






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

Birth–12 Months

12–24 Months

24–36 Months






 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Help your infant notice images in pictures with high-contrast illustrations, such as a black kitten against a white background. A play mat may have high-contrast images. Looking at the contrasts can support vision growth.</p>	<p>Look at a book or pictures of zoo animals with your toddler. Name and describe each animal as your child points to its picture. Encourage your child to join you in making the sound the animal makes.</p>	<p>Look at a book or pictures of zoo animals with your child. Encourage your child to say the names of animals of interest. For each animal, encourage your child to make the animal's sound and to move his/her body the way the animal moves.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Take your infant on a tour of your home. Stop to talk about things on the walls and what can be seen through a window. Point to and describe objects of interest to your infant.</p>	<p>Provide dry or wet sand for your child to manipulate with hands, small containers, or scoops. Describe your toddler's efforts.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to use toy blocks or similar items to build a road for a toy vehicle. Invite your child to tell about the road. Is it short or long? Straight or curved? Where does the road go? Does it take a long time to get there?</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Support your infant's attention skills by slowly moving an interesting toy back and forth in front of your child. Describe how your child is watching the toy. Slowly change the movement, such as going up and down or in a circle.</p>	<p>Support your toddler's concentration skills by encouraging him/her to watch you help a toy fish swim in pretend water, with stops to eat and sleep. Your child may want to say where to swim and when to stop for a rest.</p>	<p>Sing the "Wheels on the Bus" or any song with arm or hand actions. Invite your child to watch you move arms or hands with the words in the song, such as wheels going round and round. Encourage your child to follow along.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Sit with your infant in your lap, facing you. Make a happy face and describe your child's response, such as smiles or coos. Use your infant's response to build a back-and-forth interaction.</p>	<p>Join your child in playing with similar toys in similar ways. Examples: "You are going 'vroom' with your car. I will go 'vroom' with my car." "My horse is hungry. Is your cow hungry? Maybe we can feed our animals."</p>	<p>Play a simple board game or with a collection of small toys that provides practice in taking turns. Offer reminders about whose turn is next. Praise patience in waiting for a turn.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Support your child's body balance and control. Place several colorful toys on the floor in front of your infant, about 12 inches away. Talk about the infant's efforts to look at or reach a toy, such as lifting head during tummy time.</p>	<p>Invite your child to join you in moving hands and arms to a simple nursery rhyme, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Examples: open and close hands, reach high.</p>	<p>Invite your toddler to move his/her body in different ways. Examples: Touch your nose, touch your toes. Turn around, touch the ground. Reach up high, stretch to the sky. Thumb straight up, thumb straight down.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Share a favorite book with your infant. Encourage your child to join you in pointing to things you name or describe in a picture. Invite your child to help you turn pages or flaps in the book, if appropriate.</p>	<p>Make the sounds of farm or zoo animals that are familiar to your child, one at a time. Invite your child to repeat the sound and tell what animal makes the sound. Encourage your child to make an animal sound for you to identify.</p>	<p>Provide experiences in listening to and making quieter and louder sounds. Offer a quiet version and then a louder version of the same sound for your toddler to repeat. Include a whisper! Use animal sounds and familiar words.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Provide a small amount of warm water in a clean tray for your infant to touch or splash while sitting in a highchair or on the floor. Describe your child's actions and reactions to the water.</p>	<p>Encourage your toddler to take apart a fit-together toy, such as snap beads or Mega® or Duplo® blocks. Taking apart a fit-together toy can help a toddler look closely at the details of a toy and understand how it works. Offer hands-on assistance if necessary.</p>	
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Help your infant calm down after a stimulating activity. Hold your child, use a soothing voice and maybe sing a gentle song, and offer physical comfort, such as pats on your child's back.</p>	<p>Help your toddler calm down after a stimulating activity. Encourage your child to breathe slowly and deeply, and to put hands in lap or to the side. Sing or hum a gentle song. Rub your child's back softly.</p>	<p>Help your toddler practice calming down by breathing slowly and deeply. Gently say "in, out." Invite your child to lie flat with a soft toy on his/her tummy, and watch the toy move up and down while breathing slowly and deeply.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Support a back-and-forth interaction with your infant by providing a small bucket and soft blocks or other small toys. Encourage your child to take turns with you in dropping a toy into the bucket.</p>	<p>Join your child in playing with toys he/she especially likes. Ask and gently describe what your child is doing. Use a similar toy to do what your child is doing.</p>	<p>Provide a few different-colored crayons or markers and a sheet of white paper for you and your child to share. Take turns in selecting a crayon/marker and making a dot on the paper. Put aside used crayons/markers.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Engage your infant in play with 1–2 rings of a stacking toy or soft toys that are easy for your infant to hold. Play with the toys in a way that provides practice in reaching for and grasping a toy, one at a time.</p>	<p>Play a game of rolling a ball back and forth with your child. Draw attention to pushing and catching. Emphasize how you are using your hands. Try different types of balls.</p>	<p>Provide your child with safe experiences in stepping up and down from one step. If a stepper is available, create a simple indoor obstacle course for your child to follow that includes the stepper as a pretend bridge.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Explore with your infant a book that shows familiar things that make a sound, such as a puppy. Say the sound made by each item, such as a gentle bark for a puppy. Emphasize different kinds of sounds.</p>	<p>Explore different types of sounds with your child by mimicking the sounds made by things in your home, such as a doorbell or phone. Invite your child to make the sounds. Compare by making two different sounds back to back.</p>	<p>Support your child's understanding of how books work by talking about why a book has a cover, pictures, and words. Also, ask your child what books he/she would take on a pretend trip or want to share with a special friend.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Provide two different small toys for your child to explore. A very young infant may explore by looking. An older infant may touch or mouth one or both toys. Describe what your infant does.</p>	<p>Support your child's thinking skills with a flap book or a book that offers clues about what we will see on the next page. Your child will have fun telling you what may be under the flap or on the next page.</p>	<p>Without your child watching, collect some of his/her favorite small toys and familiar items, such as a toothbrush. One at a time, hide a toy/item in a bag. Give clues about the item and invite your child to figure out what it is.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Encourage your infant to watch a rattle that you gently shake and move back and forth. You may wish to hide the rattle while your child is watching and then excitedly "find" the rattle.</p>	<p>Secure a small toy animal. Encourage your toddler to watch you move the toy around and then hide it under one of 2–3 containers. Support memory skills by asking where the animal is hiding.</p>	
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Sit with your infant facing you. Mimic your child's facial expression or make a silly face and wait for a response. Use facial expressions to interact with your baby. Include pauses so your infant can make a face or respond to yours.</p>	<p>Provide two balls of play dough, one for you and one for your toddler. Play together with the dough. Your toddler will enjoy your watching and imitating his/her play. Comment on your toddler noticing what you do with your dough.</p>	<p>Support your child in pretend play, such as cooking, running a store, or building a farm. Follow your child's lead. Help by providing materials, asking how things work, and participating as a play partner in ways that support your child's ideas.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Enthusiastically respond to any attempt your infant makes to move an arm or leg, such as putting forward an arm while on tummy, moving legs into a crawling position, or kicking legs while on back.</p>	<p>Support your toddler's hand movement skills with a child-size paintbrush, crayons, or markers. Encourage your child to make different types of marks, such as using a paintbrush to make water marks on an outdoor surface.</p>	<p>Provide practice in pouring. Secure several bottles that are slim enough for your child to hold. Put about four inches of warm water in a tub with a rug or towel underneath. Talk about the ways your child uses his/her hands to pour.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Support your child's understanding of big and small by comparing sizes of toys, chairs, cups, windows in your home, people, cars, and trucks.</p>	<p>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.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to find pictures of a character or object that appears throughout a book. This helps promote concentration skill.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>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).</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

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 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Offer 2–3 small toys plus a cup or container for your child to explore. Your infant may try putting toys in the cup. Describe the items and what your child does with them.</p>	<p>Engage your child in building with toy blocks or some other type of building material. Your child may like to construct a road to a special destination, such as a farm, or a fence around a yard or pasture for keeping an animal safe.</p>	<p>Support your child's problem-solving skills by inviting him/her to use blocks for building a pretend house for a favorite toy. Gently encourage thinking about whether the building is big enough.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Provide repeated experiences in calming down after a stimulating activity. Hold your infant, talk softly, hum or sing a gentle tune, and explain it is time for us to calm down.</p>	<p>Provide your child with practice in calming down. Encourage your child to breathe slowly and deeply, and to close his/her eyes or look at one thing for a short while.</p>	<p>Provide your child with practice in calming down. Encourage breathing slowly and deeply while lying down. Suggest your child put a relaxed, open hand on his/her tummy to feel up and down movements while breathing.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Let your child know you are tuned into him/her by describing your child's responses to pictures or sounds during a book sharing. Examples: "Your eyes are looking at the big elephant." "You made a noise when you saw the kitty."</p>	<p>Support your child's experiences in making something with another person. Take turns in adding an item to the creation, such as blocks in a tower, or beads in a snap bead chain.</p>	<p>Invite your child to join you in preparing a simple food item. The process of making something with another person is just as important as the finished product.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Support reaching and grasping skills by putting 1–2 appealing toys about 12 inches in front of a young infant during tummy time or by encouraging an older infant to move large snap beads or similar toys from one bowl to another.</p>	<p>Make up a simple song or use a familiar song that encourages your child to clap his/her hands as part of the words. Your child may wish to sing with you. Provide experiences in clapping softly and clapping loudly.</p>	<p>Provide your child with practice in controlling arm movements. Offer a paper streamer, scarf, or light towel for your child to move when you say "swing, swing, back and forth." Suddenly say "stop!" Change arms and repeat.</p>

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 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Provide experience in selecting a toy to play with by offering two toys of interest to your infant. Name and describe the selected toy. Set aside the toy not selected or use the not-selected toy for your own play alongside your infant.</p>	<p>Toddlers enjoy carrying things. Invite your toddler to carry small objects, one at a time, from a basket near you to a table or other location in the room. Make up a story about the trip, such as taking toy ducks to a pretend pond.</p>	<p>Provide practice with spatial awareness skill by encouraging your toddler to move a pull toy on a route in your home that you describe or develop with your child. Create a pull toy by attaching yarn or rope to a small box.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Encourage your infant's persistence in reaching for a favorite item by placing 2–3 toys 9–12 inches in front of him/her when on tummy or near the edge of a low table if your infant can stand. Adjust distance as needed. Clap when reached.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to follow your lead in putting arms up, down, and in front of your body. Repeat with word requests only. Ask, "What comes next?" Repeat again with a change in sequence and/or add an action, such as arms out to side.</p>	<p>Support your child's understanding of how a puzzle works. Show and describe how pieces fit and offer clues about where pieces go. Begin with a simple puzzle that has a few large pieces, preferably with nobs for easy grip.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Engage in playful interactions with your infant and a teddy bear or cuddly animal toy. Make the toy wave hello and goodbye to your infant and encourage your infant to do the same. Talk about your infant's responses, such as smiles.</p>	<p>Use a teddy bear or doll to play with your toddler. Encourage your child to help the toy touch its nose, toes, and ears, reach for the sky, and turn around. If a second teddy or doll is available, use it to follow along with your toddler.</p>	<p>Play follow the leader with your child. Each of you uses a scarf or similar item to wave in different, creative ways. Take turns being a leader and follower. Start with simple actions and add more complex moves as appropriate.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>The next time your infant plays with a rattle or bell, talk about how he/she is using a hand(s) to shake the toy. Draw attention to how the toy makes a noise when your baby shakes or moves it.</p>	<p>Provide practice in coordinated body movements by helping your toddler roll his/her body with arms to the side or hands together at the top of head. Suggest your child begin on his/her back and imagine he/she is a hot dog!</p>	<p>Provide a ball of soft play dough about the size of your toddler's fist. Encourage your child to flatten the ball with both hands and to make things of interest with his/her hand. Fingerprints are fun to make and see.</p>

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 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for your infant to notice differences in toys. Offer two toys that are different, such as a smooth and a bumpy ball, or a large and a small soft toy. Describe how your infant explores the toys. Looking is a way to explore.</p>	<p>Provide 2–4 dolls and/or teddy bears and a basket of small toys. Encourage your child to pick one toy for each doll/bear to play with. Then pretend the dolls want different toys! Return toys to the basket and repeat, again one toy per doll.</p>	<p>Provide a ball of soft play dough for your toddler to split into two parts. Have them make a creation from each part (two creations total). When done, invite your child to hold one creation in each hand. Emphasize one hand, one creation.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Support concentration skill by moving a puppet (or sock as a pretend puppet) while your infant watches. Observe your infant's gaze to know whether it is time for different moves or to stop. Offer chances to touch or hold the puppet.</p>	<p>Secure two toy frogs, bunnies, or small items that are make-believe animals. Make one of the toys hop and encourage your toddler to do the same with his/her toy. Stop periodically for a rest or food. Change roles so your toddler can lead.</p>	<p>Sing a nursery rhyme with hand/body actions that you know or want to learn, such as "I'm a Little Teapot" or "Itsy Bitsy Spider." Encourage your toddler to watch and copy your actions. Talk about your child's favorite movements.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Use a toy car or a toy with moving parts to engage your infant in play. Describe and move the car's wheels. Gently move the car on a flat surface. Encourage your infant to hold and explore the car. Describe what he/she does.</p>	<p>The next time your toddler plays with a toy, show you are tuned into his/her actions by gently describing what you see. Ask whether you could play along by doing the same thing with a different toy. Follow your child's lead.</p>	<p>Invite your toddler to draw something with you, using a large sheet of paper and crayons or markers. Encourage your child to suggest what to draw and decide who will draw what. Talk about what each of you is doing.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Help your infant develop muscle strength and balance while sitting in your lap. If young, support head and back so your baby can freely move arms. If your infant sits independently, offer a fun toy your infant can reach by extending arms.</p>	<p>Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It" or a song that supports your offering body movements for your toddler to follow. Examples: clap our hands, stomp our feet, swing our arms back and forth, march in place.</p>	<p>Support hand control by giving your child a bell or shaker for each hand (two total). It is fine to have a bell in one hand and a shaker in the other hand. Give guidance on when to shake/ring one or the other or both, and on how loudly and softly.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Play <i>Peekaboo</i> with your infant. Describe your infant's response to seeing your face. Use your open hands to cover your face if a blanket or other type of cloth upsets your child.</p>	<p>Invite your toddler to act out one or two exciting parts of a familiar story, such as "Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed."</p>	<p>Encourage your child to tell you parts of a favorite storybook. Invite your child to tell what happens first and what happens next in the story.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Provide a soft, cuddly toy and a toy with a smooth surface for your infant to feel. If your infant is older, offer a plastic ring and a silky fabric for your infant to put into and pull through the ring. Describe your infant's explorations.</p>	<p>Offer your toddler safe experiences in exploring what happens to a tub of water when toys of different size or weight are gently dropped into the water, and when more water is poured into the tub.</p>	<p>Collect some of your child's small toys. Invite him/her to find toys that are the same in some way. Examples: same color; same type of part, such as wheels.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Provide practice and help for your infant to calm down after a stimulating experience. Hold your infant, sing or talk softly, and pat his/her back.</p>	<p>Provide practice and support for your toddler to calm down after a stimulating activity. Explain it is time to calm down. Encourage your child to sit quietly. Pat his/her back and sing or talk softly.</p>	<p>Yoga is a proven way to help us calm our minds and bodies. Invite your child to make a tree pose. It is fine to stand on both feet if using one foot creates a balance challenge.</p> 
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Use a rattle, bell, or similar toy to engage your infant in back-and-forth play. Shake the toy and then invite your infant to shake the toy. Mimic what your infant does with the toy. Emphasize you are making sounds together!</p>	<p>Pretend you and your toddler each have a telephone. Engage in a conversation using your imaginary phones. Talk about your day, what you ate or will eat, and other topics of interest to your child.</p>	<p>Use chairs or a couch in your home as seats on a pretend bus. Take your child on an imaginary trip to a place of interest to your child. What do you see along the way? What do you do when you arrive? Who drives?</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Invite your infant to hold a small item in his/her hand and then let it drop to the floor or into a container. Describe how his/her hand is closed and then open. Encourage an older infant to use the opposite hand and both hands.</p>	<p>Create a simple path in your home for your toddler to walk on. Include some turns or gentle curves. When your child reaches the destination, invite him/her to walk back to the starting point.</p>	<p>Support hand muscle development by encouraging your child to dress and/or pretend to feed a doll.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Young children enjoy looking at pictures of babies. Show your child some pictures of babies in your extended family, including pictures of your own child. Talk about what the baby is doing in a picture.</p>	<p>Engage your toddler in play with water sprayers, such as spray bottles, and/or a tub with a small amount of warm water and a colander. Describe how the water is falling like rain.</p>	<p>Engage your child in play with wind by using a small fan or playing out-of-doors on a windy day. Select a few items to find out if they blow in the wind. Use the words <i>up</i> and <i>down</i> to describe the movement of the items.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Select familiar textured objects to share with your infant, such as socks with grippers at the bottom, stuffed animals, a bib, and a washcloth. Encourage your infant to touch each object as you describe how it feels and say its name.</p>	<p>Name items of clothing when you help your child get dressed. Invite your toddler to say the names with you.</p>	<p>Gather in a pile some clothing items your toddler will wear for the day. Name and describe items for your toddler to find.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Select a few simple toys or items of interest to your infant, such as a car or ball. Support your infant's concentration skill by encouraging your infant to watch you manipulate an item, such as dropping a ball into a container.</p>	<p>Invite your toddler to dance to his/her favorite music. Encourage your child to stop dancing and try to stand still when you stop the music. You can play the game without music by simply saying "dance" and "stop dancing." This simple game can support your child's skill in paying attention and remembering what to do.</p>	
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Look in a handheld, nonbreakable mirror with your infant. Point out facial features. Encourage your infant to touch parts of his/her face, such as nose and mouth, and parts of your face.</p>	<p>Provide a small ball of play dough or a piece of paper and age-appropriate drawing tools for your toddler to use in making his/her face or your face. Remind your toddler that a face has eyes, a nose, and a mouth. Be flexible about what your toddler decides to include.</p>	
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Sit or kneel on the floor with your infant. Provide support for your child to stand, such as holding your infant's torso. Describe what your infant can see while standing.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to gently shake a bell, maraca, shaker, and/or rattle. Use a mix of slower and faster rates of shaking. Point out how our hand movements make the sound.</p>	<p>Fill one large bowl halfway with water or a dry material. Leave a second large bowl empty. Provide cups, spoons, or scoops for your toddler to use in transferring the water or material to the empty bowl.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Infants like to look at faces! Talk with your infant about facial expressions by showing pictures of children's faces and/or by making different types of facial expressions to your infant.</p>	<p>Support your toddler's knowledge of action words by describing what you are doing when preparing a meal or putting away groceries. Examples: "I am reaching high to put away cereal." "I am moving my hand to stir our soup."</p>	<p>Offer a sponge and a small tub of warm water for your toddler to make different kinds of pretend rain sounds. Focus on how the sponge is squeezed, such as slow and fast. How does the "rain" sound?</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Support your infant in playing with a sound-making toy or a pop-up toy. Talk about how your infant's actions with the toy can make something happen.</p>	<p>Offer a toy that your child can take apart, such as two or more large snap beads that you connect. Show how to put the toy back together, if appropriate. An older toddler may enjoy a more complex fit-together toy, such as star builders.</p>	
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Place your infant in your arms or sitting with support across from you, so he/she can see your face. Move your mouth to make different types of sounds, such as a "raspberry" sound with your lips. Describe your child's reactions.</p>	<p>Support your toddler's concentration skill by putting in a basket some small items that include items that are the same color or are identical. Pull one item from the basket and ask your child to find another item that is the same.</p>	<p>Provide your child with practice in matching identical picture cards, such as cards in a memory game. Start with 6–10 cards (3–5 matches) on a table in random order, face up. Encourage your child to look at picture details.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>If your infant is awake and alert when you arrive at or leave your child development center, encourage him/her to wave at some of the people you see together. Say the name of the person your child is greeting.</p>	<p>Show pictures of people in your larger family, such as your child's cousins or grandparents. Encourage your child to say with you the name of each person.</p>	<p>Read with your child a book that involves two or more children doing things together. Talk with your child about what the children do and how they get along.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Encourage your child to use both hands to hold and explore a toy. Support use of each hand, one at a time or together, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Provide your toddler with experience in throwing or rolling a large soft ball to try to knock over empty milk jugs.</p>	<p>Offer your toddler safe practice in jumping. Emphasize how we use our legs, feet, and knees. We bend our knees, we lift both feet, and we land on both of our feet.</p>

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

Birth–12 Months

12–24 Months

24–36 Months

 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Share with your infant a book that includes pictures of some familiar objects. Examples: car, pet, fingers, hat. Name and describe the objects, especially items that your infant points to or looks at intently.</p>	<p>Invite your toddler to join you in pointing to eyes, ears, nose, and toes on your own bodies. Add challenge by including other body parts of interest, such as tummy and legs. Invite your child to say names with you.</p>	<p>Strengthen your child's understanding of the names of important body parts by encouraging him/her to touch head, nose, knees, and toes as you say each. Add challenge by changing the order in which parts are touched.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Offer 1–2 soft balls for your infant to explore by looking, touching, holding, or maybe mouthing. If available, a clear ball with an object inside may interest your infant. Describe your infant's actions.</p>	<p>Offer nesting cups or other easy-to-hold items that fit into each other. Encourage your child to explore how the items can fit into each other and also how the items can be stacked when turned over.</p>	<p>Invite your toddler to use blocks to build a boat for one or more favorite toys. Encourage your child to think and talk about the size of the boat in relation to the size of the toy(s).</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Provide practice in calming down after a stimulating activity. Hold your infant in your lap or arms, sing or hum a gentle tune, and pat your infant's back. Explain we are calming down.</p>	<p>Provide practice and support for your toddler to calm down after a stimulating activity. Explain it is time to calm down. Encourage your child to sit quietly. Pat his/her back and sing or talk softly.</p>	<p>Invite your child to make a frog (yoga) pose.</p> 
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Watch and describe how your infant plays with a favorite toy. Talk about how your child explores and responds to the toy. Example: "You have a big smile when you shake your rattle. Your rattle makes a noise!"</p>	<p>Make up a simple song or saying that includes names of people in your family. Encourage your toddler to clap whenever you say his/her name.</p>	<p>The next time your toddler plays with a toy, ask if you can play alongside with a different toy. Talk about what you are doing. Invite your toddler to also talk about what he/she is doing.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Offer a soft toy for your infant to feel and maybe hold. Encourage an older infant to touch or hold the toy with both hands.</p>	<p>Invite your toddler to use different types of art tools to make marks on a blank piece of paper. Examples: paintbrush dipped in water, crayon, marker. Talk about differences in the marks and how your child holds the tools.</p>	<p>Offer a song or rhyme that includes hand and other body actions, such as "I'm a Little Teapot" or "Itsy Bitsy Spider." Encourage your child to do the actions with you.</p>

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Birth–12 Months

12–24 Months

24–36 Months






 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Strengthen your infant's understanding of the word "goodnight" by saying goodnight to available family members and favorite toys at bedtime. Read the book <i>Goodnight Moon</i> to your infant, if available.</p>	<p>Invite your child to say the names of what you point to on your own body: eyes, ears, nose, and toes. Then encourage your child to point to his/her eyes, ears, nose, and toes as you say the name of each.</p>	<p>Talk with your child about the meaning of symbols in your neighborhood and places you visit, such as a stop sign near your home and an exit sign in a building you go to with your child.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Draw attention to your infant's actions that cause something to happen. Examples: tapping or kicking a mobile, tipping over a cup with a ball inside, shaking a rattle.</p>	<p>Gather two different types of toys, such as 3–4 small animals and 3–4 small vehicles. Place the toys in a random arrangement in front of your child. Invite your child to sort the toys by putting each type in its own group.</p>	<p>Provide a small set of items that your child can sort by type, size, or color. Examples: picture cards, Legos®, jumbo beads, animal and people figures. Place the items in a random arrangement in a basket for your child to sort.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Support your infant's persistence in exploring features of a toy by enthusiastically describing things your infant discovers while touching, mouthing, or moving the toy.</p>	<p>Secure a toy car or truck or use a toy block as a pretend vehicle. Encourage your toddler to watch you move the vehicle and then hide it under one of 2–3 containers. Ask your child where the vehicle is hiding. Repeat with different hiding places.</p>	
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Use a favorite toy to support back-and-forth play with your infant. Comment on your infant's communications, such as cooing or looking at you or the toy. Example: "I can hear you cooing. You are talking to me!"</p>	<p>Engage your child in playing together. Use crayons or markers to create a picture together.</p>	<p>Invite your child to work with you in putting together a puzzle of interest to your child. Consider taking turns in putting pieces in the puzzle form.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>When your infant seems ready for some action, gently and playfully move his/her hands/arms from side to side across the chest. Help your infant clap his/her hands near the center of his/her chest.</p>	<p>Provide experiences in putting toys or books in a tote bag or similar type of bag, and then carrying the bag to another place in your home where the items can be removed and used in play.</p>	<p>Provide experiences in moving arms in a specific way by encouraging your child to pretend he/she is a bird flying in the air or inviting your child to swing a crepe paper streamer in a simple pattern.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Read with your infant a book that includes textures to feel, such as the soft “fur” of an animal. <i>Baby Touch and Feel</i> books are an example. Describe things your infant feels in the book.</p>	<p>Read a book that includes words that rhyme or say a nursery rhyme. Emphasize words that rhyme. Invite your child to say rhyming words with you.</p>	<p>Help your toddler understand the difference between words and pictures in a book by pointing to words that describe something in a picture. Example: “These words say the puppy is jumping.”</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Encourage a younger infant to reach for and grasp a favorite toy that is partially hidden in your hand. Encourage an older infant to creep or crawl around a small barrier, such as a box, to reach a favorite toy.</p>	<p>Read with your child a book about size, such as <i>The Three Bears</i>.</p>	<p>Use a sheet or piece of fabric to create a pretend round pond of water. Give your child a toy duck or an item that can be an imaginary fish or duck. Encourage your child to walk around the pond with the toy. Then change direction.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Support early concentration skill by encouraging your infant to visually follow an interesting object you hold in your hand and move around. Offer the object for your infant to hold and manipulate, if interested.</p>	<p>Put the palms of your hands together to make an imaginary fish. Encourage your child to do the same and follow along. Pretend your fish is swimming. Your fish gets tired and hungry. It stops to rest and eat, and then swims again.</p>	<p>Sing a song that involves moving our bodies, such as “Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear Turn Around” or “I’m a Little Teapot.” Invite your toddler to do the movements with you.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Describe what you are doing during a care routine with your infant, such as a diaper change. Example: “I am going to pick you up now.” Describe your infant’s communications and actions during the routine.</p>	<p>Support your child’s contributions to family routines by encouraging your child to help you do a simple task, such as setting the table for a meal.</p>	<p>Provide experience in sharing by offering one ball of play dough for you and your child to share in making separate creations.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Look for opportunities to support your infant in rolling over, pushing up, or crawling during playtime. Your infant will enjoy your enthusiasm for his/her accomplishment!</p>	<p>Offer a simple finger play that you know or your child’s caregiver can describe for you, such as “I’m a Little Teapot,” “Itsy Bitsy Spider,” or “Open Shut Them.” Encourage your child to do the finger play with you.</p>	<p>Offer markers or crayons and different types of textures for your toddler to mark on. Examples: smooth paper, construction paper, cardboard. Point out differences in how the marker or crayon moves.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Share with your infant a book that has pictures of babies or young children. Describe what the children are doing. Help your infant hold the book and turn pages, if appropriate.</p>	<p>Read with your toddler a book about things that can make noise, such as farm animals or vehicles. Make a sound at quieter and louder levels. Encourage your child to join you. Talk about quieter and louder sounds.</p>	<p>Sing a song that is familiar to your toddler. Sing the song a second time, leaving out some key words or phrases for your child to fill in. Offer hints as necessary.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Provide experiences in seeing something that briefly disappears and then reappears. Show and move around a small appealing toy. Then cover it with a blanket or put it behind your back. "Where did it go?" "Oh, here it is!"</p>	<p>Secure a muffin pan or another type of item that has compartments. Invite your child to put one small toy in each opening. Emphasize we put one toy in each opening. Invite your child to remove the toys, one at a time.</p>	<p>Invite your child to name items of clothing when you help him/her get dressed or undressed. Talk about how the clothing item is made to fit a specific part of our body, such as holes for our head and arms in a T-shirt.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Provide practice in calming down after a stimulating activity. Hold your infant in your lap or arms, sing or hum a gentle song, and rub or pat your infant's back. Explain that we are calming down.</p>	<p>Provide practice and support for your toddler to calm down after a stimulating activity. Explain it is time to calm down. Encourage your child to sit quietly. Pat his/her back and sing or hum a gentle song.</p>	<p>Invite your child to make a downward dog pose (yoga).</p> 
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Engage your infant in gently touching a doll or other soft toy. Pretend we are petting a furry animal toy or rubbing the back of a baby (doll) who is upset about something.</p>	<p>Read a story or talk about a recent experience that involves happy and sad feelings. Talk about reasons for feeling happy and for feeling sad.</p>	<p>Support your child in helping care for a living thing in your home or yard, such as a nontoxic plant or a pet.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Support arm and hand muscles by encouraging your infant to reach for and hold a cloth item, such as a clean colorful sock, or a toy that has a hole(s) that fingers can safely explore.</p>	<p>Lead your toddler in balancing and moving parts of his/her body while holding a soft toy. Lift toy over our head, move toy to the floor, hold toy on one side and then the other side, turn around, fall down!</p>	<p>Provide small items that support your child's use of hands and fingers, such as chubby wooden beads to put on a string, or toy nuts and bolts that fit together. Show how the items work, as appropriate.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Share a favorite book with your child. Show excitement when something is revealed by turning the page or lifting the flap of a book. An older infant may wish to turn the page or lift a flap.</p>	<p>Talk with your child about the types of food a favorite animal would like to eat. Ask some silly questions about types of food the animal probably would not want to eat.</p>	<p>Invite your child to tell what happens in a favorite story. Encourage your child to hold the book and turn the pages as he/she describes what happens. Be flexible about the order and details of events.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Offer two different types of soft balls for your infant to explore. Examples: a ball with bumps and a ball with a smooth surface, or a smaller ball and larger ball. Describe your child's explorations.</p>	<p>Support your child in creating a short tower with several plastic stacking bowls or large cups, or exploring ways to connect a fit-together toy, such as chain links.</p>	<p>Invite your child to put together different sizes and/or shapes of play building material, such as blocks. Describe your child's actions and support his/her lead in exploring the material.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Place several toys of interest to your infant about 9–12 inches in front of your infant while on tummy or sitting. Encourage your infant's persistence in reaching for a desired toy. Clap when a toy is reached.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to find a character or item that appears repeatedly in a book's pictures.</p>	<p>Join your child in taking apart and putting together a simple puzzle. Encourage your child to use his/her fingers to feel the edges of each piece, and to look at how pictures on the puzzle pieces go together.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Show ways to be nurturing with a doll or toy animal. With a younger infant, hold and rock the doll/toy. Encourage an older infant to hold, rock, and pat the doll/toy. Describe your actions and your infant's actions.</p>	<p>Talk with your child about what members of your family typically do each day, including times they spend together. Begin with your child's day. What happens first? Then what?</p>	<p>Engage in pretend play with your child. Suggest a theme or items that are of interest to your child. Toddlers often enjoy playing restaurant.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Offer enthusiastic responses to your infant's physical development milestones. Examples: reaching and/or grasping, beginning to creep or crawl, standing with support.</p>	<p>Support eye-hand coordination and hand release skills. Secure or make a simple container with a hole in the top. Invite your child to drop appropriately-sized items into the container, such as large beads or cards, one at a time.</p>	<p>Support your child's experiences in underhand and overhand throwing of a soft ball. Talk about differences in arm and hand actions.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Sing for your infant a nursery rhyme that includes hand actions, such as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” Sing the song slowly and move your hands in pronounced, simple ways that correspond to words of the song.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to pretend to be a favorite character in a book. Offer suggestions about the character’s noises or words and actions.</p>	<p>Help your toddler understand “far away” and “come back.” Talk about a familiar faraway place, such as a relative’s home or military/work assignment. Describe actual or anticipated times someone comes back. Use pictures, if possible.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Offer a nonbreakable cup and a small toy that fits inside the cup. Encourage your infant to put the toy in the cup and explore ways to play with the items. Put the cup over the toy and ask, “Where did our toy go?”</p>	<p>When you read a favorite book with your child, invite him/her to say the names of things you point to in the book’s pictures. Offer hints as needed.</p>	<p>Share with your child a book that includes pictures of some things you have in your home. Ask your child whether things shown on a page are in your home. Invite your child to find similar items in your home.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Support concentration skill by encouraging your infant to watch you move your hands in different and exaggerated ways. Clap your hands as you say “clap, clap, clap.” Pat your knees as you say “pat, pat, pat.”</p>	<p>Put in a basket three different types of toys, such as 2–3 animals, 2–3 blocks, and 2–3 cars. Invite your child to line up the toys in front of him/her, and then put together the same types of toys (three separate groups).</p>	<p>Secure some picture cards, such as cards in a memory game. Put together 1–2 sets of cards that match and 1–2 sets of cards that do not match. Encourage your child to tell how cards are the same and not the same.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Imitation is a powerful learning tool. While your infant is watching, engage in a pretend give-and-take conversation with a doll or similar toy. Talk in short phrases, pause often as if listening, and use responsive facial expressions.</p>	<p>Invite your child to make a happy face with you. Then invite your child to make a sad face with you. Talk about what makes your faces look happy or sad, such as a smile or frown.</p>	<p>Look with your child at the facial expressions of characters in a book your child enjoys. Explain how mouth, eyes, and other features of an expression tell us how someone might be feeling, such as happy or sad.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Support your infant’s use of one or both hands to make a sound by tapping a toy drum, box, or the bottom of a container that will make some sound when tapped. Describe how your child uses his/her hand to make a sound.</p>	<p>Create 4–5 sock balls by rolling an adult tube sock into a ball. Use a piece of fabric or something similar as a pretend pond. Invite your child to throw one sock ball at a time into the pretend pond. Aim for same or different places in the pond.</p>	<p>Secure a puzzle that has different sizes of pieces. Identify two pieces that differ in size. Invite your child to remove the pieces and feel how one piece is larger. Encourage your child to feel with whole hand and then with several fingers.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Look with your child at several pictures of young children that show fingers and/or toes. Name and point to fingers and toes shown in a picture. Name and point to fingers and toes on your infant's body.</p>	<p>Help your child become aware of different types of trucks by looking at pictures or pointing out different types of trucks you see when with your child. Describe what the truck does. Emphasize differences in sizes of trucks.</p>	
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Support your infant in exploring a simple toy that can come apart, such as removing several rings from the spool of a stacking ring toy. Describe your infant's actions and support his/her lead in the exploration.</p>	<p>Support your toddler's understanding of words that tell the location of something, especially "up" and "down." Point out location words in everyday conversations with your child. Invite your child to move an item up and down.</p>	<p>Support understanding of some words used frequently to tell the direction or location of something: on/off, inside/outside, up/down, under/over. Emphasize in conversations. Help your child show contrasting word meanings.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Provide practice in calming down after a stimulating activity. Hold your infant in your lap or arms, sing or hum a gentle song, and pat or rub your infant's back. Explain we are calming down.</p>	<p>Provide your child with practice in calming down after an exciting activity. Encourage your child to breathe slowly and deeply, and to close his/her eyes or look at one thing for a short while. Explain we are calming down.</p>	<p>Help your toddler calm his/her body and mind by pretending to be a cornstalk that gently sways back and forth in pretend wind. Encourage moving arms slowly and keeping feet (pretend roots) firmly on the floor.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Secure four nesting cups or similar items that can fit into each other, two for your infant and two for you. Describe and mimic what your infant does with the cups. Emphasize you are doing the same thing with your cups.</p>	<p>Share with your toddler a book in which a character shows happiness and maybe sadness, anger, or loneliness about something that happens in the story. Talk with your child about why the character feels happy (and maybe other emotions).</p>	
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Provide focused support for whatever physical development skill your infant is working on: reaching for an object, pushing up head and chest, rolling over, beginning to creep, crawl, or stand. Enthusiastically describe the efforts.</p>	<p>Secure a smaller ball and a larger ball, both soft. Invite your child to hold each, one at a time. Emphasize how a small ball can be held with one hand and a large ball needs two hands. Try to hold the larger ball with one hand.</p>	<p>Provide experience in using a hand to move and stop moving a shaker or other sound-making toy. Sing a song or offer music that supports moving the shaker slowly and quickly. Include a clear signal on when to stop moving the toy.</p>

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 <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>


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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Emphasize the names of people who live in your home, especially when you notice your child looking at someone. Use nicknames as appropriate. Emphasize the names of staff at the center at drop-off/pickup.</p>	<p>Encourage your toddler to join you in doing hand and finger actions for “Itsy Bitsy Spider” or a simple nursery rhyme you know. Move your hands slowly with the words that describe an action.</p>	<p>Invite your child to join you in pretending to row a boat. Move your upper body slightly back and forth as you make circle movements with your arms. Emphasize the word “row” and maybe sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Offer your infant a toy that has moving parts, such as a rattle or a small vehicle. Talk about what happens as your infant explores the item. Example: “The rattle makes a sound. You move the rattle. The rattle makes a sound.”</p>	<p>Provide experiences in rolling a ball through a tube, such as a mailing tube, or under a small table. A goal is for the ball to be briefly invisible. Take turns in rolling and catching the ball. Support excitement in seeing the ball reappear.</p>	<p>Support your toddler in putting together pieces of a fit-together toy, such as snap beads. Show and describe how pieces fit together, if appropriate. Talk about your child’s efforts.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Encourage your infant to watch you slowly move an appealing toy, such as a block, from side to side within the infant’s line of vision. Then slowly move the item to the front of the infant so he/she can touch or grasp it.</p>	<p>Make a simple paper butterfly. Encourage your child to watch you move and then stop moving the butterfly when it gets hungry. Invite your child to move the butterfly when you say “fly!” and stop when you say “hungry!”</p>	<p>Use a piece of paper to make a large circle in a solid color, such as red or orange. Encourage your child to clap hands and/or move arms, and then stop movements when you show and say “circle.” Support repeated practice.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Include feeling or affect words when you describe basic care routines. Examples: “It feels good to have a clean diaper!” “I have fun helping you eat.” “I am happy to see you!”</p>	<p>Invite your child to join you making a face that shows we are sleepy (yawning, eyes partially closed), excited (eyes wide open, smiling), and any other situation or emotion of interest to your child. Talk about what our faces look like.</p>	<p>Share with your child a story that describes different feelings experienced by the book’s main character, such as happy, sad, and angry. Talk with your child about the feelings, especially feelings of particular interest.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Gently and slowly guide a young infant’s legs in a bicycling motion when the infant is alert and on his/her back. Make up a simple rhyme about riding a bike. An older infant may wish to move legs independently or with less guidance.</p>	<p>Encourage your toddler to move a shaker or bell in contrasting ways: (1) with arm and then with hand; (2) with one hand and then with the other hand; (3) with one hand and then with both hands; (4) slowly and then quickly.</p>	<p>Provide experience in kicking a ball from a standing position in a safe area. Identify a target for the ball, such as a wall. Use a ball made from soft material. Emphasize how your child lines up his/her body with the ball.</p>

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	Birth–12 Months	12–24 Months	24–36 Months
 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Support your child's understanding of waving hello and goodbye by waving when you arrive/depart with your infant at the child development center and when greeting people at home. Invite your child to wave.</p>	<p>Strengthen your toddler's awareness of quieter and louder sounds by encouraging him/her to make some quiet sounds and then louder sounds by shaking a rattle, tapping a box or toy drum, ringing a bell, saying "hello."</p>	<p>Frogs are often featured in children's stories. Invite your child to pretend to be a frog. Encourage moving around by jumping, making a "ribbet, ribbet" sound, and saying "chomp, chomp" when pretending to eat.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Gently move a colorful toy back and forth while your infant watches. Then put the toy on the floor and partially or fully cover it with a cloth. Explain the toy is still here but we cannot see it. Help your infant uncover the toy.</p>	<p>Put several small toys in two small containers with a lid on each. Invite your child to move the toys to a larger container. Encourage your child to figure out how to remove the lids and where to put toys in the larger container.</p>	<p>Invite your child to create something of his/her interest with different sizes of blocks, Legos®, or similar material. Support your child's efforts to figure out on his/her own how to build with items of different sizes.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Provide practice in calming down after a stimulating activity. Hold your infant in your lap or arms, sing or hum a gentle song, and pat or rub your infant's back. Explain we are calming down.</p>	<p>Provide your child with practice in calming down after an exciting activity. Encourage your child to breathe slowly and deeply, and to close his/her eyes or look at one thing for a short while. Explain we are calming down.</p>	<p>Help your toddler calm his/her body and mind by pretending to be seaweed that gently sways back and forth in pretend water. Encourage moving arms slowly and keeping feet on the floor.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Hold your infant in your arms or on your lap facing you. Sing a simple song and gently move your body with the tune. You may wish to make up a song. Maintain eye contact with your infant and offer positive facial expressions.</p>	<p>Share a book that gives attention to the relationship between two human or animal characters. Examples: a story about how a parent loves a child or a disagreement between two characters. Talk about what happens and why.</p>	<p>Talk with your child about his/her experiences in "feeling up" when happy or excited about something, and "feeling down" when sad or worried about something.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Support experiences with hand movements by encouraging your infant to clap along with you as you say or sing "clap, clap, clap together." Offer a rattle for your infant to shake as you say or sing "shake, shake, shake together."</p>	<p>Support balance and coordination skills by identifying a path in your home or yard for your child to walk along while carrying a light object with both of his/her hands. Add challenge by including turns in the path.</p>	<p>Provide 6–10 small blocks or similar items for your child to put in a row, circle, or other configuration by using his/her fingers, one block at a time. Repeat by suggesting your child create a different arrangement.</p>

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

Birth–12 Months

12–24 Months

24–36 Months






 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Describe what is happening during daily routines that may involve other family members. Use short sentences. Maintain eye contact with your infant. Example: "You are eating. Big brother is eating. I am eating. We are all eating!"</p>	<p>Share with your child a book or pictures that show farm animals. Point to and name some animals. Describe what they are doing. Describe your child's reactions and spend more time on animals of interest to your child.</p>	<p>Support your child's story recall skills by encouraging him/her to retell what happens in a book you share together. Invite your child to use pictures in the book to remember what happens.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Support early problem-solving skill by putting in front of your infant two different types of toys. Place the toys within easy reach of your infant and encourage him/her to touch, hold, or play with one of them.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to pretend a set of blocks or similar material is something else related to his/her interest. Examples: bench for doll to sit on, bed for doll to sleep on, fence to keep animals safe, road for vehicle.</p>	<p>Gather a small collection of your child's favorite small toys. Pretend you are in charge of a toy store. As your child plays, ask if he/she would like one or two more toys to play with. Promote the concepts of one and two, not larger numbers.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Secure a clean nylon scrunchie or similar item and a cup. Put the scrunchie in the cup and hold the cup so your infant can see the scrunchie. Remove the scrunchie. Describe your actions. Offer the items for your infant to explore.</p>	<p>Use a small item as a pretend rabbit. Encourage your toddler to watch you help the rabbit jump around and then hide under one of 2–3 containers. Ask your child where the rabbit is hiding. Repeat with a different hiding place.</p>	
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Share a picture book with your infant. Let your infant know you are tuned into him/her by watching and describing your infant's reactions to the pictures.</p>	<p>Share a book that tells about a main character in situations that can involve different types of feelings, such as being happy, sad, or scared. Talk with your child about what the character feels and why.</p>	<p>Remind your child that it is okay to sometimes feel angry or sad. Describe ways to feel better: Give ourselves a hug, breathe slowly and deeply, sit quietly, gently rock back and forth, hum a favorite tune, cuddle with a parent.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Support development of balance and upper body strength by holding your infant in a secure comfortable position and moving to calm music. Infants generally enjoy smooth movements, such as walking and side-to-side steps.</p>	<p>Support eye-hand coordination by inviting your child to build a short tower with similar items, such as blocks, or put rings on the peg of a stacking toy.</p>	<p>Invite your child to play <i>Simon Says</i> with you. Demonstrate and include requests that involve moving across the midline of our body, such as using one hand to touch the elbow of our other arm and the knee of our opposite leg.</p>

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

Birth–12 Months

12–24 Months






24–36 Months

 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Infants enjoy rhythmic music. Sing a simple song that you know or make up while facing your infant. Include facial expressions and hand gestures. Your voice is more meaningful to your infant than recorded music.</p>	<p>Show and describe pictures of children doing things together. Many children's books focus on children engaged in an activity. Help your child connect a pictured activity to something he/she knows or has experienced.</p>	<p>Invite your child to join you in a "word walk" in your home to find words on a wall, items hanging on the refrigerator, books, magazines, a television and appliances (brand names), and maybe on the front of your home.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Secure two similar types of toys, such as a doll and a toy bear. Encourage your infant to hold or manipulate one of the toys while you engage in simple play with the other toy. Describe your actions.</p>	<p>Put 2–3 inches of warm water in a tub with a few drops of tear-free soap or shampoo. Gather some toys and invite your child to help wash them. Encourage your child to move his/her fingers around each toy as it is washed.</p>	<p>When your child is engaged in pretend play, such as cooking or making something with blocks, gently ask what he/she is doing with a specific item involved in the play.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>When your infant is alert and ready for some action, say the "This Little Piggy" rhyme as you gently touch your infant's toes, one at a time. Do not tickle. Repeat with the other foot if your infant remains interested.</p>	<p>Support concentration skill by providing picture cards or toys, such as blocks, that include some identical items. Encourage your child to find items that are the same. Talk with your child about how some things are the same.</p>	<p>Help your toddler calm his/her body and mind by pretending to be a tree with branches (arms) that move in pretend wind. Encourage moving arms slowly and keeping feet (the tree's roots) on the floor.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Offer a rattle or similar toy to your infant. Hold the rattle for your infant to touch, if appropriate. Stay close by and show interest in your child's actions. Join the play if your infant reaches toward you or hands you the toy.</p>	<p>Remind your child that sometimes we get upset about something. Talk about ways to feel better when we are upset: give ourselves a hug, get a hug from a parent or relative, take slow and deep breaths, hum a favorite song.</p>	<p>Share a book that provides opportunities to talk with your toddler about how a story character might feel about something that happens in the story.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for your infant to reach for, touch, and maybe hold or manipulate a ball made of soft material. Hold the ball in front of a younger infant and roll the ball toward an older infant.</p>	<p>If your child uses a riding toy at home or at the child development center, encourage him/her to talk with you about how the riding toy works. What do we do with our legs? Our hands and arms? Where do we look?</p>	<p>Provide practice in jumping in different ways: jumping in place, jumping forward, jumping from a squat position. Remind your child to stand with feet apart, but not too far apart, to help our body not tip.</p>

Birth–12 Months

12–24 Months

24–36 Months






 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Farm animals are often a favorite of young children. Show your child pictures of some common farm animals. Name and briefly describe the animal as you point. Make the animal's sound. Describe your child's reactions.</p>	<p>Provide several crayons or markers and a piece of blank paper for your child to draw something of his/her choice. Talk about your child's efforts by emphasizing words that describe marks on the paper, such as line, circle, dot.</p>	<p>Talk with your child about animals that begin life in an egg, such as a birds, turtles, and fish. Invite your child to pretend to be a little animal in an egg. Suggest kneeling and pretending to push out of an egg that is cracking open.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Support your child's awareness of different images in a picture. Most book pictures show more than one thing. When you share a book, point to and briefly describe the main image plus one other aspect of a picture.</p>	<p>Support creative problem-solving skills by asking your child to think of places where a small animal could hide in your home. Walk around several rooms with your child as he/she suggests hiding places.</p>	<p>Provide a toy, such as a Potato Head toy, that involves putting together different parts. Support your child's initiative and creativity in figuring out how to put things together.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Provide practice in calming down after a stimulating activity. Hold your infant in your lap or arms, sing or hum a gentle song, and pat or rub your infant's back. Explain we are calming down.</p>	<p>Provide your child with practice in calming down after an exciting activity. Encourage your child to breathe slowly and deeply, and to close his/her eyes or look at one thing for a short while. Explain we are calming down.</p>	<p>Draw attention to details. Point to and talk about some specific parts of pictures and objects. Example: "Look at how the child in this picture is standing. Both feet are on the ground. Where are the child's feet in this picture?"</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>The next time your child is engaged in play with an object, secure a similar object to play with alongside your infant. Gently help your infant notice what you are doing by quietly talking about what you are doing.</p>	<p>Invite your child to show some ways to tell others he/she is happy about something. Offer suggestions as appropriate, such as making a big smile, clapping hands, saying "I'm so happy!" or "hooray!"</p>	<p>Talk with your child about some good things we can do for ourself and others. Examples: brush our teeth, wash our hands, draw a picture as a gift for someone, pet a friendly dog or cat, give a "thumbs up" when we like something.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Provide focused support for a physical development skill that is emerging in your child, such as sitting, creeping or crawling, standing, or walking.</p>	<p>Prop up one end of a piece of cardboard or similar material to create a small ramp. Offer a small toy vehicle to use with the ramp. Emphasize using one hand to pick up and hold the toy, place it at the top of the ramp, and let it go.</p>	<p>Provide a ball of play dough about the size of your child's fist. Encourage your child to try different ways to change the dough: flatten with two hands, pull off little bits of flattened dough with fingers, roll small pieces into little balls.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Sing to your infant a simple nursery rhyme you know or make up. Consider using a small toy, such as a toy star or spider to do actions with the song rather than using your fingers.</p>	<p>Support the ritual of saying “goodnight” at bedtime by encouraging your toddler to say “goodnight” to family members and favorite toys and things used at bedtime, such as “goodnight, toothbrush.”</p>	<p>Share a picture book that includes no or few words. Encourage your child to make up a story by looking at the pictures.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Offer your child a simple toy that can easily come apart such as putting a small ball inside a cup. Present the cup and ball in a way that your infant can see the ball. Describe your child's explorations.</p>	<p>Create a short ramp by elevating one end of a piece of cardboard or similar material. Invite your child to hold a ball at the top of the ramp and let it go when you say “go.” Emphasize how the ball rolls when he/she lets go.</p>	<p>Put items that have hard or soft surfaces in a bag. Invite your child to put his/her hand in the bag, feel one of the items, tell whether it is hard or soft, and then remove the item.</p>
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Place 2–4 appealing small objects in a basket or box. Put the basket/box in front of your child when he/she is alert. Encourage him/her to touch or take out each toy. Support persistence in exploring the toys.</p>	<p>Secure a simple puzzle that includes a picture of each piece on the puzzle board (just under the piece). Remove each piece. Point to a picture on the puzzle board and invite your child to find the piece with the same picture.</p>	<p>Invite your child to play a game of pretending to sleep and then acting like an animal you say when it is time to wake up. Example: “It is time to wake up, little monkey!”</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>Draw your child's attention to the play activities of another young child during drop-off/pickup times at the child development center, or to a sibling or other child in your home. Describe what the other child is doing.</p>	<p>Play alongside your toddler. Use the time to show good social skills, such as taking turns with play materials and thanking your child for something he/she gives you or suggests that you do.</p>	<p>Read with your child a story that involves a main character having different types of feelings, such as happy or sad. Talk with your child about why the book character has a feeling described in the story.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Place a carpet square or rug on a smooth floor to provide experiences in crawling, creeping, or walking on different textures. Lead your child along the short path. Describe each surface as your child experiences it.</p>	<p>Support practice in bending, walking, and carrying an item while walking. Place a set of appealing toys on the floor in one area of a room and invite your toddler to carry the toys, one by one, to a different room area where you play together.</p>	<p>Support hand muscle development by encouraging your child to pick up items with his/her fingers, such as putting small toys in a container or putting cereal or crackers in a bowl.</p>

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 <p>Communication/ Language</p>	<p>Use a sock on your hand as a puppet that is a pretend animal, such as a kitty, puppy, or farm animal. Have a short conversation with your infant that includes the animal's noise. Change animals if your child is interested.</p>	<p>Share with your toddler a picture book that has no or few words. Talk together about what the pictures tell.</p>	<p>Offer several minutes of quiet in your home and ask your child what he/she hears, such as a clock ticking or a vehicle outside.</p>
 <p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Show your child how we can make something happen. Share a rattle with a young infant. Emphasize how shaking makes a sound. Create a short block tower with an older infant. What happens when we push on it?</p>	<p>Gather some small items, such as blocks or toy vehicles, that your child can sort by type or color. Examples: Put red blocks in one group and blue blocks in another group. Put cars in one group and trucks in another group. Offer suggestions as appropriate.</p>	
 <p>Self-Regulation</p>	<p>Move around a small toy and hide it under a cloth or in a container as your infant watches. Ask, "Where did our toy go?" Then show excitement in "finding" the toy. Repeat with different hiding places.</p>	<p>Support concentration skill by tracing on a blank sheet of paper the outlines of 2–4 blocks or other toys of different shapes. Invite your child to put each item on its corresponding shape.</p>	<p>Offer soft music to support your child in pretending to be a tree with branches (arms) that move gently. Encourage moving arms slowly and keeping feet on the floor. Ask your child to hold arms briefly in place when you stop the music.</p>
 <p>Social-Emotional</p>	<p>During drop-off/pickup times at the child development center, acknowledge other children and caregivers as your child watches or listens. Example: "Here is Caydon! Good morning, Caydon!"</p>	<p>Invite your child to take turns with you in pretending to be a parent and a baby. Example: Your child cries as a pretend baby and you ask whether he/she wants to be held or is hungry.</p>	<p>Invite your child to practice polite ways to ask someone to be quiet, such as putting a pointer finger over our lips. Talk about times when it is helpful to not talk or to talk quietly in your home.</p>
 <p>Physical/Health</p>	<p>Help your young infant strengthen awareness of his/her body by gently moving his/her arms and then legs when alert. Use up/down motions. Describe a scooting or crawling infant's use of legs when moving around.</p>	<p>Support hand muscle development by offering a children's thick-handled paintbrush that your child can use in making marks with paint or water on blank paper. Fingers also could be used for making marks.</p>	<p>Support body balance skill by encouraging your child to walk along a narrow path you create in your home or yard.</p>