

Early Learning and Development Ideas for Parents and Caregivers



Your child is going through a journey of development that started at conception. This guide provides you with ideas on how to support your child's development. Remember, your child is unique and will follow her or his own journey, perhaps a bit slower or faster than other children of the same age.

Birth to 3 months



- Always handle the baby gently, even when you are tired or upset.
- Support the baby's head when you hold the baby upright.



- Visit the health worker with the baby six weeks after birth.

- Lay the baby on a clean, flat, safe surface so she or he can move freely and reach for objects.
- Continue to exclusively breastfeed on demand day and night.



4 - 6 months



- Children respond to their own name and to familiar faces.



- Spoken, visual and physical cues must be provided to help children to learn and grow.

- Prop or hold the baby in a position so she or he can see what is happening nearby.



- Children begin to imitate sounds and facial expressions.

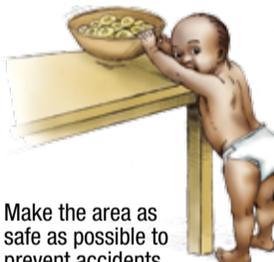
6 - 12 months



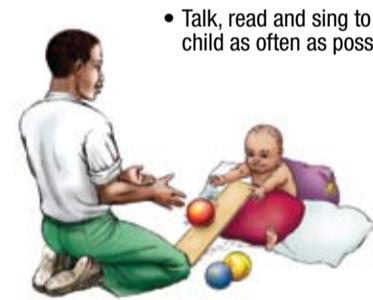
- Make sure that the child is fully immunised and receives all recommended doses of micronutrient supplements.



- Point to objects and name them, talk and play with the child frequently.



- Make the area as safe as possible to prevent accidents.



- Talk, read and sing to the child as often as possible.



1 - 2 years



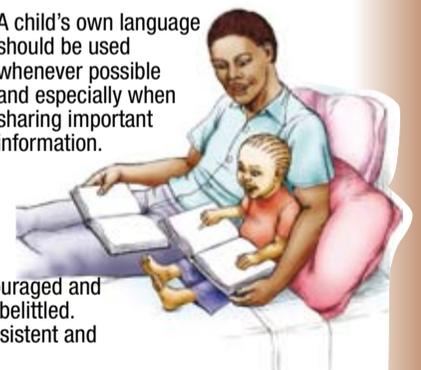
- Children should be allowed to choose and direct their activities according to their individual ages, needs and interests.

- Children should be allowed as many opportunities as possible to play actively in a safe and supportive environment. This is how young children learn best.



- Children should always be encouraged and motivated and should never be belittled.
- Discipline must be positive, consistent and age-appropriate.

- A child's own language should be used whenever possible and especially when sharing important information.



3 - 4 years



- Young children should have different kinds of materials and toys to play with inside the house as well as outside.



- The house on the inside as well as the outside area must be safe for the young child to play freely.



- Help the child learn to dress, wash her or his hands and use the toilet.



- Children need healthy food and safe sanitation.
- Children must receive regular and routine medical and dental check ups and immunisations.



education
Department:
Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Prepared by and obtainable free of charge from:
Directorate: Early Childhood Development, Department of Education,
Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001
Telephone: 012-3125435 • Email: Samuels.M@doe.gov.za • www.doe.gov.za



unite for children