



Provide A Rich Learning Environment For Your Child:

- Play games with your child.
- Keep plain, large sheets of paper and crayons for your child. There are washable crayons and markers available.
 - Toddlers and young children like to see their drawings displayed on walls and the refrigerator. It helps them learn that their ideas and work are important to you.
 - Use homemade playthings – a paper towel roll with holes punched in it becomes a flute; a pot with a wooden spoon becomes a drum. There are many objects in your kitchen that make great tub toys—clean squirt bottles, clean containers and measuring cups. Look around your home and see what items you can turn into safe playthings.
 - Exchange playthings – swap toys with other parents. Some early childhood programs and libraries offer a toy-lending program.
 - Rotate toys – put aside some of your child’s toys by storing them in boxes. Every few days switch the boxes and the child will find new and interesting toys!
 - Use music in play – move and dance with your child; sing songs and hum with her; listen to music and enjoy being musical together!

TV, Computer Games and Movies

- Limit TV, video and computer time. For children from birth to 3, no more than 1/2 hour per day should be spent watching TV. After age 3, an additional 1/2 hour of TV or computer time could be shared with a parent. Turn the TV off when you are not watching it.
- Carefully select the TV shows and videos that your young child sees. Watch videos and TV together with your child. Sing or clap hands with him and have fun together.
- Be firm about turning off the TV if a program is not good for your child to watch.
- Ask other adults who spend time with your child to talk, read, sing, listen to music and play with your child. These activities are better than watching TV or playing computer games or videos.

TV and other video media are not substitutes for loving parents, family members, caregivers and friends.

If you are a parent, share this with your child's caregiver. If you are a caregiver, share this with the child's parent(s). Thank you!



CUDDLE, TALK, AND READ WITH YOUR CHILD

This brochure is the second in an eight-part series on fun and learning with your baby or toddler:

1. Care for Yourself
2. Cuddle, Talk, and Read with Your Child
3. How Your Child Develops
4. Be Playful with Your Child
5. Show Your Child the World
6. Teach Self Control
7. Practice Health and Safety
8. Healthy Eating

“Keys to Great Caregiving” has been adapted for use in Connecticut from “Keys To Great Parenting”, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

To request Keys brochures call 203-207-3267 or visit:
www.thekeys.uconn.edu

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University of Connecticut

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM
College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

In partnership with 2-1-1 Child Care Infoline,
Connecticut Department of Social Services,
Danbury Children First, Inc., EDUCATION CONNECTION,
New Haven School Readiness Council

CUDDLE, TALK, AND READ WITH YOUR CHILD



Babies and toddlers love it when you hug, cuddle and smile at them. In addition, they love when you listen, talk, and read to them. Doing both at the same time, for example cuddling while reading simple books, develops a bond between you and your child.

A loving touch for your child, while listening and talking in a respectful way, is needed for your child's brain development, growth and success. This has been proven by research.

In the first three years of life, the brain develops very fast. The brain remains a work in progress throughout childhood and early adulthood.

A playful and loving environment helps your child's brain to develop. You can provide brain stimulation by your verbal (talking) and non-verbal (body language) messages and by the experiences and playthings you provide for your child.



Did you know?

- A newborn brain weighs .77 - .88 pounds
- The adult brain weighs 2.86 - 3.09 pounds
- At six months, a baby's brain is 50% of its adult size
- At three years, a child's brain is 80% of its adult size

Talking and reading with your child are the two most important things you can do to help your child learn. Select books that are right for your child's age and interests.

Use Loving Words and Actions:

- Gently hug and cuddle your baby. Look into her eyes and smile at her.
- Play touching games with his hands and feet, such as "pat-a-cake" and "this little piggy went to market".
- Talk, Talk, and Talk to children early and often, even if they do not understand what you are saying.
- Repeat back the cooing and babbling sounds and facial expressions she makes.
- Read to your child often. Choose regular times each day for reading and storytelling. Let the child turn pages, hold the book, select books and read to you.
- Listen to your toddler patiently. Get your toddler's attention when you are talking to him. When he looks into your eyes, he is more likely to listen.
- Make reading time fun for both of you!

Promote Literacy At Home:

- Talk with children early and often, even if they do not understand what you are saying.
- Read to your infants and toddlers daily. Combine books with pleasant experiences such as sitting on Mom's or Dad's lap.
- Visit your local library and go to story-time activities. Make this a fun time for you and your child.
- Have a variety of children's books at home. Use the library, swap books with friends, give books as gifts.
 - Use notes and lists frequently.
 - Allow your child to use crayons. Display scribbling and artwork at the child's level.
 - Limit TV, video and computer time.
 - Be a good role model - read and write often!

Cuddle
Talk
Read...

