



## Loves and Connects

### Skills Your Child Is Developing

- Imitates simple actions and facial expressions.
- Attempts to self-soothe.
- Responds and engages with back and forth interactions with others.
- Understands what to do to get someone's attention.
- Snuggles with caregiver when tired, grumpy or frightened.
- Begins to verbally and non-verbally express thoughts and variety of emotions.
- Shows confidence and pride in accomplishments.
- Responds positively to limits that are set.
- Shows awareness of others' feelings.
- Checks with familiar adult when unsure about something or someone.

### Ways to Help Your Baby Gain The Skills

- Hold your baby in a face-to-face position and make eye contact often.
- Play peek-a-boo and use silly expressions and body language.
- Experience what your baby sees by playing together on the floor everyday.
- Hold your baby in your lap while reading together.
- Share books with photos of babies and talk about what you see.
- Have back-and-forth conversations with simple sounds that your baby makes; pause to allow your baby to respond.
- Let your baby take along familiar toys or blankets when visiting new places.
- Sing, sway, dance and cuddle with your baby.

### Ways To Help Your Toddler Gain The Skills

- Roll a ball back and forth; practice taking turns.
- Encourage your toddler to help with simple tasks at home – put away toys, groceries, laundry.
- Use a mirror to make happy, sad, silly, mad faces to teach about emotions.
- Visit places (library, park, neighborhood) to encourage interaction and play with other children.
- Establish consistent routines during the day to help your child understand what happens next.
- Celebrate new skills and accomplishments, like sharing a favorite toy, with a hug or kind words.



Special thanks to Parker Pediatrics for their assistance in developing this brochure.

### Learn more:

[Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines  
EarlyLearningCo.org](http://EarlyLearningCo.org)

[Douglas County Early Childhood Council  
DCEarlyChildhood.org](http://DouglasCountyEarlyChildhood.org)



Becoming a new parent brings wonder and joy, along with concerns about doing the best for your child. The information presented here has been developed to help you give your child simple and fun experiences that support healthy growth and learning.

We wish you and your child all the best as you learn and grow together!



There are many ways to share love and language, but simply singing, reading aloud, even before birth, will begin to lay the foundation for healthy development. Starting from the first days of life, your baby will enjoy looking at your face and listening to your voice. The simplest and most natural of activities; holding your baby, looking into his or her eyes, smiling and 'talking' together are the best experiences you can give.



One of the earliest communications between you and your baby is the social smile, starting between one and three months. When you smile, your baby smiles back. Please remember that babies are unique and develop at their own pace. If you should ever have any worries or questions, be sure to speak with your doctor.



## Plays and Learns

### Skills Your Child Is Developing

- Reaches, grasps and explores objects in new ways.
- Engages in repetitive, familiar and new activities.
- Shows curiosity about the world.
- Imitates and initiates interactions with familiar people.
- Learns about cause and effect.

### Ways To Help Your Baby Gain The Skills

- Designate bottom drawer with baby-friendly items: plastic bowls, spoons, cups.
- Repeat songs and rhymes that you know and add new ones, too.
- Play peek-a-boo games with people and objects.
- Talk with your baby, imitate his or her sounds.
- Practice and celebrate new skills with clapping and enthusiasm.
- Talk about and label actions of your baby and yourself: "You are kicking your legs!" "Time for lunch."

### Ways To Help Your Toddler Gain The Skills

- Build structures with blocks, pillows, cups.
- Play with puppets, dress-up clothes, stuffed animals.
- Play hide and seek inside and outside.
- Use shape sorters, puzzles to encourage toddlers to keep trying to fit and match. Ask questions about the process and allow time before helping.
- Act out a trip to the library, choose books and check them out.
- Play repetitive games and fingerplays.
- Encourage silliness, giggles and fun while learning.



## Moves & Grows

### Skills Your Child Is Developing

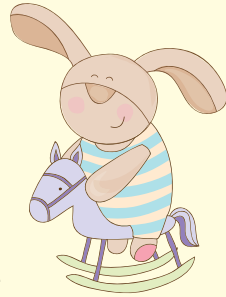
- Develops regular and consistent sleep routines.
- Uses all senses to learn about environment.
- Begins to hold and grab toys and food.
- Continues to develop large and small muscle abilities: crawl, walk, run, jump, handle small toys, scribble, use utensils to feed self.
- Learns to accept a variety of healthy foods.

### Ways To Help Your Baby Gain The Skills

- Create relaxing routines for bedtime: bathe, read, sing, snuggle, sleep.
- Introduce your baby to a variety of nutritional foods and include finger foods when age appropriate. Let your baby explore and get messy.
- Let your baby indicate when "all done" or "still hungry."
- Plan tummy time every day.
- Allow wiggle time outside of baby seats.
- Roll, throw and kick balls.
- Practice "putting in and taking out" using muffin tins and plastic bowls.

### Ways To Help Your Toddler Gain The Skills

- Let your toddler participate in self-care: teeth brushing, dressing, hand washing.
- Provide your toddler with a spoon and open cup at mealtime.
- Offer 2 or 3 healthy food choices at each mealtime (fruit, veggie, protein, grain). Allow your toddler to see adults eating a variety of healthy foods and let your toddler pick or skip.
- Use boxes and cushions from around the house to give your child little challenges. Talk about climbing on, crawling under and through, and hiding behind.
- Play simple games, like Simon Says.
- Blow bubbles and pop them with your nose, your elbow or your toes.
- Go outside and run, roll down a hill, jump, climb, throw balls.
- Give toddlers paper and crayons for scribbling.
- Walk on taped or painted lines, floor cushions, chalk lines on the sidewalk.
- Play 'chase' outdoors; run around the tree, jump along the sidewalk.
- Make homemade playdough to squeeze and strengthen hand muscles.



## Wonders and Explores

### Skills Your Child Is Developing

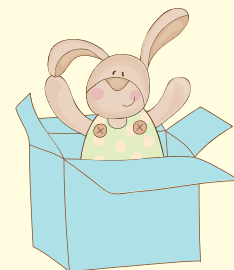
- Explores by using senses: touch, taste, sight.
- Begins to use body to interact with environment: throws, drops items.
- Understands the difference between familiar and unfamiliar objects.
- Becomes aware of differences in quantities and sizes: more/less, big/small.
- Begins to put toys into containers or climb into boxes – learning about spatial relations.
- Can repeat words and phrases from familiar songs and stories
- Begins to show understanding of cause and effect and how things work.
- Engages in simple pretend play – pretending to sip from a cup or 'talk' on a telephone.

### Ways To Help Your Baby Gain The Skills

- Open and close your baby's hands while saying "open" and "close."
- Sing songs that use numbers and counting, like "One, two, buckle my shoe".
- Shake a variety of rattles and other sound instruments.
- Play with a variety of textures so your baby can touch and explore like fabrics, foods, books, other safe household objects.
- Make faces and sounds for your baby to imitate.
- Go outside and talk with your baby about wind, rain, snow, cold, warm, sunny.

### Ways To Help Your Toddler Gain The Skills

- Let your toddler help prepare meals, talk about shapes, measurements and stirring.
- Give your toddler an ice cube, watch and talk about how it melts.
- Play games with sorting, stacking, matching and simple puzzles.
- Give boxes of different sizes and have your toddler nest them, stack them or line them up; compare sizes and shapes.
- Take a walk, point out birds, bugs, trees colors, smells, textures in nature.
- Offer a variety of containers for pouring, filling, dumping in the bathtub and sandbox.
- Count steps together while walking to the mailbox, to the bedroom, to the car.
- Play I-Spy to find shapes and colors while grocery shopping, looking at books, riding in the car.



## Talks and Reads

### Skills Your Child Is Developing

- Coos, babbles and makes loud noises.
- Responds to others by smiling, waving and clapping.
- Imitates conversations, participates in back and forth exchange with caregivers.
- Uses appropriate words and gestures to communicate.
- Enjoys and anticipates surprise elements of rhymes, fingerplays, songs and games.
- Explores books by chewing, patting, pointing, looking.
- Begins to understand and follow simple requests.
- Begins to name common and familiar objects.
- Scribbles with crayons.
- Starts to show a sense of humor.
- Claps, moves, dances to music.

### Ways To Help Your Baby Gain The Skills

- Talk with your baby at every opportunity: diapering, bathing, feeding, shopping. Make eye contact and use expression.
- Greet your baby by name and use your baby's name often.
- Talk about your baby's actions: "you are sitting, crawling, laughing"
- Give your baby choices when possible: "do you want an apple or a banana?"
- Sing songs and repeat rhymes, create your own, too.
- Read the same book over and over.
- Make a simple book with faces of family and friends.
- Go to library storytimes, check out books to take home.
- Respond to your baby's attempts to communicate.
- Read a story together every day.

### Ways To Help Your Toddler Gain The Skills

- Point out logos, letters and words on signs and labels while running errands.
- Ask questions and build on conversations with your toddler.
- Share books in many ways: look at pictures, ask questions and listen patiently to your child, let your child set the pace.
- Have your toddler tell a favorite story in his or her own words.
- Leave out words within songs and rhymes so your toddler can fill in.
- Sing the alphabet song.
- Pretend with your toddler; feed and take care of stuffed animals, make sounds for toy cars.
- Scribble and draw and talk about the pictures with your child.
- Ask your child to follow simple directions: "get your shoes and come to the door."