: Teletypewriter

TITLE XX: Section of the Social Security Act-Social Services

WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children-DHS Program

A special thanks to...

**National Lekotek Center: 3204 West Armitage Ave., Chicago. IL 60647
773.276.5164 fax 773.276.8644 Toy Resource Helpline: 800.366play
lekotek@lekotek.org**

**ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families
2000 M Street, NW, Suite 200
http://www.zerotothree.org/ztt_parentAZ.htmlshington, DC 20036**