

The Brain: How Children Develop

What Can I Do for My Child?

For Babies to Toddlers (0–2 years)

- Help your child learn about object permanence by playing “peek-a-boo” or by hiding a toy under a blanket and then searching for the toy together.
- Make a small photo album for your child with pictures of key people in his or her life. Look at the pictures together and talk about the individuals and activities represented in the pictures.
- Read to your child every day. Reading to children helps them develop the foundation blocks of language that are necessary for speech. Use board books with colorful pictures.
- Go on a walk or look out your window together and point out what you see. Use descriptive words such as “blue” sky or “fast” car.

For Toddlers (2–4 years)

- Preschool age children love finger plays such as “Five Little Monkeys.” Incorporate songs, finger plays, and nursery rhymes into your day.
- Make time each day for your child to participate in a sensory activity. This could be as simple as digging in the dirt while you garden, rinsing dishes together, playing with play dough, or baking cookies together. Hands-on, sensory activities allow young children the opportunity to explore their world through their five senses.
- Read aloud with your child every day. Also, take your child to the local library for storytime and allow them to pick out books they are interested in.
- Provide time each day for your little one to move, move, move! Movement and physical activity increase blood flow and oxygen to the brain, thus improving cognition. Go for a walk, play at the park, or dance together in your house.

For Older Children (4–5 years)

- Encourage imaginative play by providing your child with household props and dress-up clothes that they can use to reenact their favorite stories or shows.
- If your public library allows young children their own library card, help your child sign-up to receive one. Help them learn to care for the books they borrow and return them on time.
- Continue reading aloud with your child every day.
- Provide time each day for your child to be physically active. Movement and physical activity increase blood flow and oxygen to the brain, thus improving cognition. Go for a walk, play at the park, or dance together in your house.