

Caring for Babies and Toddlers

◦ ◦ ◦ . *Helpful Hints & Tips* . ◦ ◦ ◦

A Publication of the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
Growing, Learning and Caring Project

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Throughout this publication the following terms will be used to refer to different stages in children's development:



**Young
Infants**
(0-8 months)



**Older
Infants**
(6-18 months)



Toddlers
(16-36 months)

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FAMILIES



Welcoming Families

Taking care of other people's children opens the door to a world of new experiences. Whether they stay for many years or are just passing through, each family brings its own perspective. Sharing the care of children requires trusting relationships, which takes time and effort to build. Each family is unique. Some families have two parents and a child living under one roof; others live with an "extended" family of several generations or a "blended" family with members from different marriages or relationships. Now, there are many single parents with an increasing number of single fathers. The parents may be teens, older parents, grandparents, foster or adoptive guardians, gay, lesbian or multiethnic; they may be relatives, friends or neighbors. All families deserve acknowledgement and respect.

- Providers can get to know the families by learning about the family composition, the roles of the family members (e.g., caregiving, decision-making), their routines, values and expectations.
- Families can get to know their children's caregivers by having conversations about their routines, values and expectations.
- Open, clear communication is essential for families and caregivers to develop relationships based on trust.
- Ongoing dialogue is particularly important when the caregivers are relatives or friends of the family. Open, clear communication helps to dismiss assumptions and clarify expectations.
- Taking the time to exchange information about the children's care, progress or behavior when they arrive, when they leave, or during scheduled periodic appointments promotes dialogue with families.
- Inviting family members to share their special talents or skills (e.g., sewing, carpentry, storytelling) helps the families stay involved in the children's care.

Supporting Families

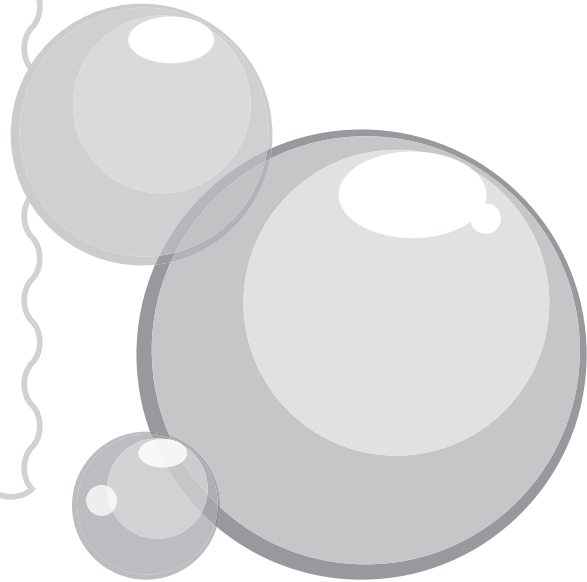
Assuming the role of a parent changes everything in one's life. Many parents admit that they were not prepared for parenthood. It takes time to adjust. The brief parental leave in this country makes child care necessary before most parents are emotionally ready to part with their child. Many new parents return to work exhausted from night-time waking and feedings. Some are experiencing postpartum depression. Parents welcome sensitivity and guidance.

Parenting may be a difficult job at times, even for those parents who are experienced. Parents grow and develop with their children. Each child is different, and each stage of children's development brings new challenges. Parents may be in a different stage of their own lives when children come to them. Older parents may be seasoned, first time parents, adoptive parents or grandparents. Teen parents may have supportive parents, critical parents or they may have no support at all; they may need a mentor. Parents and caregivers can learn from each other as they share the care of children.

- The pain of separation was described by one parent as “worse than labor!” Although caregivers may feel confident with the transition to child care, it can be a traumatic experience for parents and children.
- Parents may worry that child care will disrupt their close connection with their children, and the children will feel abandoned. Parents may also fear that the children will love the caregivers more.
- Different children have different responses to their parents' return. Some are excited to see them, while others may cry.
- Caregivers can be a hub of information and activity that supports families. Sharing a common language and culture can be an important link. Sometimes, however, families may benefit from services in the community.

Tips to Support Parents before Child Care Begins

- Inquire about previous experiences of parent and child separation.
- Allow parents to visit anytime.
- Start the child with short days and gradually lengthen, if possible.
- Ask about the use of a transitional object (e.g., blanket , soft toy).



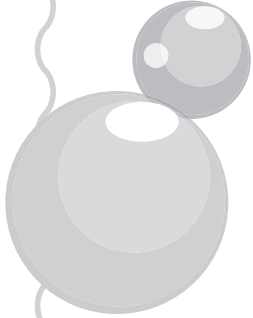

Tips to Provide Ongoing Parent Support

- Compliment the parents' care: "Ricky smells so nice and clean."
- Accommodate mothers who want to continue breast-feeding.
- Help parents read the children's cues: "You're rubbing your eyes. Are you tired?"
- Notice children's gestures toward parents: "Look at that special smile for mama."
- Invite parents to share their joys and concerns about their children.
- Highlight positive parent-child interactions: "He loves it when you...."
- Set the stage for parents to discover special milestones: "I think he's ready for his first step. Let's see him go towards mama."
- Share songs or games that parents can do with children.





Tips to Support Parents after Child Care Begins

- Be sensitive to parents' feelings of sadness, loss or guilt. For example, "It must be difficult to leave your child" is a more supportive statement than "Don't worry, she'll probably only cry for a few minutes."
 - Invite parents to share their feelings about someone else caring for their children.
 - Encourage parents to say "goodbye" before they leave.
 - Have children clean and ready by the time parents arrive.
 - Time children's feeding so that mothers can nurse when they arrive.
 - Plan end-of-the-day activities that are easy to finish.
 - Invite parents to join children at the end-of-day for singing or dancing.
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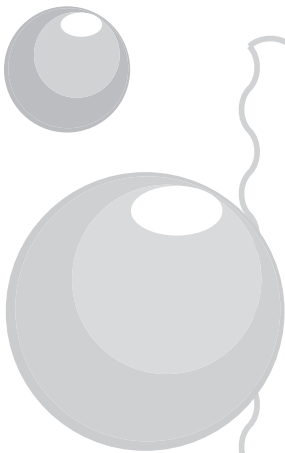
Tips to Help Children Adapt to New Siblings

- Help toddlers notice infants: "She's crying. Maybe she needs a bottle."
- Guide them on how to touch gently. Practice on dolls and stuffed animals.
- Read picture books about siblings and families.
- Look at baby photos and tell stories about when the children were born.
- Comfort children during the separation when mom goes to the hospital.
- Encourage children to make a drawing or painting of the new sibling and family.



Tips to Help Children Adapt When a Sibling Comes Home

- Use the child's name instead of "the baby."
- Allow mixed feelings. Don't expect loving feelings all the time. Expect some resentment, moodiness and possibly some regression. Toddlers may want to be held. They may be too big to carry, but they can always get a hug.
- Talk about things the older child can do (e.g., play ball, paint, go down the slide).
- Engage toddlers in conversations not related to the new sibling.



Respecting Families

With increasing diversity in the United States, child care can be an interesting mix of people. It can also be a challenge. We have a tendency to view our own cultural group as the norm. It takes self-awareness to not impose our own values or make assumptions about other people. There are great variations in families from the same country, as they may be from different regions, class, religions or generations. Each family has ideas and values about how to raise children.

- Cultures vary in how information is valued. For example, the expression of feelings may be valued as honest statements or considered self-indulgent when group harmony is more important than one's own emotions; asking questions may be seen as an interest and desire for clarity or as an impolite insinuation that the speaker was not clear; making eye contact or touching someone may be seen as a friendly gesture or as a disrespectful or uncomfortable intrusion.
- Cultures vary in how information is communicated. For example, it may be done in a very formal manner or in a casual, informal way; the tone of voice, the pace and the volume may vary; the focus of attention may be on individual accomplishments or on group efforts; a nod may mean agreement or just acknowledgement that the speaker was heard.
- Some cultures may have a hierarchy with respect for age, gender or status, which may determine who speaks for the family and makes decisions.
- Listening to the families' perspectives is useful when trying to identify and negotiate differences. Intercultural competence is learned through practice and reflection.
- The goal of listening is to understand the other person's point of view. Active listening entails paying full attention, staying calm under pressure, controlling body language, listening without interrupting, and summarizing what the speaker said.
- Families may share private information with caregivers. It is important that the information remain confidential. Breaking confidentiality can disrupt relationships.



Tips to Communicate with Families

- Acknowledge that there may be differences and clarify expectations from the beginning.
- Ask for families' perspectives when differences arise. Listen respectfully.
- Identify the issues without judgment.
- Keep children's best interest in mind, instead of who is right or wrong.
- Invite families to discuss possible solutions.

Communicating with Families about Children's Behavior

Adults may have differing expectations regarding children's behavior, which may create confusion or lead to misunderstanding. It is essential that families and caregivers work as a team, maintain consistent communication, and be ready to address any problems that may arise. How this is done will make a difference in the outcome.

- Communicating about children's behavior entails having regular check-ins that allow families and caregivers to talk about and discuss positive notes, as well as any concerns that may arise.
- Observing children's behavior objectively can help families and caregivers describe and communicate facts, not opinions or judgments. For example, "When another child approached her this morning, Lisa put her arms out and pushed him away. I have seen her do that three times this week," instead of, "Lisa is so aggressive; she is always pushing other children away!"
- Introducing observations with "I" statements such as "I have noticed", "I saw", and "I heard" adds to the objectivity of the information to be communicated. For example, "For the past three days, I have noticed that Tysha has been expressing her opinion when she dislikes something," instead of, "Tysha has been a bit feistier lately. She really knows what she wants these days."
- Words such as "always" or "never" are often overused. The inaccurate use of these words may diminish the objectivity of the information to be communicated.
- When concerns arise, families and caregivers can address them together by setting up mutual time for dialogue in person or by telephone; investigating together to find possible causes; finding agreement on several strategies to try as effective solutions; and making a timetable to try the new ideas, followed by checking back with each other.

Consulting with an Expert

Sometimes, children may present challenges that reach beyond the skill or comfort levels of families and/or caregivers. Some of these challenges may be addressed by setting up a consultation to discuss the issues with an expert.

- A consultation with an expert can be an opportunity to get support around difficult issues, and a way to ensure the social and emotional well-being of children, both at home and in child care.
- A consultation with an expert can be a chance to get another person's observations and perspective on children and the issues associated with the challenge. It can also engage families and caregivers in a dialogue about children's unique characteristics, feelings, relationships and related behavior.
- Some counties have programs that are funded to support children in child care, and that specialize in infants and toddlers. Resource and Referral or Parent Resource Centers, Public Health or Mental Health Departments are available to provide referrals to a variety of services, or to offer information. The California Child Care Health Line can also be a resource: (800) 333-3212 <http://ucsfchildcarehealth.org/>
- Some typical reasons for referrals are due to disruptive behavior such as biting, tantrums, not eating or sleeping, and running away.
- Other child behaviors that may signal a need for consultation include: little social response and inability to be comforted by a parent or provider, and self-abuse.
- Some emotional expressions that may signal a need for consultation include: frequent anger or frustration, extreme fear, panic, or anxiety, and limited interest in play.
- Behavioral changes happen gradually and, often times, with the help of early intervention.

ROUTINES



What Children Learn During Daily Activities and Routines

Daily activities and routines are opportunities for children to develop skills and to learn about the world around them. During routines, children develop physical skills, language, problem-solving skills, self-awareness, self-regulation, and a sense of competence. Routines enable children to have sensory explorations and to learn about sequencing, sorting, cooperation, and spatial concepts.

- Children develop physical skills when they pick up and chew food; use cups and utensils; get in and out of chairs; take their shoes off; pull their pants up; and zip their jacket.
- Children develop language skills when they name body parts, articles of clothing, food, and utensils. They also learn about language through everyday actions such as washing, drying, eating, or giving.
- Routines provide opportunities for sensory exploration. Children experience the taste, smell and feel of food; they also experience the difference between wet and dry diapers.
- Children practice their problem solving skills when they try to keep food on the spoon or when they get their socks off.
- Getting up and down, putting clothing on and taking it off help children learn about spatial concepts.
- Concepts such as “more,” “all gone,” “one cup for each child,” “wash two hands,” or “put two shoes on” expose children to math.
- Daily routines expose children to sequencing (e.g., washing and drying hands; putting a jacket on before going outside; reading books before taking a nap).
- Children practice their sorting skills when they put dishes in containers, throw dirty napkins in the garbage, or when they put toys away in their own containers.
- During routines, children develop self-regulation. For example, they adapt to the rhythms of hunger and feeding, and the cycles of sleeping and waking.
- Children learn about cooperation when they lift their legs for diapering; when they give a bowl back when they have finished eating; or when they hold their arms up to have their shirt removed.
- Children develop a sense of self-awareness during daily activities and routines; they experience how it feels to be touched, how different parts of the body function, and they learn to recognize their own belongings.

Feeding

Children need good nutrition to grow and develop, and they are ready for new foods as their digestive systems mature. Children's eating experiences are influenced by variables such as the physical and social settings, the expectations of the adults, the children's physical abilities, and their sensitivities to taste, texture and temperature. Early experiences associated with eating and feeding may influence children's future attitudes and practices around food. Families, caregivers and health professionals can work together to ensure that children are well-nourished and develop healthy eating habits.

Birth – Six Months

- Breast milk or formula supply all the water, nutrients and fat that children need for general growth, energy and the development of the brain and nervous system until the age of 6 months. It is essential that formula is mixed according to instructions and that breast milk is stored properly.
- Breast-fed children may have difficulty adjusting to bottle feeding or they may refuse the bottle altogether. Having adults introduce a bottle at home before beginning child care may ease the transition. Some children will not take breast-milk in a bottle but will accept formula.
- Children feel other people's body tension. Some strategies that may make feeding a more comfortable experience for everyone include: staying calm; using a rocking chair or glider; holding restless children in a secure position; trying different nipples; pausing after each 2-3 oz. of liquid so children can burp; avoiding distractions.
- La Leche League <http://lalecheleague.org/> is a community resource for nursing mothers. Adults can call for questions about nursing and caring for breast milk. Public health nurses may also be resources.

Four – Twelve Months

- When food is introduced, the demand for fluids increases, which can be met with water and juice. Apple, white grape or pear juice are good choices before 12 months of age.
- Breast milk or formula supply the fat that children need until the age of twelve months.
- Baby cereal (usually rice cereal) is introduced between 4-6 months, followed by other strained baby food. Attempting to give food before this time, when the digestive system is still immature, can lead to digestive problems and can create allergies.
- Introducing a new food over the weekend and continuing that food for a week allows plenty of time to watch for any allergic reactions. Vegetables are usually introduced before fruits to prevent babies from developing a preference for sweeter foods.
- Sensitivities to smell, taste and texture vary among babies. Some children may need to see and smell their food before they eat it; others may not like slippery or lumpy food.
- Spoon-feeding may be more challenging than giving a bottle or breastfeeding because children may move around, turn away, grab the spoon or smear the food. In addition, adapting to receive a spoon takes time because the tongue thrust, useful in sucking, reflexively pushes the food out at first.
- Holding children in an upright position and letting them hold a plastic lid or their own spoon may ease the spoon-feeding experience.
- Growth happens in spurts rather than on a steady path, and toddler likes and dislikes may change from month to month. Picky periods are usually temporary.

Twelve Months and Older

- When children reach the age of twelve months, their nutritional needs require more food and less formula or milk. Children are ready for many solid foods when they are able to sit well, use a pincer grasp and have a rotary pattern of chewing.
- While some children self-wean and enjoy a sip cup, others wean more slowly and may want a bottle before naps and/or at night-time. As a transition, they may accept water in a bottle and milk in a cup. When security is the issue, a pacifier can be a replacement.
- Children at this age have an increased need for protein so yogurt, egg yolk, tofu and soft-cooked meat is often added to their diet. Filling up on bottles intrudes on this nutritional need.
- Whole milk (cow or soy) provides the fat that children need between twelve and twenty-four months. After that, low fat milk is recommended.
- Some gagging and spitting up is not uncommon because children are learning how much to bite off; how to chew (even without so many teeth); how to move the food around the mouth; and how to swallow. Learning these new skills takes practice.
- Adults may be reluctant to give children solid food because they are concerned about choking. However, children who continue to eat pureed food after the first year may have an increasingly difficult time making the transition to regular food. They may also miss out on the exercise of tongue, lips and throat muscles needed for speech development.
- By one year old many children want to have control of what goes into their mouths and will resist adult attempts to feed them. Finger foods and suction bowls allow them to feed at their own rate and to exercise their growing independence.

Differences

- Children's "independence" with feeding is not every family's goal. Some families may want to spoon feed their toddlers, for example, because they believe that wasting food is disrespectful to those who don't have much; they may believe that making a mess of hair and clothing is disrespectful to the child and creates more work for the parent; or they may simply want to know how much children actually eat.
- When caregiving practices vary, differences may be negotiated. It is important to honor the families' goals and concerns. This may mean keeping children clean, sitting next to them to assist or reporting on what they eat each day.

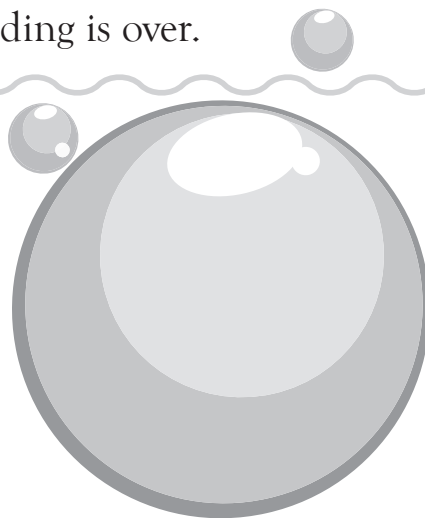
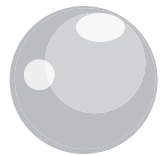
Health and Safety Issues

- Children today are contracting diet-related health problems that in the past were mainly associated with adults. Obesity, heart disease and diabetes type II are now affecting an increasing number of children. Diet and healthy habits start early.
- When children refuse to eat, desperate attempts to force them to eat may make the problem worse. Regular pediatric check-ups will reveal whether or not the children need to gain more weight.
- Infants or toddlers who are not gaining weight may need more specialized attention. Their pediatrician may recommend food supplements or a feeding therapist. There may be sensory motor issues, which require some mouth stimulation before feeding.
- Some (one in five) children have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), or “reflux,” which causes vomiting after eating. A mild case can be eased by having baby sit up for awhile after eating. Projectile or forceful vomiting can be a sign of a more severe “reflux” problem, which requires medical attention.
- Diarrhea may be caused by a change in diet, intolerance to cow’s milk or reaction to antibiotics. It could also be caused by a viral or bacterial infection, which may require more attention.
- Children with diarrhea need more than water to replace their body salts; they need electrolyte solutions. A few days of severe diarrhea can cause dehydration that may require hospitalization.
- Children may become constipated when they start eating solid foods. Withholding the bowel movements may also cause constipation.
- To reduce the risk of choking, adults should avoid giving children nuts, seeds, popcorn, chips, hard candy, raw vegetables, peanut butter, grapes and hot dogs until they have mastered chewing and swallowing. Grapes or hot dogs should be cut in half lengthwise.
- Allowing bottles in cribs may lead to choking, ear infections, baby bottle tooth decay, and difficulty learning self-comforting skills.
- Children with bad breath or white spots and pitting of enamel on the upper teeth could have baby bottle tooth decay, also called bottle mouth. If left unchecked, teeth can rot, become painful and require surgery to cap the baby teeth. It also affects future teeth. Prevention is the best medicine.



Feeding Tips

- Eat with children and model food acceptance and enjoyment.
- Sit next to children who need help maintaining the focus on eating.
- Establish meals as routines with a positive atmosphere.
- Avoid TV, videos and other distractions while eating.
- Give ample time for meals. Part of the experience is learning to chew well and to use fingers, a spoon, and later a fork.
- Build in some choices of food to avoid power struggles.
- Offer new foods frequently, along with the old favorites.
- Avoid using food as a bribe, consolation, reward or punishment.
- Keep servings small at first, and add more as needed.
- Serve healthy snacks and limit juice to 6 oz. each day.
- Offer food in a variety of styles (e.g., strips, cubes, slices).
- Take advantage of toddlers' love of dipping food into little containers of ketchup, yogurt or sauce.
- Allow children to determine when they have had enough. Playing with food is a good indication that feeding is over.



Tips to Deal with Constipation

- Offer cooked vegetables, fresh fruit and 2-4 oz of prune juice.
- Massage children's tummies gently in a clockwise direction.
- Use baby suppositories, mineral oil or other stool softeners only under a doctor's supervision.

Hand Washing Tips

- Wash hands frequently. This practice helps reduce the spread of infection.
- Start hand washing practices early.
- Use pump soap, lots of friction and a clean towel.
- Wash before and after handling food.
- Wash hands before and after meals.
- Make washing hands a regular part of the feeding routine.

Safety Tips

- Locate first aid information in the Yellow Pages; cut it out and keep it near the phone at all times.
- Have the numbers for the local hospital and the Fire Department near the phone at all times.
- Take a CPR/First Aid course.

Dental Care Tips

- Use bottles only for milk, formula or water.
- Rinse children's mouths with sips of water or wipe their teeth or gums after feeding. Residual formula, juice and milk (even mother's milk) can create a breeding ground for bacteria in the mouth.
- Join children in brushing their teeth after meals.

Tips to Prevent Childhood Obesity

- Have regular times for meals and snacks.
- Offer healthy and nutritious food for meals and snacks.
- Let children rely on their own sense of being full. Don't force them to "finish."
- Avoid using food as a bribe, reward or punishment.
- Ensure children get ample exercise daily.

Diapering and Toileting

Diapering or toileting can be more than a necessary task. This intimate contact can be a positive experience for children and caregivers. Children on the diaper table can have undivided attention with warm physical contact and little “conversations.” An introduction to the potty can be a time to learn about one’s body and social expectations, and to develop self-control.

- Proper hygiene is essential during diapering and toileting routines. Disinfecting the diaper pads or toilet seats and washing hands before and after these routines may help ensure proper hygiene.
- Children with sensitive skin may be prone to developing diaper rashes and may require frequent diaper changes. Disposable diapers generally keep moisture away from the skin, but it is important to keep in mind that some children may have allergic reactions to certain brands. The incidence of diaper rashes may be reduced with thorough cleaning and drying, wiping from front to back.
- Antibiotics may cause yeast infections and bright red rashes.
- Toddlers may resist toileting as a way to maintain control over their own bodies and privacy. Some children may be afraid of the toilet; others may be afraid of flushing, in which case, flushing later may be an option. Potty chairs may help until they are no longer afraid of falling in.
- Families vary greatly in the meaning, practices and timetables of “toilet training.”
- Regression is not uncommon when children experience changes in their lives. For example, sleeping in a new bed; having a new baby around; having to use strange bathrooms while on vacation or traveling; starting child care; or changing primary caregivers. Children’s regression is usually temporary, while they adjust to the new circumstances.

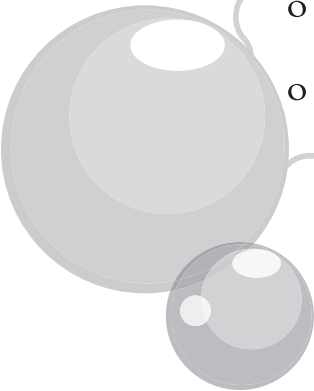
Sleeping

How, where and how much children sleep is a learned skill. Sleep needs and disturbances change as they grow. Sleep is one of the top concerns with infants and toddlers. Sleep deprivation is beginning in infancy. Without enough sleep children may be fussy, accident-prone or may have difficulty learning. It is an emotional issue, especially if adults are also sleep deprived. It is essential that caregivers and families keep each other abreast of any sleeping issues that may arise.

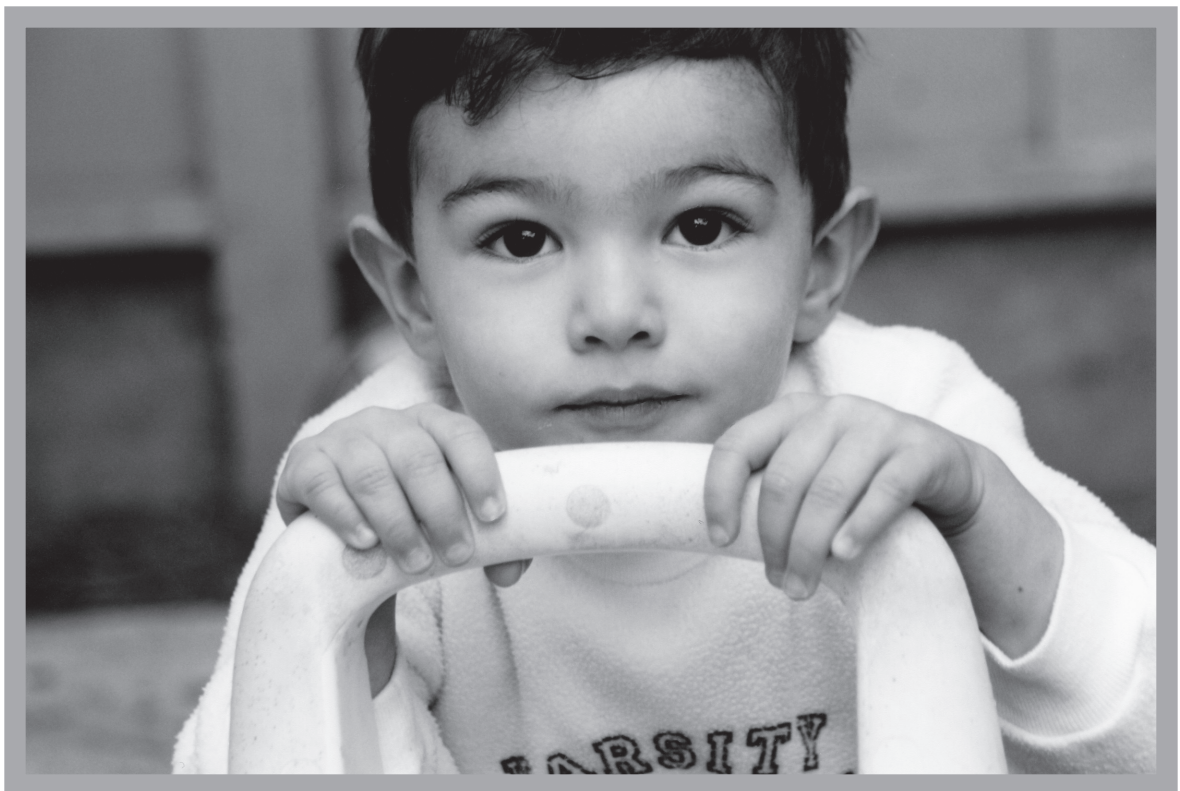
- Children may have difficulty sleeping due to physical or medical reasons (e.g., teething, ear infections, coughing).
- Temperamental traits such as sensitivity to strange situations, high or low levels of activity, difficulty settling, or not tiring easily influence children's sleeping patterns.
- Fears, anxiety and dreams, especially during periods of major developmental changes like getting ready to walk or going through separation anxiety, may affect children's sleep.
- Too much noise and/or light, schedules that are not in tune with the children's rhythms, changes in regular, familiar schedules, and adult tension are also factors that may affect children's sleeping patterns.
- While many children get on a regular sleep cycle and sleep through the night by 4-6 months of age, others are more irregular.
- Sleeping arrangements vary from family to family.
- Adults often worry that the use of pacifiers may create a bad habit. It is possible, but it is easier to quit than the thumb. Some children may have a need to suck that goes beyond nutritional needs. Toddlers, for example, may use it as a security object. When a pacifier is kept in the crib or car seat and used only at specific times, children learn to associate it with certain activities.
- Babies need to sleep on their backs; their faces or heads should never be covered with sheets or blankets, as it severely limits the oxygen available and can have fatal results. For young babies, the sheet and blanket should be tucked in at the bottom of the mattress and not reach any further than their armpits.



Tips to Help Children Sleep

- Lower evening stimulation, by avoiding active play.
 - Follow consistent, predictable routines when bathing, brushing teeth, or reading books.
 - Start the bedtime process a little earlier each night, gradually getting to the desired time.
 - Match the families' methods as much as possible, at least at first. The more familiar the routine, the easier it will be for everyone.
 - Put children down before they are completely asleep to help them learn to self-comfort when they awake mid-nap or at nighttime.
 - Darken the room, keep voices and noise down.
 - Offer children a transitional or security object (e.g., a teddy bear or a blanket).
 - Play soft lullabies or soothing classical music.
 - Stroke or pat children softly.
 - Use a nightlight if the children are afraid of the dark.
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BRAIN DEVELOPMENT



Early Brain Development

The miracle of early child development intrigues many minds. Advances in technology shed more light on the brain's process and the influence of the environment on growth and development. Results confirm what parents and caregivers have observed: the first three years have enormous impact on children's lives. Brain growth in the first three years is more rapid and remarkable than at any other time of life.

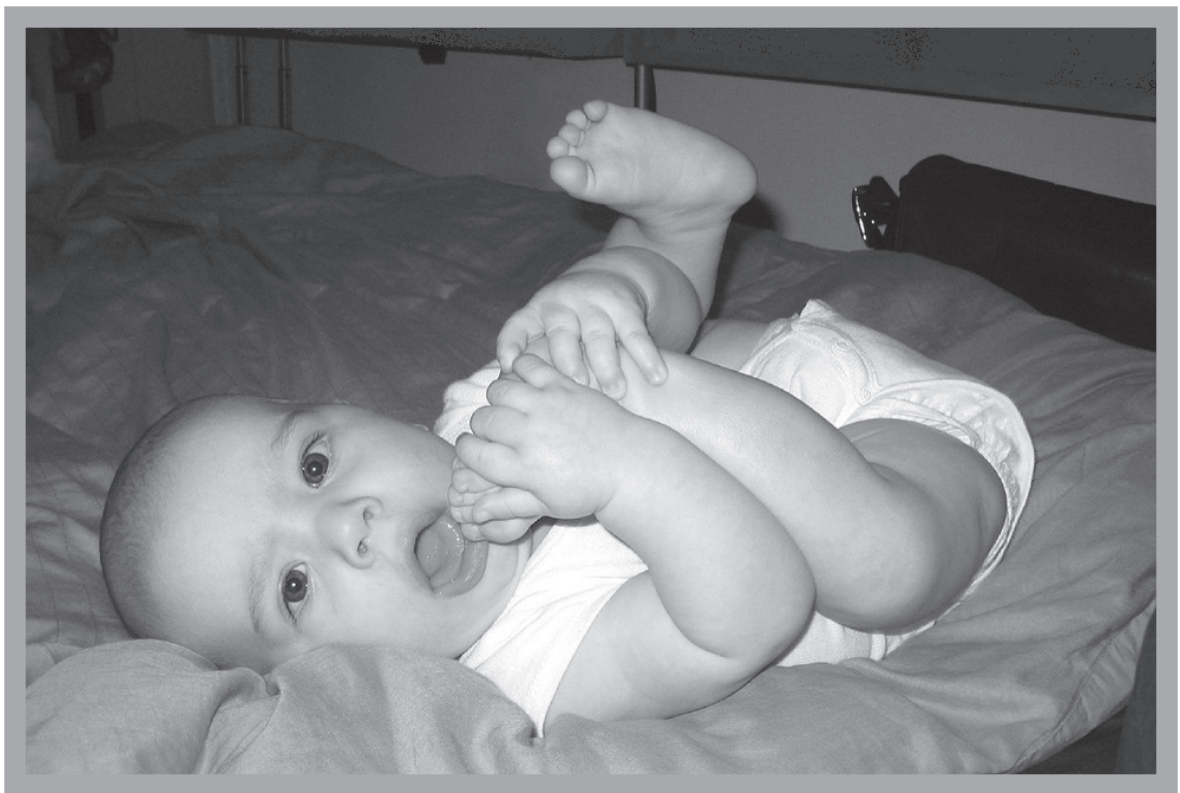
- People are born with 100 billion brain cells; but it's the connections of brain cells, created by stimulation, that cause the brain to continue growing. This process causes a rapid increase in brain mass, weight and density. Unused connections soon dissolve in the "use it or lose it" process.
- Lower brain functions are available first; with time and experience the higher levels of the brain grow and develop. Each subsection has separate functions, but all are connected to and influence each other.
- While nature provides a general guideline and timetable for development, the brain gets organized through experiences and continues to reorganize itself as new information is compared to what is already known.
- There is a link between the external world and sensory and emotional experiences. Children create an internal representation of the world each time adults talk to them or rock them.
- Children make sense of their environment through repeated patterns of behavior and stimulation. Organized environments, predictable routines and consistent interactions with caregivers make the world more understandable.

The Impact of Violence on Children

Children need loving and nurturing care to thrive. When physical safety and emotional security are threatened, they can experience anxiety and panic that can have long lasting effects. Repeated experiences of stress, fear and anxiety can interfere with thinking and impair the ability to learn. Sustaining a caring, positive environment can help children develop a sense of security and well-being. Careful observation of children's behaviors will help caregivers notice behavioral or emotional changes.

- Abuse isn't always obvious or noticeable; four primary forms of child abuse include: physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect.
- Children who experience abuse may show eating or sleeping disturbances, and crying jags. They may also imitate the behaviors they are exposed to.
- When children feel threatened physically, intellectually or emotionally, the "alarm center" goes into action. Stress hormones are released into the system and destroy neural pathways in the brain; when the levels remain high, children may demonstrate impaired attention and memory; regression; over-reactivity; inability to self-regulate; or inability to use "higher" thinking skills.
- Children who are victims of physical abuse may demonstrate overly fussy or negative behavior towards others. Children who experience emotional abuse may threaten, ridicule or humiliate others.
- Children's sense of security may feel threatened if they sense that others are in danger. They may become withdrawn, overly inhibited or too insecure to explore and learn. Their behavior may also become unruly, aggressive, anxious, or disorganized.
- Shaking a child can cause brain damage, disability or death! More detailed information is provided at www.dontshake.com (National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome).

SENSORY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT



Sensory Motor Development

The purpose of the brain is to receive messages from the sensory organs and to interpret or process this information in order to make adaptive responses. Children learn to understand and respond to the physical and social world through active experiences that involve all the senses.

Sensory Stimulation

- Children receive information about the external world through their senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling. Information about the internal world is received through the body's sense of movement and general body senses.
- The brain processes information by interpreting what it receives, storing it and integrating information from all the senses to "make sense" of the experience. The brain keeps reorganizing itself to create an internal "map" of the world, connecting new information to what is known. In turn, children respond through sound and verbal responses, movement and action.
- Sensitivity levels vary among children. For example, infants with immature nervous systems may experience distress when they are over-stimulated; some children may prefer low light, while others need bright light; some children may not have a strong sense of smell, while others can smell subtle odors.
- Degrees of mental alertness are influenced by levels of sensory stimulation. People vary stimulation by lowering their voices and dimming the lights when it's time for nap or adding variety to overcome boredom.
- Caregivers can provide a physical and social environment that supports sensory motor development by being aware of the level of environmental stimulation; observing how children respond to stimulation and change; and supporting children through periods of challenge and stress.

Seeing

- Newborns can see, but need early experiences to get “visually organized” and to make sense of it all. As soon as they are able to, they can begin to recognize people and things, understand the meaning of what they see, remember what they have seen, and become more tuned in to detail and differences.
- Young infants enjoy watching others and love eye contact as they are fed, talked to and sung to; they can even understand and return a smile. Fascinated with faces, they also like to see faces in mirrors and in picture books. Though they seem to forget what is not visually present, young infants can watch the movement of a mobile, windsock or fish in a tank; track a toy that is moved slowly; and even inspect colorful toys that they hold.
- Older infants can read and respond to facial expressions, understand and imitate gestures such as clapping or waving goodbye; pat and point to pictures in books that are displayed at their level, and can understand and use pointing to refer to people and things. They also notice when people or situations are different. Older infants love to play “peek-a-boo” and will also search briefly for toys hidden under a scarf or out of sight.
- Toddlers recognize many familiar people, as well as themselves in mirrors. They remember where their things are and where their favorite toys are kept; they also like to turn toys and books so they’re right side up and match identical toys, pictures, shapes and colors.
- Visual clutter can be avoided by keeping backgrounds walls and carpets simple, so that people and toys visually stand out. Organizing toys on shelves or in small bins by sorting “like things” together helps make items more useful and accessible.
- Continuous observation can help adults to identify visual problems; some childrens’ behavior to look for include: lack of response to visual stimulation, holding toys or items very close to face, repeated infection of eyes or eyelids, eyes appear crossed, one eye seems to float (lazy eye).

Hearing

- Newborns are especially tuned to the human voice, which links language, intelligence and emotions. Voices and other sounds can soothe, stimulate or frighten infants as they learn to recognize and distinguish new and familiar sounds.
- Adults often talk to newborns in a universal language referred to as “Parentese.” This entails musical intonations of the voice, simplified speech, repetition of sounds and words, elongated vowel sounds, and expressive gestures.
- Young infants respond to sound by moving or becoming still; but may startle and cry with loud or sudden noises. They love to hear people talk and sing and can be soothed with the soft sounds of lullabies, as well as the musical language of “parentese.” Young infants can distinguish different sounds of language, like friendly or angry voices, and can turn to look towards familiar voices.
- Older infants can turn when their names are called or look toward familiar people or objects when named. They listen and move rhythmically to music; shake and bang musical or noisy toys; remember tunes and try to sing the lyrics, just as they can imitate sounds with increasing complexity. Older infants can listen when read to and can follow simple requests, such as “Get the ball, please.”
- Toddlers can identify environmental sounds (e.g., animals, cars) and familiar voices on the telephone. They can understand and use phrases with more words, show interest in simple stories that are read aloud, and learn many songs.
- Identifying noises that scare children and minimizing the background noise of TV, radio and electronic toys contributes to creating a comforting environment. Rugs, drapery and pillows can help to absorb noise.
- Some indicators that there may be a hearing problem include: frequent ear infections, no reaction or effort to look toward sound source, halted babble or lack of response.

Smelling

- It's important to stay aware of odors to ensure a healthy, comforting environment. Airing out the house frequently to circulate fresh air and stepping outside for a while and returning to the environment can help people regain their sense of smell. Using hypo-allergenic cleaning solutions, especially on rugs where children or pets play, can help to clean the area, whereas cover-up sprays only add perfume or mask odors.
- Young infants know their mothers by smell and can be comforted by a cloth with mother's scent, they may even respond negatively if a caregiver's scent is very different. They can have a negative reaction to perfume, body lotion, laundry detergent and smoke.
- Older infants like to have their faces close to everything. Since much of the taste experience is related to smell, they're also trying new food. Older infants can notice different smells coming from bakeries, restaurants, and other facilities.
- Toddlers can notice different aromas and can often name them when adults are cooking or eating. They can appreciate smells from a flower or herbal garden.

Tasting

- Young infants know the taste of their own and mom's skin. They put everything in their mouths and show "disgust" by wrinkling their noses and sticking out their tongues.
- Older infants are trying new food all the time; breastfed infants may be more ready than formula-fed babies to try new things. They have already had a variety of tastes, as mother's milk reflects mother's diet.
- Toddlers need many exposures to new food with no added salt or sweetener in order for them to develop a palette; they often want their food kept separate on their plates.

Touching

- Skin is the organ that receives information about touch, pain, pressure and temperature.
- Young Infants feel soothed and loved through gentle stroking and get excited with playful touching and tickling; they can be relieved of tension through massage. Young infants find pleasure in touching themselves as they learn about the boundaries of their bodies; for example, sucking a thumb or fist; clasping hands together; finding their toes; patting their tummies, thighs or genitals. They're very sensitive around the lips and mouth.
- Older infants put things in their mouths to learn about them. They explore textures with their fingers by: scratching the rug; pulling a furry toy animal; sticking fingers in food; and feeling textures in tactile books; they may also hold a new item to the cheek to feel it. Older infants like teething toys with different textures, touching and exploring other faces and bodies; they tend to return to adults after exploring to "touch in."
- Toddlers need touch and will often touch adults to get attention. They enjoy playing with water, sand and art materials, as well as exploring texture boards, cards, books and other three-dimensional objects.
- Oxytocin, often referred to as the "love hormone," is released when children are gently stroked; this gentle touch contributes to emotional bonding, stress relief and self-regulation.
- Children who are sensitive to touch may keep their jackets on, or experience a light touch as annoying or painful. They need firm and predictable touch, such as patting to the beat of a song or rolling on a mat.
- Identifying various textures in the home can help to create a feel good environment that stimulates children's sense of touch, for example: setting up pillows for resting and romping or stuffed animals and cuddly dolls. Fabric scraps of many textures (e.g., silky, rough, bumpy) will also help to stimulate children's sense of touch.

Movement and Exploration

While the first five senses receive information from the outside world, a combination of sensory systems detect the body's internal experience, including balance in response to gravity, vestibular or sensing head position and motion, and muscle sense of "body map" and coordination of movements.

Body and Movement

- Movements are made possible by "feedback" from muscles, tendons and joints. Combined with tactile stimulation, this information creates an inner sense of body image and refines the strength, timing, planning and coordination of movement.
- Older infants sense a loss of support, and may show an automatic response, called the Moro Reflex: the body arches back with arms flung open, followed by a strong grasping and pulling in. It's a great survival instinct, and a reminder that children need to be held securely.
- As infants grow, early reflexive movements are replaced by voluntary motor skills that become more complex with practice. Children develop balance progressively: head and neck control, trunk control for sitting up, and then kneeling, standing and walking. Jerky movements are the muscles making adjustments to continually find a dynamic balance with just the right amount of muscle tone or tension.
- The inner ear's vestibular system detects the head's position and motion; it affects posture and balance. Toddlers become aware of their ability to create sensations with movement, making themselves dizzy by spinning around. Rocking, rolling, bouncing, spinning, swinging, balancing, starting and stopping are "vestibular stimulation." Some children need more than others.
- Rocking may come naturally to caregivers when children need to be soothed. However, all rocking is not the same; children have preferences. For example, they may like to be positioned differently; rocked back and forth; bounced up and down; or moved at a different tempo. A caregiver's body may also affect the way children are held and moved.
- Young infants wave wildly at crib gyms and then refine their movements to reach and grasp. Older infants learn to turn around to back down a step, while toddlers figure out how to get their legs out in front of themselves when going down a slide.

Body and Movement (continued)

- Children need safe places to move, rather than being confined to equipment that restricts movement.
- Some red flags for motor problems may be that children's muscle tone is too rigid or too floppy; reflexive, involuntary movements persist beyond 6 months or one side of the body is inactive.

Exploration: Young Infants

- Muscles get stronger with use. Balance and coordination develop with effort and bumps. The development of physical abilities unfolds in a general progression. Children develop at different paces; while some may be very active, others will need more stimulation and encouragement to make the effort to move.
- Going from tummy to hands and knees and then rocking back and forth in this position is preparation for crawling. Because the upper body is stronger and some surfaces are slippery, pushing up often results in moving backward.
- Young infants often get in and out of sitting by dropping their hips to the side and sitting from the hands and knees position. To get back to all fours, they need to turn to either side.
- Mirrors and pictures encourage children to lift their head and push up with arms and hands to lift the chest when they lay on their tummy. Toys placed in front and to the side stimulate reaching out and rotating the upper body.
- Pillows or noisy toys placed by young infants' feet encourage kicking when they lay on their back.
- Young infants can put their hands together more easily when they lay on their side with a rolled up blanket along their back to support this position.
- Young infants can work on achieving balance when they are propped with pillows or sitting on an adult's lap and their hands are free to explore.
- Infants must never be left on a bed or sofa. It is easier to roll from front to back than vice versa; the first roll may be unexpected.

Exploration: Older Infants

- Surfaces for crawling on hands and knees can vary (e.g., floors, carpet, grass), but once the level surface is mastered, older infants often want more challenge. They can crawl on or over a pile of cushions or pillows, bolsters, plastic or rubber inner tubes; crawling through tunnels and under chairs or tables are other challenges.
- When pulling up to stand, older infants have plenty of choices: sturdy furniture, large stable toys, railings and gates. Caregivers can provide them with good support by sitting on the floor with them.
- Older infants like to “cruise” or move along sideways; stable push toys, heavy boxes, chairs and strollers are favorite supports when they want to move forward.
- Once the basic walking pattern is developed, older infants will seek new challenges. Carrying toys around is typical, and at first they often need two items, one in each hand, to feel balanced.
- Different surfaces will present some challenge; stepping on mats or even on the threshold to a doorway can become an activity. The outdoors present more options to challenge walking balance (e.g., gravel, grass, uneven sidewalks). Changes in levels will also attract them, such as stairs, platforms or decks and even stepping up onto a wooden plank.
- Being able to maintain standing, use enough thrust and release the ball at just the right time requires balance, strength and coordination. Older infants will also begin throwing; it is developmentally appropriate. Lightweight balls of different sizes are good choices.
- Another developmental feat that gets older infants into trouble is climbing, but they have to do it. Adult size furniture is the usual choice in homes. Climbing in and out of cardboard boxes or laundry baskets is also a challenge.
- Baby walkers can be dangerous and do not help the development of muscles needed for walking.

Exploration: Toddlers

- Toddlers enhance their visual-motor skills (coordination) when they follow paths of carpet squares; walk on stepping stones or curbs; walk or jump along a path made of masking tape or chalk.
- Toddlers learn to back up, turn around and stop before bumping into things by playing with string toys, poppers, baby carriages, wagons, toy vacuums, toy lawn mowers, etc. Small tricycles help toddlers to improve their coordination by learning to make the pedals go around and steer at the same time.
- Toddlers advance their movement abilities by marching and galloping; running to touch a wall and return; and chasing bubbles. Balance is further challenged with ramps to crawl and walk on. They also enjoy climbing small ladders, slides and stairs.
- Mini-obstacle courses work well with toddlers; they can step into and over tires; go through an upright hula hoops; step or jump over lines or ropes; crawl through tunnels made of large boxes.
- Jumping is a fun activity for toddlers, as long as it is in a safe area without protruding corners. Pillows to jump into, platforms to jump off of and bubble wrap to jump on can add to the excitement.
- Teeter totters and rocking boats facilitate rocking and bouncing activities, while sharing the activity with another child.
- Toddlers can continue to develop their throwing and catching skills with a variety of balls, particularly when learning to catch, large balls allow them to use their arms and chest. They can also practice indoors by tossing balls of socks into a laundry basket; using hoops, boxes and baskets to throw things through and into can be a fun challenge as well.
- Some toddlers like to hang on things, like railings or cross bars; it's important that there be strict supervision and that this is done in a safe environment with secure bars, sufficient space and safety mats.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Social Emotional Development

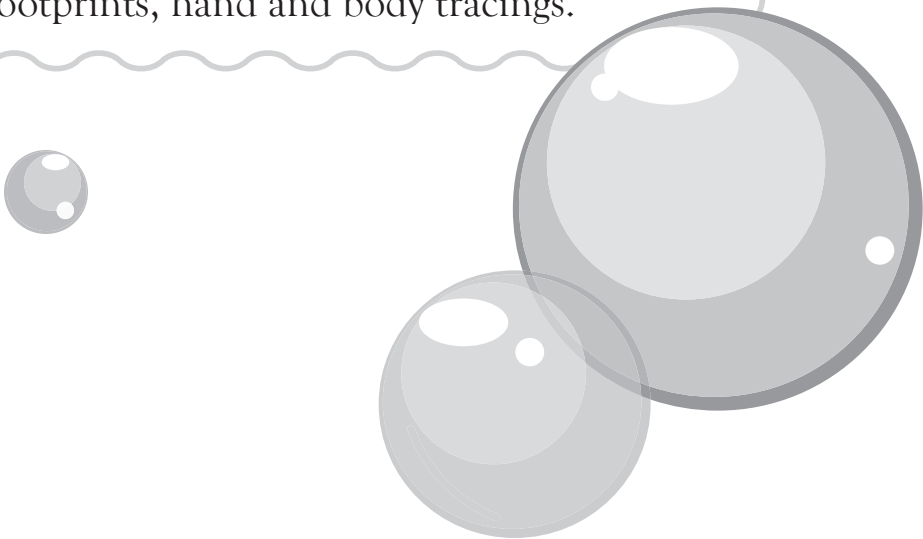
Genetics and prenatal conditions affect the “wiring” of the brain, including a baby’s sensitivity to stimulus, intensity of reactions and general sociability. Every child’s social-emotional experience is unique, as inborn characteristics are met by the expectations of caregivers and family. A foundation for self-concept, self-regulation and social relationships develops in these early years.

Self Concept

- Young infants develop a sense of well being when they are engaged in loving interactions, held securely, talked to lovingly and kept warm and dry. Through touch, they become aware of their own bodies and begin to gain a sense of body boundary: where they begin and end.
- Older infants are developing a sense of their own body size and capabilities; they know their own names, some body parts and facial features. They are also beginning to understand where they can fit into or how they can get out of spaces. Older infants are also developing a sense of competence with their accomplishments as they make toys work, feed themselves and make themselves understood. Their actions tend to be more goal-oriented: see it, want it, and go for it! However, they can get very frustrated if their efforts are blocked.
- Toddlers are becoming more conscious of their individuality and abilities. They recognize themselves in mirrors and photos, know many body parts and know if they are a boy or girl. They are aware that there are “other people” whose interests may differ from their own; how these differences are handled has great impact on children’s confidence in their own abilities.
- Children develop a concept of “self” through body awareness and caregiver responses to their inborn characteristics; encouraging or restricting curiosity and meeting children’s feelings with acceptance or rejection have a great impact on the development of their self concept. Daily experiences, interactions, and expectations help build a sense of who they are and how they are valued.



Tips to Support the Development of Self-Concept

- Maintain predictable routines so children know what is happening next.
 - Keep responses consistent so children know what is expected of them.
 - Use their names often and affectionately.
 - Make mirrors and photographs available.
 - Be respectful in your words, tone, body language and actions.
 - Use art to emphasize the body: handprints, footprints, hand and body tracings.
- 

Self-Regulation: Young Infants

- The rhythm of stress and recovery directly influences how children learn to self-regulate, as the emotional and thinking areas of the brain get activated and organized.
- Caregivers' sensitive responses can help young infants in distress return to a calm state.
- Caregivers can help young infants recover from over-stimulation with a familiar touch or smell, or using soft sounds and rhythmic movements.
- Young infants may suck a thumb, hand or pacifier; clasp hands together; turn away from stimulation; or fuss to signal the caregiver as they learn to self-regulate.
- Young infants learn to regulate their biological functions (i.e., sleeping, waking, sucking), the intensity, range and duration of their emotions, and their facial and body responses.
- Emotions that young infants express include interest, joy, surprise, fear, sadness, distress, anger, disgust, and boredom. Reading children's emotions and noticing how they tend to self-regulate can help caregivers support their social-emotional development.
- Young infants develop self-regulation when they play and repeat social face-to-face games, or games that involve anticipating the rhythms of excitement and recovery, giving them time to reorganize and wait for re-engagement cues.

Self-Regulation: Older Infants

- The presence of adults gives older infants a "secure base," helping them play; if they aren't sure about something, they can look to the adults for a response.
- Older infants may stay near the adults or "touch in" often. They may also have an attachment to a special object such as a soft toy or blanket; babble on their own; talk to themselves; or use rhythmic movements like hair twirling, rocking or rolling.

Self-Regulation: Toddlers

- Emerging language and memory help the regulation of emotions. In this stage, language skills are developing, but not yet ready to express these feelings. Their brain is changing to allow some delay in response time, some thinking before acting.
- Toddlers may inhibit their own impulses to touch forbidden objects by shaking their head "no." However, this stage can have intense emotions, as toddlers want to assert more independence. While the ability to shift emotional states is growing, physical responses or "falling out" are typical.
- Toddlers hum or sing to themselves to self-regulate; they touch their bodies or clothing; use security objects; follow predictable routines; and use some language to get needs met.
- Toddlers show self-consciousness and awareness of others through modesty, shyness, embarrassment, shame, doubt, guilt, jealousy, compassion and empathy.
- Supporting toddlers as they attempt self-regulation can be done by congratulating their efforts, setting firm limits, responding consistently, anticipating frustration and intervening before children lose control. Giving toddlers choices and time to think and respond is also important, as is providing the language for them to express their feelings; doing so with humor and being available for hugs can also help strengthen these skills.
- Some activities that can help toddlers develop self-regulation include: trying songs that include stop and go movements, changes in energy levels, or games that have a few seconds of suspense, like "Pop goes the weasel."

Understanding Toddler Behavior

As toddlers are developing their self regulation skills, they may throw tantrums or become aggressive or withdrawn. Expressing a desire to understand their feelings by taking time to identify underlying causes and understanding that stress or distress is experienced differently by each child, will be appreciated by all children.

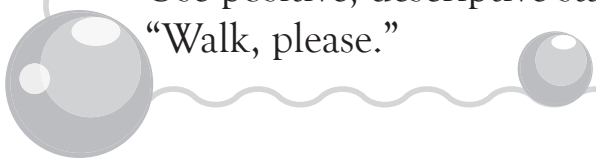
- Some common causes for physical or physiological conditions are: hunger, thirst, fatigue, illness, teething pain, ear infection, medication that causes irritability, soiled diaper or diaper rash, itchy skin or being too hot or cold.
- Some developmental and life changes that toddlers experience may include: beginning child care, a new member in the family, the need for autonomy, moving from a crib to a bed, or potty training.
- Fear and anxiety may result from varying sources such as loud or strange noises, dark places, strangers, new situations, separation from loved ones, punitive tone of voice, dogs and other animals, falling, and other children, especially children who bite.
- Toddlers often experience frustration or distress as a result of their lack of physical and cognitive skills to get or do what they want (e.g., not being able to reach a toy; getting physically stuck in places or positions; using toys that are too challenging; not being able to express themselves verbally).
- The environment can greatly influence the emotions and behavior of toddlers. Over-stimulation may result from excessive handling, crowding, chaos, clutter, noise, or adult tension. Under-stimulation may result from boredom or lack of novelty.
- It's natural for toddlers to resist adult control at times. For example, they may not want to lie on the diaper table; they may resist being fed by an adult; or they may say "no" to every request. It's important for adults not to take it personally or overreact.

Understanding Toddler Behavior (continued)

- Some children may need time to warm-up to new people depending on their individual temperament and social experiences. Some strategies to help them transition include: letting them watch from a distance, defining boundaries and staying nearby.
- Aggressive behavior in toddlers may be linked to developmental factors (e.g., experimenting with cause and effect; expressing the need for autonomy and attention).
- Aggressive behavior in toddlers may be linked to the expression of feelings (e.g., anger, tension, excitement, reaction to abuse or other aggression).
- Aggressive behavior in toddlers may be linked to an environment that is not working for them in terms of space, expectations or schedule (e.g., too much stimulation, unrealistic adult expectations, lack of routines).

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Tips to Guide Toddler Behavior

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- A cluster of three gray bubbles of varying sizes, each with a white highlight, floating in the lower left area of the page.
- Substitute one object for another. Give the new item before removing the old.
 - Redirect the child's action.
 - Offer realistic choices instead of asking yes/no questions.
 - Use language that invites children to show their competence: "Where does your jacket go?"
 - Notice and comment on positive actions.
 - Use positive, descriptive statements such as "Walk, please."

EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT



Early Literacy Development

While infants and toddlers are not expected to read and write, they do need vital experiences to build a foundation to develop these skills; gain knowledge about the world; and learn how language is used. The sounds of language are different for each language spoken. Children are already distinguishing sounds in the first months of life. They are ready to learn languages that they hear. Many children are hearing two languages from birth and becoming proficiently bilingual. Besides learning the individual sounds, they are learning the flow or rhythms of the language. Meaningful early literacy experiences are embedded in daily routines and play activities, and build on what children know.

Language

- Body Language (i.e., posture, face or hand gestures and tone of voice) “speaks” as loudly as words. Children learn to “read” faces early and are sensitive to changes in tone of voice, movement, tension and energy of the caregiver.
- Children develop verbal and non-verbal language skills by listening and understanding what others say; watching and understanding non-verbal and emotional messages; and imitating sounds, words, gestures or signs that others use to communicate.
- Children talk about what they see or want. For example, they may call “Mama” or point to a favorite “duck.” Early words are generally labels for familiar people and objects. They also describe what they see or hear, and their understanding of what is happening: “Bye-bye,” “all gone,” “mine,” “doggie go woof.”
- “No” is a popular word with toddlers. They use it to express feelings and to indicate what they do not like or do not want to do. Children under three years old are not capable of explaining their own thoughts and beliefs; they are not ready to respond to: “Why did you do that?”
- Conversations or dialogues involve turn-taking. Communication is a reciprocal experience that involves giving and receiving, listening or watching, and responding. The rhythm of a conversation is established when children babble and caregivers wait before responding.
- Early face-to-face dialogues are time to hear and practice the sounds of language. It also strengthens the attachment and helps with self-regulation.
- Caregivers can support vocabulary development by talking to children on a regular basis. Language that is used to direct and control children’s behavior, while sometimes necessary, has limited vocabulary.
- Caregivers can support language development and enhance the children’s understanding of the world by describing what is happening at the moment; what the caregivers are doing; what the children are doing or how they are feeling; or what will happen next.
- Caregivers encourage children to listen to the sounds of language when they face the children, slow down and simplify their speech enough for the children to hear and understand.
- Caregivers promote language development when they talk, sing and read aloud books with rhymes and playful sounds. Around their first birthday, children grasp the concept of language; they begin to understand that sounds actually represent something in the real world. Finger pointing comes into play, as they now want a label for everything.

Books and Storytelling

- Long before they can comprehend printed words on a page, children enjoy looking at pictures and having adults read aloud to them. It's a warm and cozy experience, which is also filled with curiosity for what appears on each page. They are introduced to the world of symbols and begin to understand that pictures and words represent people and things in the "real" world.
- Young infants look briefly at pictures, especially pictures of faces; they chew, bang and drop books. Cloth, vinyl and thick cardboard books are appropriate for this stage of development.
- Older infants enjoy pictures of babies, families, animals, familiar objects and daily routines. They use their thumbs and fingers to open books, and pat and point to pictures for the adults to name. Older infants also enjoy books with repetitive and rhyming phrases, as well as feel books with textures. They also enjoy picture stories made of 2-3 photos arranged in sequence.
- Toddlers know how books work; they hold them right side up, turn pages from front to back and, with some guidance, they soon learn to handle paper pages and flaps. They recognize people, animals, things, actions and details. They also attend to simple stories with a beginning, middle and end, and stories that are related to them or their experiences.
- Adults enhance children's experiences with books when they make appropriate book selections; create cozy environments; and have books accessible in baskets, on shelves or in book pockets so children can make their own choices.
- Adults can get children involved and interested in reading experiences by talking slowly and clearly; asking open-ended questions such as "What is teddy doing?" or "Where is his mommy?"; allowing time for children to respond; and by using gestures and different voices.

Symbols of Language

- Written language involves the use of visual symbols (things that represent something else). Letters are symbols that have names and represent particular sounds; and when they are put together, they become meaningful words and sentences.
- Young children are beginning to see print on pages and realize its relationship to the stories that are read. They are getting familiar with some letters, usually the ones they see regularly in their names. If names are printed on art work or on photos, two year olds may be able to pick out their own.
- Children's scribbling skills develop in stages. Initially, children bang surfaces with a fistful grasp, leaving dots and marks. They also scrub back and forth, often off the edges, not focusing on the paper. As their eyes follow their hand, and the thumb helps control movement, children's marks begin to stay within the borders. Marks are followed by circular, continuous strokes, closed or mostly closed circles or ovals, and vertical and horizontal lines. Little "doodles" appear when children are able to grasp the writing tool with their thumb and forefinger. As they see and imitate people who write, children start to pretend to write.
- Before children are ready to recognize letters and words, they learn to recognize pictures, and to match and sort shapes like circles, squares, triangles, stars, and moons. They also learn to match identical pictures, and pictures to the objects or people they represent.
- Writing tools give children opportunities to practice how to hold and control the tools and the paper; how to coordinate their eyes and hand movements; how to stay within the limits of the paper; and how much pressure to apply to make marks and not rip the paper.
- Sidewalk chalk, white or pastel colors, is a good choice for beginners; the bright colors stain hands and clothing. Dustless chalk is available in the smaller size.
- Chubby crayons fit little hands well and do not break easily.
- Two-year-olds can use smaller pencils and washable, non-toxic markers. They may be interested in removing and replacing the tops of the markers before they make any marks on paper or doodle on little sticky notes.
- Children enjoy experimenting with writing on a variety of surfaces: different sizes, shapes, materials, colors, textures. They also enjoy writing on three-dimensional objects. Some examples of writing surfaces include: paper, cardboard, sand-paper, cement floors, steamy windows, chalkboards, and wood.
- Some strategies that may facilitate children's writing experiences include: having a varied but manageable amount of materials available; placing loose items in a little basket or on a tray; taping paper down until children know how to hold the paper in place; and supervising children closely without interrupting them.

PLAY



Play and Learning Experiences

Play prepares infants and toddlers for the many years of schooling ahead. It is an opportunity for children to practice skills and make sense of the physical world, themselves and others. Learning experiences are meaningful when the “whole child” is involved. Infants and toddlers at play show the intense involvement in development and learning when adults support their natural curiosity with interesting materials and genuine interactions. At any given time, a number of areas of development are involved when children are engaged in play.

- Play contributes to children’s physical development. When children move, roll, crawl, walk and run, they develop strength, balance and coordination; they develop gross motor skills. When they reach, grasp and release, they develop fine motor skills, as well as hand-eye coordination.
- Play has a role in the development of language and communication skills. Children develop receptive language skills such as hearing and understanding what is communicated, as well as expressive language skills, also known as verbal and non-verbal communication skills.
- Play provides a wide variety of opportunities for children to develop cognitive skills. Children learn to focus their attention; they discover how things work; they use trial and error to solve problems; and they learn to use toys to represent reality. In addition, when children play, they learn concepts such as object permanence (i.e., things exist even when not in view), spatial dimensions (i.e., big/small, up/down, front/back, sides, in/out), time and sequencing, and math skills (i.e., quantity, number, order and sorting).
- Play enables children to develop self awareness and self-regulation, and to build relationships with adults and peers.

The Role of the Caregiver

Understanding the role of child-centered play and learning is critical. While some play may be adult initiated and some skills taught or demonstrated, it is ultimately the child's continued interest and engagement that will affect learning. Adults play a vital role in supporting children's play and learning.

Selecting Safe, Developmentally Appropriate Toys and Materials

- Young infants enjoy mobiles and colorful things to watch, teething toys and textured materials, rattle and noise-makers to shake, mirrors, books and pictures with faces.
- Older infants are fond of rolling, push and pull toys, nesting and stacking toys, and larger toys to climb on. They like containers to fill and empty, things that open and close, toys that respond with sound or action, simple art materials, and books or pictures of familiar people and objects.
- Toddlers like things to climb, ride and balance on, balls and bean bags to toss, toys to stack, nest, line up or fit together, water, sand and art materials to touch, musical instruments, props for pretend play, and books with familiar themes.

Presenting Toys and Materials

- Infants and toddlers need toys within reach and things they can get into their mouths. Only a few items at a time are necessary.
- Arranging a few toys in low shelves and sorting toys in small baskets or boxes allow children to see and have access to the toys of their choice.
- Storing materials that need supervision on higher shelves enhances safety.
- Trays, place mats, or carpet squares are ways to define physical boundaries for toddlers.

Observing Children's Interactions with the Materials

- Observing children when they are engaged in play, (e.g., paying attention to the children's choices or the way they play with toys) can help adults set up and monitor the play environment.

Supporting Children's Interest in Play

- When adults are available, through language or action, children feel a sense of security. For example, when a child bangs on a drum and looks up at the caregiver, and the caregiver responds by bouncing to the sound, or by echoing the sound, "boom." Feedback also keeps children involved.

Interacting With Children

- Observing children at play allows adults to get a sense of when to step in and when to step back and not interrupt their play.
- Some cues for stepping in include: looking at the adult; extending or giving a toy to the adult; expressing frustration with a difficult toy; or showing signs of boredom with the toys and materials available.
- Some cues for not interrupting and stepping back include: being intently involved; not responding to the adult's play agenda and expectations; or resisting physical or verbal directions.

Ending Play or Transitioning to Other Activities

- Letting children know what is coming up next at the end of a cycle (e.g., emptying and filling or stacking and knocking down) can be a strategy to end their play and ease the transition to another activity. Some examples of transition activities include putting toys into containers, bags or onto shelves; singing and chanting; modeling what to do next.



Tips to Support the Role of the Caregiver

- Position babies so they can watch others.
- Create spaces for a few children to play near one another.
- Have enough toys for everyone and duplicates of popular items.
- Keep clear limits or simple rules: No one gets hurt. We take care of our things.
- Model desirable behavior: giving, receiving, asking.
- Structure high-energy activities: When toddlers are running around, give them a path to follow or a place to touch. Use songs so that there is some structure.
- Support children's attempts to make contact with others.
"Vanessa, Jennifer wants to give you a cup. Do you want it?"
- Coach children by guiding them with language, especially during conflicts: "Ian, you want the car. Paul is playing with it. Paul, when you are done, can you give the car to Ian? Ian, can we find another car?"
- Limit and supervise television programming. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no television for children under 2 years old.

Social Play

A comfortable environment for adults and children promotes positive interactions. Time on the floor with children gives young infants the needed safety and security, allows older infants to “touch in” frequently and toddlers to use the caregiver as a resource when help is needed. Mutually pleasurable experiences help form attachments. Time spent holding, talking and singing, playing repetitive baby games, reading books and dancing together strengthen this bond. Sometimes the adult initiates the activity, while other times the child might. Watching and listening to each other’s signals and responses, children and caregivers learn to “dance” together. The more secure the relationship, the more willing a child is to comply with adult demands and to accept limits.

Stages of Social Play

- Young infants enjoy playing with toys alone, but also love to watch other children. They may reach out and touch another baby who lies nearby.
- Older infants may investigate other bodies with their mouths, or crawl over someone like a piece of furniture.
- Toddlers are not yet capable of playing cooperatively, but do want to play near each other; they may also notice what others are doing or imitate each other. Their attempts to interact with other toddlers can be very frustrating, as their ability to communicate is limited.
- Toddlers have some ability to remember their own experiences of hurt or loss. When they hear others cry or see sadness, they may respond in ways that adults have responded to them: patting, giving a toy or bottle. This is the beginning of empathy and compassion for others.

Peek-a-Boo

- Peek play helps children deal with separation anxiety and learn about object permanence (i.e., people and things still exist when out of sight).
- Looking activates visual pathways in the brain. Making and breaking eye contact means the brain must reconnect each time. Peek play helps strengthen those pathways and build visual memory.
- Children tolerate different levels of excitement. Adding variations like switching from popping up over the top of furniture to peeking out from the side helps keep the game alive.
- Young infants love to watch adults hide behind their hands and uncover their faces slowly. They also enjoy watching adults move back and forth repetitively, towards and away from them.
- Older infants want to participate. Some strategies that encourage active participation include adding scarves to cover faces and letting the children remove them themselves; peeking in a mirror; finding an object behind some fabric; partially hiding toys in pockets and letting children find them; providing toys and objects that open and close such as board books, busy boxes with little hinges or slide doors, pop-up toys or peek boxes, so children can see things appear and disappear.
- Toddlers like to initiate their own games. Some strategies that encourage initiative include providing books with little flap-windows; supporting “bye-bye” play by providing push toys, ride toys, purses and other bags or baskets to carry; waving “bye” and welcoming them as they “come back;” adding toy animals or figures to a sand bin or in the garden for children to “discover;” placing toy keys or junk mail into purses that open and close easily; providing tunnels, tents, houses and opportunities for toddlers to find each other.

The Development of Humor

- Adults exaggerate faces, play endless peek-a-boo, make silly sounds and jump around to make babies smile and laugh. It's a healthy goal. Humor releases tension, eases social situations and has healing powers. It also supports learning, for children will maintain interest longer when they are having fun.
- Recognition: At first, children smile when they recognize familiar people. Then, recognition of something new (a new facial expression) causes a smile when they can relate it to something familiar (a parent's face). Later it becomes the knowing or "ah-ha" smile with the discovery of a solution (getting a puzzle piece to fit) or a funny situation (a toy falling off someone's head).
- Sensation: Infants smile when they get tickled under the chin or razzed on the tummy. When the game is repeated and a slight pause comes before the tickle, the anticipation will make them laugh. Older infants laugh when adults hold them for dancing or twirling. The excitement of running and chasing causes toddlers to squeal and laugh.
- Imitation: Identifying with the excitement or pleasant emotional state of others makes children smile and laugh.
- Incongruity: Understanding or creating surprises, distortions or nonsense keeps the children's interest. Novelty can be a pleasant surprise; it stretches the mind. By their first birthday, most children find that a shoe on a hand or a hat on a foot is funny. However, when the distortion is too far from what is known, children may not find it funny.
- A sense of humor develops as children move into the world of symbols and language, where one thing stands for another. They begin to understand "pretend" play. If adults move and meow like a cat, they get it. When adults use funny voices, children know that the adults are fooling.
- Around two years old, children begin to use a little imagination. They can appreciate picture stories that show difficulties they have mastered (e.g., falling down, putting clothes on). Being able to laugh at previous shortcomings is a healthy tool.

Water Play

Water covers the majority of our planet and is the main ingredient of our bodies. We use it every day. Infants and toddlers find water fascinating and they easily get absorbed in water play.

Water Play and Learning

- Water play allows children to feel the water: wet, soft, warm or cool; hear the sounds that water makes: gurgle, drip, splash; and observe how water looks: transparent, colored.
- Water play allows children to experience what water does: it reflects light, magnifies and distorts images, and slips through fingers and cracks.
- Water play exposes children to size and volume when they pour it into different size containers.
- Water play allows children to classify: wet and dry, sink and float.
- Water play allows children to use physical skills such as holding, squeezing and pouring.

Setting Up for Water Play

- Water tables: Indoors or outdoors toddler-size water tables can be filled with one shared body of water or catch the spills from several pans set inside. Children's arms should reach comfortably over the rim, so they don't have to bend over into a deep bin.
- Dishpans: Individual pans with an inch or two of water can be set on a towel-covered table or on an outdoor bench or garden wall. Toddlers like to stand for water play. Standing reduces the risk of leaning on the rim and tipping the pan over. They can also sit with a dishpan placed on the grass, patio or in a sand box.

Water Play Toys

- Sponges, small wash clothes
- Play dishes
- Toy figures, animals, fish
- Boats, floating ducks
- Cups, funnels, scoops, spoons
- Squeeze and pump bottles
- Small strainers, slotted spoons
- Sea shells, tree bark, pine cones, leaves

Other Water Play Activities

- Blowing bubbles made with dish detergent
- Painting with water on patio, pavement, brick wall or wooden fence using an inch or two of water and a 1" wide brush
- Washing toy cars, wagons, furniture and playhouses with small sponges or brushes and lots of suds
- Washing windows with sturdy paper towels
- Watering plants with a watering can or spray bottle
- Running under child-safe sprinklers
- Stomping in puddles

Sand Play

Warm from the sun, or cool and damp, sand invites little hands to dig in. It can feel light and loose, or wet and heavy. It can slip through fingers or be scooped, poured or sifted. It can fill acres of seashore or a small dishpan. However presented, sand is a children's favorite.

Types of Sand

- Beach sand can be fine and blow in the wind. It may be filled with shells, dried seaweed and other treasures (or garbage).
- Playground sand cushions falls and jumps, and it is great to play in. It needs to be checked for glass or other dangerous objects.
- Play sand is coarse, washed and dust-free. It's safe and inexpensive, and can be bought at toy stores.
- Sand alternatives include rice or beans.

Setting Up for Sand Play

- Sun and shade: Some sun is welcomed to dry out damp sand. An umbrella, canopy or tree can provide shade.
- Size and accessibility: A tall planter or a sand table allows toddlers to stand and play. A ground level sand box can be large enough for a group to sit comfortably. Any sand that is not in use should be covered, for local cats may think it is a litter box.
- Space: A sandbox or sand table can be a place for toddlers to learn to share space and materials. Individual dishpans or boxes along a bench or inside a sand table to catch the spills can help define individual spaces for toddlers.

Sand Toys

- Things to scoop, fill and empty include measuring cups, big soup spoons, laundry scoops, plastic bowls, muffin tins, yogurt cups, funnels, and strainers.
- Things to hide and find include pine cones, toy figures, strings of beads, and other “treasures.”
- Small clear plastic containers filled with sand and sea shells can be used as sandy peek boxes.
- Net laundry bags make great portable storage for sand toys.

Sand Challenges

- Eating sand: Infants who put everything in their mouths are not good candidates for sand play. Toddlers may put sand in their mouths if sand play is a new experience for them. Toddlers can be redirected to fill a container rather than their mouths. If a few redirections don’t work, sand may be reintroduced in a few weeks’ time.
- Throwing sand: Toddlers may be redirected to filling or sifting. If throwing is the interest, adults may find a ball or another suitable object for the toddlers to throw.
- Getting sand in the eyes: Adults should avoid rubbing the eyes. They should rinse the eyes with water, instead.
- Getting sand in the hair: Wearing hats or head scarves can become the routine outfit for sand play.
- Slippery sand can be a hazard to runners. Sweeping spilled sand from patios or decks can help reduce the risk of falls.

Experiences with Nature

A backyard, park or garden offers opportunities for children to interact with nature. It is a fascinating world that changes with life cycles and seasons. There's peace in nature along with surprises that capture children's attention - a gust of wind blows leaves across the yard, a squirrel runs along the fence, birds sing to each other, misty rain cools the face. Nature is full of sensory experiences. These early impressions may build a long-lasting love of the environment.

Plants

- Plants inside the house bring beauty and serenity and soften the environment.
- A garden with fruit trees can draw children's interest. They can pick lemons to make lemonade, peaches to make a pie, or start a garden with aromatic herb seeds in a cup.
- A path or stepping stones can take little ones on an adventure through planted areas. A sense of "place" can be marked by a large rock, a statue or a flowering bush.

Animals

- Children recognize the movement of living beings with excitement and wonder. Ants marching in formation across a patio, for example, can absorb a toddler's attention.
- Sweet smelling flowers attract butterflies; hummingbird feeders and bird houses invite frequent visitors that children find interesting.
- Pet animals fascinate children. While allergies to furry animals are common, recent research shows that early contact with pets can actually prevent allergies. Any interactions with pets require close supervision.
- Fish tanks engage children with colorful fish that glide and dart around.

Light and Shadow

- Prisms or hanging crystals make small rainbows dance.
- Chasing one's shadow is a long-time toddler fascination. A patio or fence makes a great canvas for shadows.

Rocks and Shells

- Real things are more interesting than plastic toys. Toddlers like to fill and empty containers with rocks or shells. They also enjoy finding them buried in sand and line them up.

Weather

- Infants should stay in the shade; older children should use sun screen.
- Toddlers like to watch the rain trickle down the window. They also like to wear their hooded raincoats and boots and stomp in puddles on rainy days.

Art

Before children can make representational or symbolic images, they need to have sensory and motor experiences. Art experiences foster physical, cognitive and social learning. Children are ready to explore art materials when they no longer put everything in the mouth. Art fosters the development of physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional skills.

Art Experiences

- Art experiences allow children to experiment with different writing and painting tools; practice their hand-eye coordination; play with colors, shapes and textures; and explore cause and effect.
- Art experiences contribute to the development of children's language, reading and writing skills.
- It is the process, not the product, that is meaningful in early art experiences. It's the doing, the experience that matters.
- Demonstrating how markers or brushes are used encourages children to use their imagination and creativity.



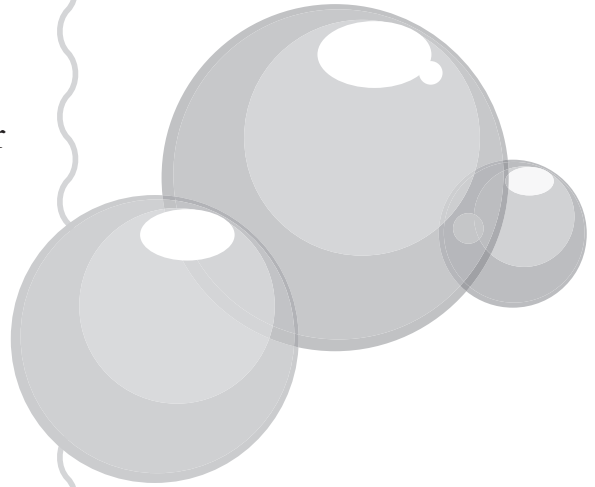
Tips to Set Up for Art Experiences

- Try out new activities beforehand, considering the fragility and safety of the materials, and the energy and force children typically use with toys.
- Protect the art surfaces with newspaper.
- Use smocks or large T-shirts as a regular routine for messy art.
- Have clean-up items handy.
- Select materials that are non-toxic and washable. Prepare and gather them in a box or dishpan in advance.
- Secure materials such as paper that may crumple, crayons that may fall, paint cups that may tip over, and trays that may bump into each other.
- Allow toddlers to stand at tables.
- Ensure that the children's elbows can reach the table top when they are sitting.
- Offer just a few items at a time.
- Allow preschoolers to use multiple materials interchangeably (e.g., scissors, glue, markers).
- Provide infants and toddlers with more structured experiences.



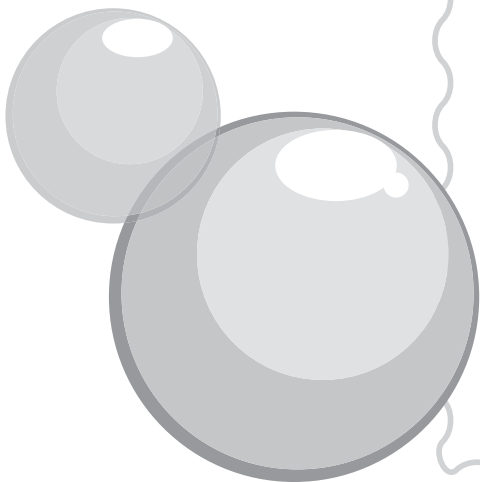
Tips to Display Art

- Mount and frame artwork with construction paper to make a gallery.
- Hang small pieces as a mobile.
- Display some of the art down at child's level, and protect it with clear contact paper.
- Photograph the children as they are involved in art experiences.
- Display the children's artwork with captions that tell what they are working on.



Tips to Save Art

- Put children's names and dates (or ages) on their work, asking for permission first.
- Keep a folder for each child with samples of their work.
- Make "Me Books" to give to the families.
- Make cards or wrapping paper with the children's artwork.
- Write down and attach what toddlers say about their art and share it with their family.



Painting Tools

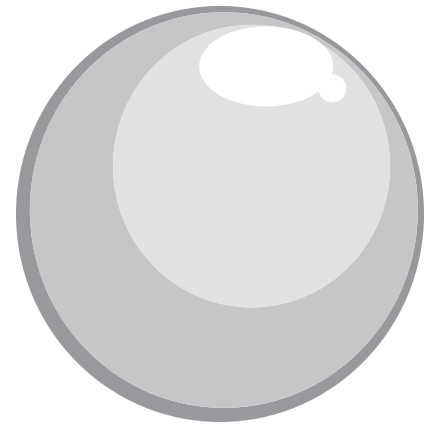
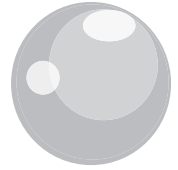
- Brushes: Short handled “chubby” brushes are best for toddlers. Some are color coded to match the paint and cups.
- Containers: Purchased cups can be color-coded and come with a hole in the lid for the brush. It is important to make sure that containers will stand up with a brush in them.
- Water color sets: One or two large paint tablets work well with small brushes. Regular water color sets get muddy very fast with toddler use.
- Tempera paint: It comes ready-mixed or in powdered form, which is less expensive, but requires time to mix well. Although most child paint says “washable,” some colors tend to stain. Adding a little baby shampoo helps with the clean up. The consistency should be thick, not runny.
- Finger paint: This type of paint can be purchased already made, or can be made at home with liquid starch, soap flakes, baby powder and coloring; or with shaving cream and coloring.

Painting Techniques

- Dabbing: Applying a small amount of paint on simple shapes cut out of dense packing material and pressing onto a surface. Limiting the amount of paint can help reduce splattering.
- Rolling: Applying a small amount of paint on play dough rollers or toy cars with tread on wheels and moving them back and forth over a surface.
- Folding and pressing: Folding construction paper in half and adding some dabs of paint for children to pat and press, open and close.
- Layering: Scribbling with waxy crayons first and then painting over it.
- Mixing: Adding texture or objects to wet paint such as leaves, sand, pictures or pieces of paper. Adding in a little glue can help keep the mixture together.

Tips to Set Up for Painting

- Decide where the activity will be.
- Decide which surface the children will use.
- Cover a table with a roll of butcher paper or laminated placemats.
- Put large paper on the floor or patio.
- Hang a large piece of paper on a fence.
- Use a toddler-size, free-standing easel.
- Have a stable cup holder for several colors.

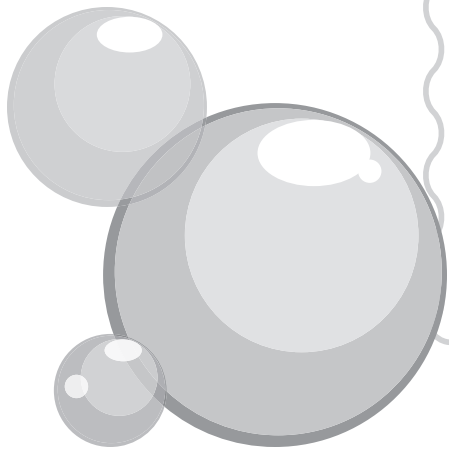


Tips to Interact with Children while They Paint


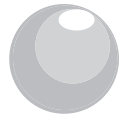
- Let children explore when they are absorbed in painting.
- Offer a new piece of paper before children scrub a hole through it. Paint will eventually soak the paper.
- Describe the actions or colors: “You filled the whole paper!” or “Look at all that red.”
- Notice children’s interest and involvement. They may be more interested in watching the paint drip than in naming colors.



Tips to Paint with Water

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- Purchase thick, short-handled brushes.
 - Give each toddler a little bucket or a frozen orange juice can with an inch or two of water.
 - Encourage children to “paint” cement patios, brick walls, wooden fences and rocks.

Finger-painting Tips


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- Mix liquid starch with soap flakes and/or baby powder for smooth texture. Add paint for color. Whip up the soap flakes for puffy paint.
 - Mix shaving cream and paint for color.
 - Add sand to the finger paint for a grainy texture.
 - Use smooth, slippery surfaces to paint on.
 - Use individual plastic trays or metal baking sheets with a non-skid pad underneath the surfaces.
 - Start with just a few dabs of paint and add more, as needed.
 - Invite children to use their fingers to paint, without pushing them to do so.
 - Save the artwork by making a handprint before washing up, pressing absorbent paper on the design to save the imprint, or making a frame with little cut-out pieces.
- 

Sticky Materials

- Toddlers do not apply glue to each piece and place it carefully like preschoolers. They are interested in the stickiness (i.e., placing and removing items).
- Sticky materials include: glue, stickers, tape, contact paper, Velcro, magnetic vinyl (sold in hobby stores), play dough, and goop.
- Surfaces that are good for gluing include: construction paper, cardboard, poster board, paper plates, or anything sturdy.
- Materials to stick on surfaces include: pieces of paper, pictures from magazines, pieces of fabric (free sample books), fabric trim, pieces of ribbon, pom-poms, wall-paper samples, small leaves, flower petals, potpourri, and sand sprinkled from a spice jar.




Tips to Cut and Paste

- Let children tear paper and save the pieces for collages (crumpled tissue paper is easier to stick on than flat pieces).
 - Let children snip pieces from a strip of paper with rounded scissors (they may need practice with the “open and close” movement and some “hands-on” help).
 - Put some glue in a small bowl and let children use small brushes to paint with glue. Add a little paint for color.
 - Provide glue sticks. They are less messy than glue bottles.
 - Let children apply the glue to the surface first. Then offer items for them to stick on.
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Play Dough Tips

- Use individual trays to define the space and keep the play dough and tools off the floor.
 - Offer the play dough first, without tools, so fingers can feel, squeeze, poke, pat and pick it apart.
 - Add a few simple poking tools such as toys, small cups or blocks (cookie cutters require more advanced skills).
 - Offer blunt scissors to practice cutting a roll of play dough hot dog.
 - Limit adult-made models; allow children to use their imagination.
 - Store the play dough in two containers - one for tools and one for play dough.
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Dramatic Play

Dramatic play, even in its simplest form, is an opportunity for adults to witness how children make sense of this world of people and things. Children practice their physical and social skills, organize their thinking and learn to cope with feelings. As they use an object, action or gesture to represent something, they are beginning to participate in a symbolic system of expression and communication. This ability develops best when there is a sensitive and supportive play partner. Dramatic play is also known as make-believe, symbolic play, representational play, pretend play, fantasy play, and imaginative play.

Dramatic Play and Learning

- Dramatic play helps children develop physical skills when they make things work, dress-up, or manipulate items.
- Dramatic play helps children develop cognitive skills when they match and categorize.
- Dramatic play helps children increase their vocabulary and allows them to practice their communication skills.
- Dramatic play exposes children to math concepts such as one-to-one correspondence (e.g., a spoon in each bowl, a blanket for each doll).
- Dramatic play promotes imitating how to use objects or how things are done.
- Dramatic play provides opportunities for children to cope with their fears.

Dramatic Play Outdoors

- Ride toys and wagons can inspire trips to the store; they may also need gas, bridge tickets or a car wash.
- Dolls or teddy bears can ride in a carriage, wagon or swing, and people on a bus may need a transfer.
- A low platform can become a stage for singing and dancing, while a steering wheel on a post can get children driving a bus.

The Development of Dramatic Play

- Simple play acting: Around their first birthday children begin to act out everyday actions such as lying down to go to sleep; pretending to drink from an empty cup; putting a play telephone to their ear.
- Acting on others: At this stage, children offer bottles, cups, or food to their dolls or stuffed animals, or hand the telephone to an adult.
- Using gestures to symbolize actions: Children imitate actions they see in books, such as eating, sleeping, or hugging.
- Animating a toy: Two year olds begin to make toys act; they make animals walk, eat or bite.
- Substituting objects: Children may use a block as a telephone or a dowel as a baby bottle.

Materials for Dramatic Play

- Telephones stored in wall pockets or shoe bags
- Cameras with movable parts
- Baby dolls reflecting ethnic diversity and gender
- Doll accessories such as boxes or baskets for beds, blankets, bottles, diapers, cups, bowls, spoons, brushes, rattles, potties, and carriages
- Toddler-size kitchenettes, baskets or dishpans with bowls, spoons, cups, plates, pots and pans
- Empty food containers such as cereal boxes, spice tins, yogurt cups, plastic ketchup, mustard, juice and syrup bottles
- Toy food, muffin pans with muffins or egg cartons with plastic eggs
- House cleaning tools such as dust pans and short-handled brushes
- Plastic tool kits
- Doctor kits
- Child-size clothing and accessories such as slippers, shoes, boots, sunglasses, purses, scarves, skirts, pants, shirts and capes
- Backpacks, belly packs, cloth or paper bags
- Finger and hand puppets

Tips to Support Dramatic Play

- Create a mini-environment that will inspire children's play. Add a small log, interesting rocks, dried flowers, little plants, toy people or animals to an inch or two of sand in a dishpan or tray. Observe children's responses.
- Mirror what children are doing or feeling.
- Narrate or comment to highlight what children are doing.
- Assist verbally or physically if children get "stuck."
- Remove unwanted materials.
- Talk for inanimate objects.
- Model use of an object or action on a toy.
- Suggest a new prop or idea to expand the play.
- Participate in the play without taking it over.
- Redirect disruptive or aggressive behavior.

Tips to Set Up for Dramatic Play

- Offer a few things at a time; too many items may create distraction and confusion.
- Use household items to reduce expenses.
- Have duplicates of favorites. Toddlers don't play different roles; they want the same toys.
- Group things by categories in a variety of containers: boxes, dishpans, shopping baskets, straw baskets or small shopping bags.
- Place animals on the play dough table, dolls in the water table, or cars in the block area.

MUSIC AND DANCE



Music and Singing

Experiences with a steady beat and musical patterns help the brain to organize information and to produce coordinated movements and speech. Music aids attention, impulse control, and later, reading and math skills.

Music

- Music helps children develop balance and coordination through rhythmic movement and making both sides of the body work together.
- Music helps children become aware of their body parts and how they relate to each other.
- Music allows children to practice their listening skills.
- Music helps children develop self concept (“I can make music!”).
- Music and dance allow for self-expression.
- Music and dance help children develop spatial awareness as they move up and down, forward and backward, side to side.
- Music helps children develop temporal awareness (e.g., fast and slow, repetition, sequencing, beginnings and endings).
- Music can contribute to children’s self-regulation, including paying attention and following the beat.
- Music can help children connect with others, and learn about the diversity of musical rhythms in different cultures.

Singing

- The human voice communicates information and expresses feelings. Infants pay attention to faces when adults sing to them and respond with lovely cooing sounds.
- Older infants clap, use gestures with songs and hum tunes before they know the lyrics.
- Toddlers begin to sing with some words or phrases and remember songs with lots of repetition.
- By the age of three, children like to sing a number of songs and choose which songs to sing.

Tips to Expose Children to Sound and Music


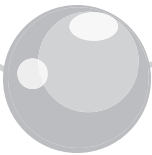
- Play a variety of child and adult music from diverse cultures, music of different styles and rhythm (e.g., classical, jazz, lullabies, fast beat, slow beat).
- Expose children to nature sounds (e.g., bird songs, leaves blowing, heartbeat).
- Play different types of instrumental music while children scribble.
- Play musical instruments in front of the children.
- Use a certain song or music box to signal change of activity.
- Attend to the overall noise level to avoid over-stimulation.
- Invite families to bring taped music.

Tips to Play Musical Instruments with Children

- Have the children sit down, if it is a first time experience. It is safer than standing.
- Have enough instruments for everyone.
- Give children time to feel and explore the instrument.
- Establish a path or direction around the room to avoid accidental bumping into one another when walking around.
- Sanitize instruments that require mouth contact between uses.




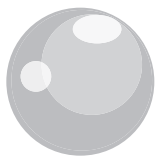
Tips to Make Musical Instruments

- Things to shake: Collect spice cans, plastic bottles, tea tins, plastic eggs, small boxes; fill them with pebbles, sand, bells, seeds, beans; seal them well with super glue or hot glue.
 - Things to drum: Bang on oatmeal containers, plastic bowls, pots and pans with hands or with wooden spoons.
 - Things to tap together: Tap small wooden or plastic blocks.
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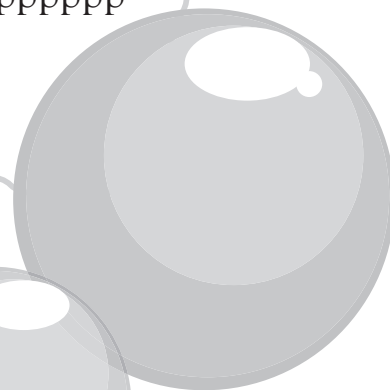
Tips to Involve Families in Music and Dance

- Ask about the music they listen to, play, sing or dance to at home.
 - Invite the parents to share their music in person or on tape.
 - Invite parents to sing and dance with their children.
 - Teach parents songs that their children are learning. Write down the lyrics, loan audio tapes or sing it for them.
 - Encourage parents to provide daily music and movement experiences for the children.
 - Suggest tapes that can be used in the car to keep toddlers occupied.
 - Request recycled materials to make simple instruments.
 - Video the children singing and dancing to show parents.
- 



Tips to Sing with Children

- Listen to the music beforehand and learn a few songs.
- Keep in mind that infants and toddlers are not able to sing along to recorded music. It moves along too quickly, and the songs can be too complex.
- Hold infants and invite toddlers to join in.
- Find a special place to sit, such as a carpet square or a cushion.
- Show enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- Encourage active participation with hand gestures.
- Illustrate characters in songs with props or puppets.
- Encourage toddlers to choose songs by selecting pictures that represent their favorites.
- Play with voice qualities (e.g., soft or loud, high or low pitch, fast or slow)
- Exaggerate words that match actions: “Let’s zzziiiiipppppp your jacket.”
- Make up silly rhymes.



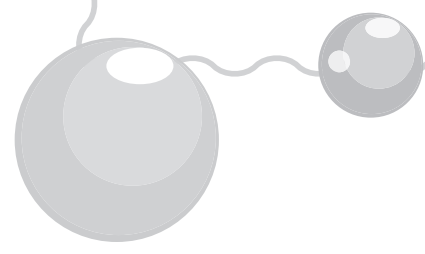
Dancing

Slow motion film has captured the “dance” of the newborn to the music of the mother’s voice. It is an immediate and unconscious response that is universal. When two or more people move with each other in synchrony, it brings a feeling of pleasure. Dancing helps caregivers and children develop bonding relationships.

- Infants like to be held for gentle dancing and enjoy being gently rolled side to side to the rhythm of music or a song.
- Older infants sit, bounce, clap hands or pat thighs. They also stand, bounce and clap.
- Toddlers do the “toddler rock” side to side; stomp in place and march around; twist and turn; jump and gallop; imitate the dance moves of older children and adults; and wiggle and shake in their own way.
- Dancing is a way to introduce and illustrate new concepts such as “stop and go,” “walk and stop,” or “run and stop.”
- Props for dancing may include hats, mittens, and slippers to emphasize body parts, streamers and scarves to wave, toss or wear; carpet squares, cushions or masking tape to make a path to jump on, or strut along.



Tips to Prepare for Dancing Activities

- Create a clear space away from furniture.
 - Remove toys that clutter the floor.
 - Avoid socks on slippery floors.
 - Adjust children's clothing to avoid tripping.
 - Protect baby's neck by dancing gently.
 - Monitor recordings that give specific instructions on how to move. Most are too fast or complex for toddlers to follow: "Touch your elbow to your knee."
 - Join children when they are "free form" dancing to mirror their movements.
 - Talk about what the children are doing: "Jake is moving his head with the music!"
 - Alternate energy levels to help children learn self-control (e.g., loud feet and quiet feet; big claps and little claps; fast shakes and slow shakes).
 - Offer choices to toddlers.
 - Cool down at the end. Bring it back down to the floor with smaller, slower, more focused movement. Rest.
- 

GROUPS



Groups

Different combinations of infants, toddlers, preschoolers and/or school-age children reflect the reality of many family and child care settings. Many adults take care of other children while they raise their own. The dynamics of the groups vary depending on the ages and personalities of the children and the adults; they also evolve over time, as children grow and interact with their environment, their caregivers and the other children in the group.

- Often times, siblings are together in child care. Whether or not they begin child care together, caregivers and families can work together to create a positive experience for everyone.
- Infants need to have quality one-on-one time with their caregivers in order to develop emotional attachments and trust. Caregivers may use other children's nap, feeding and diapering times to make the most out of their individual time with infants. Getting older children engaged in an activity before tending to the infants can also be a strategy.
- Environments set up for children of different ages provide flexibility to meet their developmental interests and abilities.
- Pairing up children of different ages has many benefits. It brings out the caring, kind side of the older children; sparks their confidence; allows them to be role models, practice social responsibility, and experience a sense of growth. Younger children, in turn, look up to the older children and use more complex play.
- Older children can read books to younger children; help them wash their hands before snack; and assist them in buttoning up their jackets or tying their shoelaces. In addition, older children can sing, dance and play instruments with younger children; toss or roll a ball back and forth; and pretend play using dolls or a doctor's kit.



Tips to Set-up the Environment for Groups



- Arrange shelves with the lowest level for infants and toddlers, and upper shelves for preschool materials in labeled bins. School-age materials and games that have small pieces can be stored in latched cabinets.
- Create a safe zone for infants. Use a playpen or protected area of the room, out of traffic and active zones.
- Set up special or messy activities for older children when babies are napping.
- Set up school-age games with small pieces in the kitchen or in a gated off area.
- Match size of furniture to children's bodies. Booster seats work well.
- Provide materials that can be used in a variety of ways.
- Check the environment often.

Tips to Work with Siblings in Child Care Together

- Give children their own personal space.
- Ask the siblings about ways they enjoy each other; explore possible conflicts of interest.
- Be clear about who is responsible for the younger child during child care hours. Many older children are “in charge” of younger ones at home.
- Balance time together with time apart. Siblings sometimes need a break from each other. Also, older children need time to do “their own thing” without being a “helper.”

Tips to Adapt to a New Child Coming to Child Care

- Supervise toddlers continuously, as a hug can quickly become a squeeze.
- Show children how to play with infants without hurting or scaring them. Peek-a-boo or singing are good choices.
- Notice and comment on positive interactions.
- Make some special time to spend one-on-one time with each sibling.

APPENDICES



ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE EVERYONE

Wash Day

On a warm day everyone can wash toys and equipment in a dishpan or with sponges and buckets of water. Older children can wash the car. Infants can squeeze clean sponges.

Obstacle Course

Infants can clap for each “winner.” Toddlers can go around any way they can. Older children can help set up the course and perform more advanced movements.

Read Aloud

Babies love to have lap time and look at pictures. Older ones will appreciate the story and act out some of it. Or, everyone can have their own books for some quiet time.

Blocks

Infants can chew, drop, and tap them together. Toddlers line them up, stack them and knock them down.

The elaborate structures of older children may need protection from the young ones.

Puppet Shows, Variety Shows

Older children can plan, make props, set up and put on puppet shows. Toddlers and preschoolers can sing and dance. Infants and toddlers are great audiences.

Exercise

Stretch and bend, twist and turn, or jump around. Toddlers will imitate older children. Infants can have their arms and legs moved around for gentle stretching.

ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE EVERYONE

Make a Fruit Salad

Babies can taste and munch on the fruit. Toddlers can mix it all in a bowl or cut bananas with plastic knife. Older children can wash and peel fruit.

Make Play Dough

School age children can read the menu, gather ingredients and cook with supervision. Preschoolers can measure and pour ingredients, while toddlers stir. Everybody can knead the dough.

Make a Pizza

Toddlers can pour ingredients, help knead the dough and sprinkle cheese, while older children prepare the toppings. Infants will chew on the crust.

Play Dough Recipe

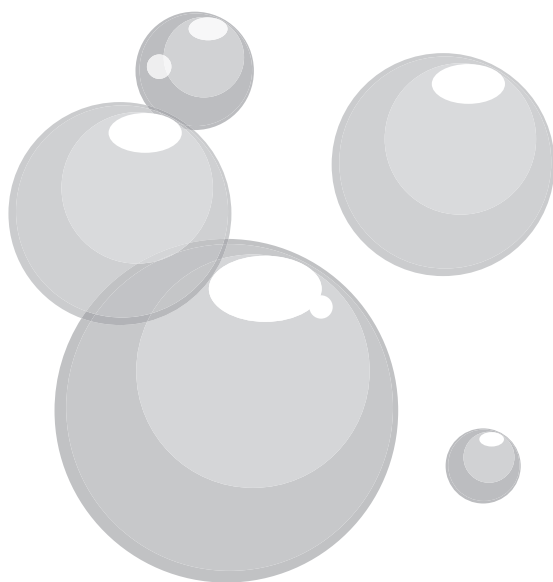
Ingredients: 1 cup flour, 1/2 cup salt, 1 cup water, 2 TBS vegetable oil, 2 tsp. cream of tartar, a few drops of food coloring.

Process: Mix all ingredients in a pan and stir over a medium heat until they all stick together. Knead into a ball as it cools. Keep in an air-tight container in the refrigerator.

Goop Recipe

Mix equal parts of cornstarch and water and some food coloring. Goop feels hard when patted, but will drip off fingers. It is very messy so use smocks and pans or trays to catch the drips.

ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE EVERYONE



Dramatic Play

Infants and toddlers can be “babies” or just explore a variety of safe props. Toddlers will begin to pretend with a few props. Older children can help set up, direct and play different roles.

Paint

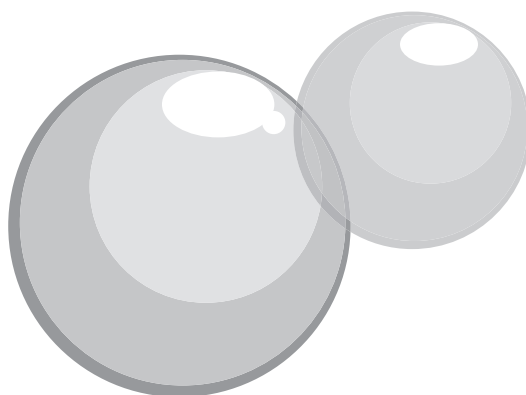
Babies in high chairs can dab paint with fingers. Toddlers can paint a low mural while older ones use the higher level. A large roll of paper on the ground will allow everyone to paint together. An alternative is to “paint” with water.

A Neighborhood Walk

Infants in a carriage or in a backpack get to see everything going on from their perch. Toddlers might enjoy pushing carriages. Older children can collect leaves for collages or enjoy specialty stores.

Prop Boxes

Portable containers can go inside or outside. Keep all items safe for infants. Include board books or laminated pictures. Possible themes are: house play, restaurant, grocery store, camping, doctor, veterinarian or a teddy bear picnic.



ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE EVERYONE

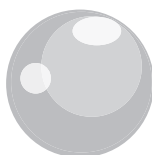
Picture File

Collect pictures that relate to infant and toddler interests. Parent magazines and junk mail are resources. Trim to highlight the main item. Cut small enough for little hands. File them by topic. When an interest arises, pull out the file.



Discover the Picture

Glue a colored paper or a picture onto cardboard and seal it with clear contact paper or lamination. Put it inside a sandwich or freezer bag with some tempera paint. Seal well with glue or duct tape. Babies can move the paint around to reveal the color or picture.



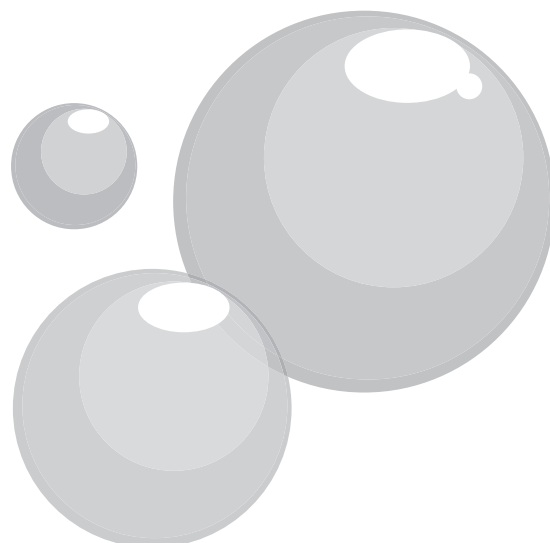
Move like Animals

Toddlers and older children can pretend to be animals. Playing a guessing game for teams of mixed ages can be fun. The babies can watch and laugh.

Art in a Bottle

Use clear baby oil bottles, small enough for little hands to hold when full. Empty out half the baby oil and replace with water and a few drops of food coloring. Secure the cap with super glue or hot glue. Tip and shake for designs to appear.

Variation: Water bottles - Fill half-way with water. Add colorful things that float or sink, color beads, metallic confetti, cork, or plastic toys. Seal well.

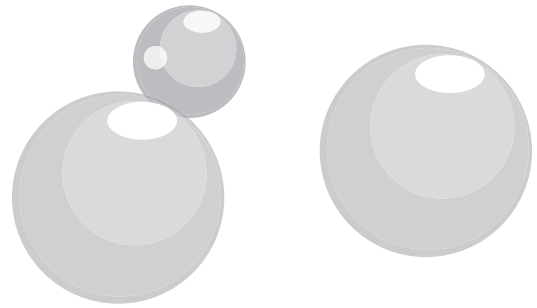


Songs for Transitions

Children will listen and cooperate more with routines and transitions if instructions are sung. You will be more relaxed, too!

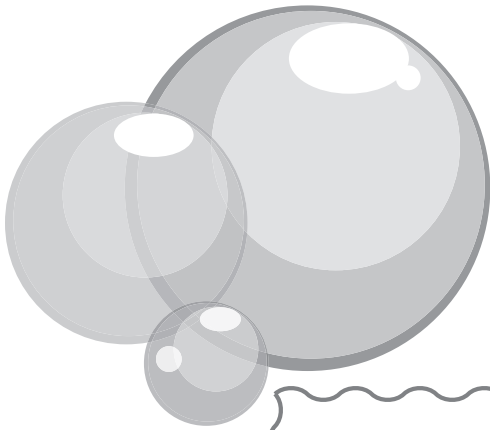
Sing a classic

Clean up, clean up,
Everybody, everywhere.
Clean up, clean up
Everybody do your share.



Try a two-pitch chant

Clean hands, clean hands,
We want clean hands.



Make up a song

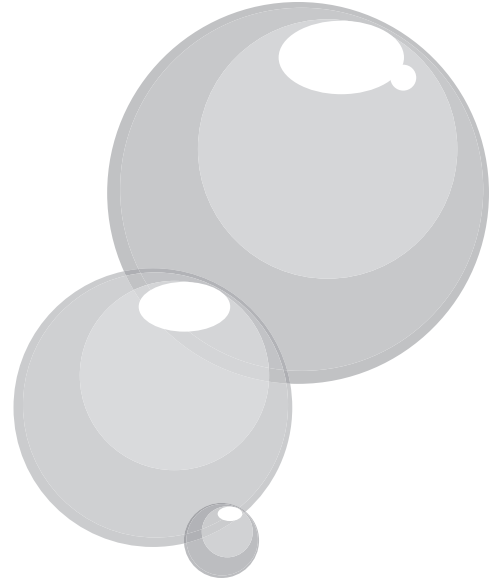
Let's get your shoes on,
Shoes on, shoes on.
Let's get your shoes on,
Then we'll go outside.



Children Dancing Together

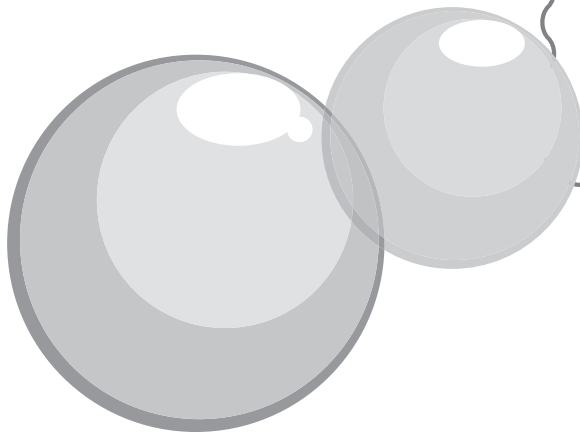
Circle Dances

If holding hands is too difficult, let them hold onto a hula hoop for “Ring around the Rosie”.



Partner Dances

Sit facing and holding hands, rocking back and forth to “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Toddlers can briefly hold hands and dance together while standing.



RESOURCES

Books for Children about Families and Separation

- Buckley, Helen E, Ormerod, Jan. Grandfather and I
- Comb, Bobbie. 123 A Family Counting Book
- Joffe, Laura Numeroff. What Grandpas Do Best
- Munsch, Robert. Love You Forever
- Pellegrini, Nina. Families are Different
- Skutch, Robert. Who's in a Family?
- Trayser, Laura. My Mommy and Me: A Lift-the-flap Story Separation
- Brown, Margaret Wise. The Runaway Bunny
- Christian, Cheryl. Where's the Baby?
- Cohen, Miriam. Will I Have a Friend?
- Corey, Dorothy. You Go Away
- Got, Yves. Where's Sam?
- Hill, Eric. Where's Spot? (Picture Puffins)
- Johnson, Dolores. What Will Mommy Do When I'm at School?
- McCormick, Wendy. Daddy, Will You Miss Me?
- Munsch, Robert. Stephanie's Ponytail
- Ross, Anna. Knock, Knock, Who's There?
- Wells, Rosemary. Timothy Goes to School
- Wells, Rosemary. Yoko & Friends School Days: Mama, Don't Go! – Book #1

Books for Children about Daily Routines

Eating

- Degen, Bruce. Jamberry
- Gelbard, Jane, et al. My Bye-Bye Bottle Book
- Hoban, Russell. Bread and Jam for Frances
- McGovern, Ann. Stone Soup
- Patricelli, Leslie. Yummy, Yucky
- Touch and Feel Mealtime. DK Publishing

Dental Care

- Rogers, Fred. Going to the Dentist

Toileting

- Borgardt, Marianne. What Do You Do with a Potty?
- Cole, Joanna. My Big Girl Potty
- Cole, Joanna. Your New Potty
- Gomi, Taro. Everyone Poops
- Mayer, Gina. The New Potty
- Rogers, Fred, et al. Going to the Potty
- Sesame Street. I Have To Go

Sleeping

- Brown, Margaret Wise. Good Night Moon
- Fox, Menn. Time for Bed
- Fujikawa, Gyo. Good Night, Sleep Tight: Shhh
- Hudson, Cheryl Willis. Good Night, Baby
- Katz, Karen. Counting Kisses
- London, Jonathan. What Do You Love?
- Long, Sylvia. Hush Little Baby
- Mayer, Mercer. Just a Nap
- Roffey, Maureen. Upstairs
- Scary, Richard. Goodnight Little Bear
- Wells, Rosemary. Goodnight, Max

Dressing

- Dewan, Ted. Bing, Get Dressed
- Parr, Todd. Underwear Do's and Don'ts

Books for Children on Feelings and Behavior

- Alborough, Jez. Hug
- Boynton, Sandra. Snuggle Puppy
- Brandt, Amy. Benjamin Comes Back
- Carle, Eric. The Very Hungry Caterpillar
- Carle, Eric. The Very Busy Spider
- Carle, Eric. The Grouchy Ladybug
- French, Vivian. Not Again, Anna
- Hughes, Shirley. Being Together
- Kasza, Keiko. When the Elephant Walks
- Lara, Adair. Oopsie! Ouchie!
- Mayer, Mercer. I Was So Mad
- Mayer, Mercer. Me Too!
- Mayer, Mercer. When I Get Bigger
- Shannon, David. No, David!
- Shannon, David. David Gets in Trouble
- Siddals, Mary McKenna. I'll Play with You
- Watt, Fiona. That's Not My Bunny
- Watt, Fiona. That's Not My Kitten
- Watt, Fiona. That's Not My Teddy
- Watt, Fiona. That's Not My Train
- Worth, Bonnie. Bye, Bye Blankie
- Young, Dianne. Purple Hair? I Don't Care!

Books for Children about Learning

- Albee, Sarah. Budgie and Pippa Count to Ten
- Awdry, Rev. W. Thomas' Busy Day
- Big Trucks and Diggers. Caterpillar
- Davis, Billy. Tap the Tambourine!
- Dr. Seuss. The Cat in the Hat's Great Big Flap Book
- Falconer, Ian. Olivia Counts
- Falconer, Ian. Olivia's Opposites
- Freeman, Don. Courduroy Goes to the Doctor
- Freeman, Don. Courduroy's Busy Street
- Freeman, Don. Courduroy's Party
- Kenyon, Tony. Pat-a-cake
- Maccarone, Grace. Cars! Cars! Cars!
- Maccarone, Grace. Oink, Moo! How Do You Do?
- Martin, Bill. Polar Bear, Polar Bear
- Martin, Bill Jr. & Archambault, John. Here Are My Hands
- McGrath, Barbara B. M & M's Counting Board Book
- Meyer, Mary. You Choose
- Miller, Margaret. Baby Talk
- Murphy, Chuck. Slide 'n Seek Colors
- Nobles, Kristen. Drive This Book
- Opie, Iona. Humpty Dumpty and Other Rhymes
- Opie, Iona. Little Boy Blue
- Pandell, Karen. Around the House
- Pandell, Karen. In the Yard
- Pandell, Karen & Tomie de Paola. I Love You, Sun, I Love You, Moon
- Patricelli, Leslie. Big Little
- Patricelli, Leslie. Quiet Loud
- Paul, Ann W. Hello Toes! Hello Feet!
- Pfister, Marcus. Rainbow Fish Counting
- Regan, Dana. Wheels on the Bus
- Rowe, Jeanette. Whose Feet?
- Tallarico, Tony. What's Opposite?
- Tangvald, Christine & Rondi. My Two Feet
- Tangvald, Christine & Rondi. My Two Hands
- The Big Book of Things that Go. DK Publishing
- Tonka Books – The Garbage Truck. Scholastic
- Tonka Books – The Steam Roller. Scholastic
- Touch and Feel Farm. DK Publishing
- Touch and Feel Home. DK Publishing
- Wells, Rosemary. Itsy Bitsy Spider
- Wells, Rosemary. Old MacDonald

Books for Children about Children

- Bailey, Debbie. My Friends
- Brandt, Amy. Benjamin Comes Back/Benjamin Regresa
- Cole, Joanna. I'm a Big Sister
- Cole, Joanna. New Baby at Your House
- Greenfield, Eloise. She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl
- Harris, Robie H. Happy Birthday!
- Holub, Joan. What Can Our New Baby Do?
- Lasky, Kathryn, et al. Baby for Max
- Meyers, Susan. Everywhere Babies
- Numeroff, Laura. If You Give a Mouse a Cookie
- Numeroff, Laura. If You Give a Pig a Pancake
- Ormerod, Jan. Mom's Back
- Ormerod, Jan. Bend and Stretch
- Rogers, Fred. The New Baby: A Mister Rogers' First Experience
- Titherington, Jeanne. A Place for Ben
- Williams, Vera B. More, More, More Said the Baby
- Ziefert, Harriet. Waiting for Baby