

Readiness Starts Early: Tips for Promoting Your Child's Learning

	Birth-12 Months	12-24 Months	24–36 Months
Communication/ Language	Share a book about animals, such as farm animals or zoo animals. Talk with your child about the animal's name, what it looks like, and maybe the sound the animal makes. Spend more time on pictures of interest to your infant.	Share a picture book with your child. Describe pictures your child points to. Encourage your child to point to pictured items that you name. Spend more time on pages of special interest to your child.	Ask your child what might happen next in a story you read. Emphasize clues if your child seems uncertain. It is not necessary for your child's idea to be correct. Doing this with a familiar book supports memory skills.
Cognitive	Encourage your infant to feel two small toys with different textures, such as soft versus hard, or bumpy versus smooth. Describe how your child explores each toy.	Support your child's understanding of big and small by comparing sizes of toys, chairs, cups, windows in your home, people, cars, and trucks.	Put together a collection of your child's small toys that he/she can sort by color or type. Use different areas of a table or floor for your child to make small groups of things that are the same.
Self-Regulation	Support concentration skill by encouraging your child to watch you help two dolls or soft toys with arms take turns waving at each other. Then invite your child to exchange waves with one or both of the dolls/toys.	Strengthen your child's skill in looking at details by putting two or more identical items in a small basket. Examples: spoons, forks, cups. Invite your child to put together things that are the same. Add challenge by using different sizes.	Encourage your child to find pictures of a character or object that appears throughout a book. This helps promote concentration skill.
Social-Emotional	Place a small toy in each of 3–4 plastic cups or openings in a muffin pan. Encourage your infant to play with you in taking toys out of the cups or muffin pan openings, one at a time. Talk about your infant's actions.	Use puppets, or socks as puppets, to engage your toddler in pretend play about a simple topic of interest, such as what to cook for a special meal. Have your puppet ask questions that engage your child in a conversation.	Engage your child in a play activity in which each of you tells the other what you are doing. Experiences in describing what we are doing can enrich pretend play and help us notice someone else's ideas and actions.
Physical/Health	Provide opportunities for your infant to shake a rattle. Support the infant's use of one or two hands to hold the rattle. You may wish to emphasize how the rattle is quiet when we stop moving our hand(s).	Provide your toddler with supervised practice in crawling or walking up and down 1–2 steps. Lightly place one hand on your child's back when going up. Offer your hand for walking. Provide support for turning around.	Support your child's hand movement skills by providing markers or crayons of different colors for making any types of marks on white paper. Draw attention to how your child uses his/her hand to manage the crayon/marker.

