

Exploring the Neighborhood:

Push your baby or toddler in a stroller or take a short walk down the sidewalk. Point out and describe to your child what you can see, hear, touch and smell. Go inside stores. Talk about familiar places so that he can begin, with time and practice, to recognize them too. He will gain a sense of belonging and security.

Exploring the Community:

Exploring your community usually works best for toddlers 18 months or older. Be sure to take along extra diapers, bottles, wipes and healthy snacks. Keep your trip short so that your toddler doesn't get too cranky, tired or bored. Your child needs you to provide words for all that she is hearing, seeing, smelling and touching. Also, after your trip, talk with your child about what you saw together. This will help your child remember what she did. Your young child understands more than she can tell you. Here are some ideas:

- Watch a construction project with large earth-moving vehicles.
- Visit a fire station to see the fire trucks and the special clothing firefighters wear.
- Spend time together in a children's museum.
- Attend a local holiday parade with your child.
- Go to the supermarket when you do not have lots of shopping to do and walk down the aisles together.
- Visit a car wash.
- Visit a farm where there are animals you and your child can watch.
- Go to your local public library to find books to share at home.
- Join a playgroup, or Mom's or Dad's group.

Explore
the world...

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!

SHOW YOUR CHILD THE WORLD

This brochure is the fifth 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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THE WORLD



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

SHOW YOUR CHILD THE WORLD

The more your child explores, the better her brain grows and helps her to learn.

From the moment your baby is born, she has active brain cells – 100 billion of them. They need to make trillions of connections with each other for your child to learn as much as possible while growing. She needs help – not only from you, but everyone and everything around her.

Babies and toddlers are experts at learning through their 5 senses – seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. Almost all learning in the first three years takes place through their senses.

They do all this with wonder and a desire to explore and learn. You are her best guide to the exciting world around her – her first and most important teacher. To be a good teacher, take time to help her explore. Relax and enjoy the process yourself. Try to see everything around you as she does.

Your child relies on you to provide words for what she hears, sees, smells, tastes and touches.

Talk with your child about what you saw or did together. This will help your child remember her experiences and learn new words.

Remember that your young child understands more than she can tell you.



Repetitive play and exploration help your child build important connections in her brain. These connections are necessary for learning now and in the future.

Exploring the Indoors:

- Walk around your home with your baby, holding him upright. Talk or sing a song about the things you see. Bring his face within 12 inches of some objects for the first month or two. As he grows, his eye muscles and nerves will become stronger. He will be able to see things from farther away.
- While you are in the kitchen making a meal, place your baby or toddler in a playpen, infant seat or high chair near you. Point out the names and colors of the fruits and vegetables you are using. Let him touch, hold and smell the foods. **Do not give him anything that he can choke on such as: uncooked vegetable or fruit pieces, grapes, raisins, slices of hot dog, nuts, popcorn and other small food items.**
- Use words to describe the sounds in your home such as the “ticking” of a clock or the “humming” of a dryer.
- Provide many pleasing sounds inside your home: play music that you and your baby enjoy and then clap your baby’s hands and wiggle her legs and feet to the music. Remember to “listen” to the quiet. You and your baby need quiet times, too.
- Carry your child to the window to watch birds, animals, people, cars or trucks outside. Talk about what you see. Watch your child to see what interests her and then talk more about those things.
- Invite other children to your home for play. Always supervise their play. Provide enough toys so that both children are not fighting for the same toy. Learning to take turns and sharing are important social skills that your toddler is just beginning to learn.

Exploring the Backyard:

Take your baby outdoors every day, if possible. She will enjoy it and fresh air is wonderful for her health! Carry your baby or walk with your toddler to see and feel the bushes, trees, bugs, flowers and grass around her. Describe the colors, sounds and smells you both see and feel. Don’t be concerned if your child cannot say the words right. Just keep using the words in sentences. Your child is learning the sounds of language, even before she can speak.

