

Help your child learn and grow

As your child's first teacher, you can help his or her learning and brain development. Try these simple tips and activities in a safe way. Talk with your child's doctor and teachers if you have questions or for more ideas on how to help your child's development.



- Encourage “free play,” where your child can follow her interests, try new things, and use things in new ways.
- Use positive words and give more attention to behaviors you want to see (“wanted behaviors”), than to those you don’t want to see. For example, say “I like how you gave Jordan the toy.”
- Give your child food choices that are simple and healthy. Let him choose what to eat for a snack or what to wear. Limit choices to two or three.
- Ask your child simple questions about books and stories. Ask questions, such as “Who?” “What?” and “Where?”
- Help your child learn how to play with other children. Show him how by helping him share, take turns, and use his “words.”
- Let your child “draw” with crayons on paper, shaving cream on a tray, or chalk on a sidewalk. If you draw a straight line, see if she will copy you. When she gets good at lines, show her how to draw a circle.
- Let your child play with other children, such as at a park or library. Ask about local play groups and pre-school programs. Playing with others helps him learn the value of sharing and friendship.
- Eat family meals together as much as you can. Give the same meal to everyone. Enjoy each other’s company and avoid screen time (TV, tablets, and phones, etc.) during meals.
- Limit screen time (TV, tablets, phones, etc.) to no more than 1 hour per day of a children’s program with an adult present. Children learn by talking, playing, and interacting with others.
- Use words to describe things to your child, such as big/small, fast/slow, on/off, and in/out.
- Help your child do simple puzzles with shapes, colors, or animals. Name each piece when your child puts it in place.
- Play with your child outside. For example, take your child to the park to climb on equipment and run in safe areas.
- Allow your child to eat as much or as little as she wants at each meal. Your job is to offer her healthy foods and it’s your child’s job to decide if and how much she wants to eat.

To see more tips and activities download CDC’s Milestone Tracker app.

This milestone checklist is not a substitute for a standardized, validated developmental screening tool. These developmental milestones show what most children (75% or more) can do by each age. Subject matter experts selected these milestones based on available data and expert consensus.

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