






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

Birth–12 Months

12–24 Months

24–36 Months

 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Look with your infant at some pictures that show members of your family or another family. Name and point to people in a picture. Describe your child's reactions to the pictures.</p>	<p>Talk with your child about pictures that show a person or book character with a happy face. If you know the song "If You're Happy and You Know It," sing it to your child with actions your child enjoys watching or doing.</p>	<p>Talk with your child about words your family uses to greet someone, such as "hello" and "hi," and to say "goodbye." Invite your child to practice saying the words. Offer "hello" in another language, if you know it.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Show or offer your child two items that represent contrasting solid and bold colors, such as red and blue. Your child is not expected to learn color names at this early age, but looking at contrasting colors can strengthen a child's vision.</p>	<p>Provide a tub with a small amount of warm water and several cups for your child to explore in pouring water. Invite your child to hold water in his/her hands. This activity can also be done during bath time.</p>	<p>Provide play dough and two animal or people toys of different sizes. Invite your child to use the dough to make small pretend food items for the small toy and bigger food items for the bigger toy.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Place 1–2 floatable toys slightly out of the reach of your infant during bathing. Put the toy(s) in front of your child. Respond enthusiastically when your child persists in reaching for or grasping the toy.</p>	<p>Invite your child to join you in moving your bodies to music that you manage. Turn off the music and stop moving your bodies. Repeat. This is a fun way to promote self-control and paying attention.</p>	<p>Support your toddler in calming down after a stimulating activity by encouraging him/her to relax arms, put hands in lap (if sitting), breathe slowly and deeply, and close eyes briefly. Sing or hum a gentle song for your child.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Help your child look at himself/herself in a nonbreakable mirror. Talk about facial expressions and features your infant sees, including changes in expressions. It is fine for your young child to not realize he/she is looking at himself/herself.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to make happy and sad faces with you. You may wish to include facial expressions for other feelings that would be of interest to your child. Talk about what your faces look like. Emphasize how the shape of our mouth is different with a happy face and a sad face.</p>	
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Support hand muscles and coordination by encouraging your child to move a small object from one hand to the other hand. Encourage holding one object in each hand and tapping the two objects together.</p>	<p>Secure a simple puzzle with chunky pieces and/or pieces with pegs. Invite your toddler to pick up, hold, and feel each piece, one at a time. Compare how the pieces feel. It is not necessary to put the puzzle together.</p>	<p>Secure a scarf or piece of light fabric. Gently toss the scarf into the air for your child to catch. Emphasize watching the scarf move in the air, extending arms, and catching the scarf with both hands open. Support repeated practice.</p>