



## **PARENT HELPER...The Series**

The Maryland State Department of Education publishes a series of PARENT HELPER handbooks covering a variety of skill development areas.

- BOOK 1, Parent Helper: **OVERVIEW**
- BOOK 2, Parent Helper: **Communication**
- BOOK 3, Parent Helper: **Cognition**
- BOOK 4, Parent Helper: **Motor Development**
- BOOK 5, Parent Helper: **Socialization**

For a single handbook or for the entire PARENT HELPER series, contact the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Early Childhood Intervention and Education Branch, 200 W. Baltimore Street, 9th floor, Baltimore, MD 21201; 410-767-0261 Voice; 1-800-535-0182 Toll Free; 410-333-8165 Fax.

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**Introduction:**  
**PARENT HELPER Handbook Series**

As a parent, you are the most important adult in your child’s life. Long before your child reaches school age, she will learn from you. She will learn by watching you, playing with you, and being cared for by you.

The PARENT HELPER handbooks are designed to help you support your child’s growth and development from birth through age five. Each handbook contains a Developmental Milestones chart which will help you gauge your child’s development at different stages. Each offers activities and suggestions for supporting and encouraging your child’s progress, learning, and exploration. And each provides suggestions for developing partnerships with early care and education providers working to help your child reach her potential.

Many of the suggestions found in the PARENT HELPER handbooks come from parents. Others have been successfully used by providers. And while a sequence of steps is suggested at each developmental level, you may need to modify some activities to meet your child’s individual needs.

You are your child’s first teacher. By using the information found in the PARENT HELPER handbooks, it is hoped that you will observe your child from a whole new perspective and assist her in “discovering” the world.

## From Here to There... Typical Patterns of Development In Young Children

In the developmental process, each new skill builds upon what is already learned. At three months of age, a child may lie on his back and kick his feet in the air. At nine months, that same child may crawl around the floor on his tummy. And by the time that child reaches 24 months, he may run the entire length of a room without falling down.

Kicking, crawling and running all involve gross motor development—one of the developmental areas in the following PARENT HELPER **Developmental Milestones** charts.

**Cognition:** knowing, thinking, awareness

**Communication:** expressing language

**Gross Motor:** large muscle development

**Fine Motor:** small muscle development

**Self Help:** doing for self

**Social:** self awareness, response to others

The **Developmental Milestones** charts present typical patterns for growth and development in young children. As you observe your child's development, remember that no two children are exactly alike, so your child may develop at a different rate than what is suggested here.

### Cognition

- Looks at an object or person
- Follows movement of hands with eyes
- Shows positive response to familiar sound
- Responds to new sounds with movement or with voice

### Communication

- Makes small, throaty noises
- Coos expressively, vocalizes
- Smiles at mother's voice
- Responds vocally to a friendly person

### Gross Motor

- Rolls from side to back
- Gains head control in upright position
- Waves hands and kicks feet when lying on back
- Turns head to either side when lying on stomach or back

### Self Help

- Watches movement of own hands
- Glances from one object to another
- Grasps object when placed in hand
- Follows movements up, down, and across

### Social

- Quiets when picked up
- Enjoys being tickled and fondled
- Expresses pleasure with physical activity
- Maintains brief eye contact during feeding
- Smiles spontaneously or in response to a familiar smile, voice, or touch

0



to



3



Months



# Developmental Milestones

<b>Cognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes mother</li> <li>• Imitates cooing sounds</li> <li>• Repeats action on objects</li> <li>• Finds partially hidden object</li> <li>• Looks at hand and object when grasping</li> <li>• Uses movement or sound to continue a game</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to own name</li> <li>• Uncovers partially-hidden toy</li> <li>• Imitates simple, familiar gestures, like shaking a toy</li> <li>• Tracks object that has fallen out-of-view</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies crying to different stimuli</li> <li>• Turns head to locate sounds and voices</li> <li>• Vocalizes sound patterns, begins babbling</li> <li>• Responds to voice by making sounds or movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smiles at mother's voice</li> <li>• Coos expressively, vocalizes</li> <li>• Makes small, throaty noises</li> <li>• Responds vocally to a friendly person</li> </ul>
<b>Gross Motor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolls from stomach to back</li> <li>• Reaches for feet and brings to mouth</li> <li>• Pushes up from ground, lifts head and chest</li> <li>• Straightens hips, lifts legs when on stomach</li> <li>• Pushes self to sitting position; sits alone momentarily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifts head while on back</li> <li>• Rolls from back to stomach</li> <li>• Bears weight in standing position</li> <li>• Sits unsupported and reaches for toys</li> <li>• Maintains balance on hands and knees</li> <li>• Crawls forward with stomach on floor</li> </ul>
<b>Fine Motor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangs objects in play</li> <li>• Uses fingers and palm to hold objects</li> <li>• Holds object directly in front, both hands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claps hands together</li> <li>• Holds one cube while given another</li> <li>• Moves wrist to manipulate toy or object</li> <li>• Grasps with thumb and side of index finger</li> <li>• Transfers objects from one hand to the other</li> </ul>
<b>Self Help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eats baby foods from spoon</li> <li>• Reaches for and holds bottle</li> <li>• Anticipates feeding with increased activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manipulates finger foods</li> <li>• Begins chewing movements</li> <li>• Reaches for and holds bottle</li> <li>• Drinks from a cup with help</li> <li>• Holds, bites, and chews soft foods</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notices strangers</li> <li>• Likes physical play</li> <li>• Laughs aloud often</li> <li>• Voices pleasure or displeasure</li> <li>• Approaches image in a mirror</li> <li>• Cries when left alone or put down</li> <li>• Shows awareness of strange environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plays games like "peek-a-boo"</li> <li>• Reacts playfully to own image in mirror</li> <li>• Plays unattended for short periods of time</li> <li>• Expresses pleasure when playfully handled</li> <li>• Shows displeasure when familiar object is removed</li> <li>• Understands and adapts to social signals like smiles and tones of voice</li> </ul>



3 to 9 months

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays simple games, like pat-a-cake</li> <li>Acts on or with visible toys or objects</li> <li>Moves to reach a desired object</li> <li>Finds a completely hidden object</li> <li>Looks at pictures in book</li> <li>Touches adult or object to cause action</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">9</div> <div style="background-color: gray; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">★</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places one shape correctly in a form board</li> <li>Uses tool such as a stick to obtain objects</li> <li>Recognizes shapes in a puzzle board</li> <li>Imitates unfamiliar sounds and gestures</li> <li>Imitates at least one facial gesture</li> <li>Points to an object named or wanted</li> </ul>	<b>Cognition</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays pat-a-cake; waves bye-bye</li> <li>Imitates coughs, tongue clicks, lip smacks</li> <li>Stops activities in response to “no”</li> <li>Repeats what adult says</li> <li>Understands a few words and gestures</li> <li>Uses jargon or non-meaningful monologue</li> <li>Imitates new words</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">★</div> <div style="background-color: gray; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">♥</div> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">12</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moves head side-to-side to mean “no”</li> <li>Uses first spontaneous words</li> <li>Uses one word to express idea, like “milk”</li> <li>Follows simple command</li> <li>Performs requested actions</li> </ul>	<b>Communication</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creeps forward on hands and knees</li> <li>Pulls to standing, using stable support</li> <li>Sits from standing with help and then alone</li> <li>Walks holding on to furniture</li> <li>Walks with support</li> <li>Lets go of support and stands alone</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">★</div> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Months</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creeps upstairs</li> <li>Walks without holding on to furniture</li> <li>Creeps downstairs backwards</li> <li>Stands alone in the middle of a floor</li> <li>Walks backwards and sideways</li> <li>Climbs upstairs with one hand held</li> <li>Rises to standing position independently</li> </ul>	<b>Gross Motor</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses index finger alone</li> <li>Makes marks on paper with pencil or crayon</li> <li>Grasps items with finger and thumb</li> <li>Pokes at objects with index finger</li> <li>Bangs spoon or cup</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">★</div> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">12</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places cubes in a cup</li> <li>Uses both hands to perform same action</li> <li>Holds crayon and scribbles on paper</li> <li>Stacks one block on top of another</li> <li>Builds tower of three or four cubes</li> </ul>	<b>Fine Motor</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stops drooling</li> <li>Licks food off utensil or from sides of mouth</li> <li>Finger feeds for part of meal</li> <li>Usually weaned from breast or bottle</li> <li>Drinks from cup with some liquid spilling from mouth</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">★</div> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">to</div> <div style="background-color: gray; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">♥</div> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">18</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picks up cup and drinks</li> <li>Spoon feeds without many spills</li> <li>Removes simple garments on request</li> <li>Cooperates in dressing by moving limbs</li> <li>Indicates wet or soiled diaper</li> </ul>	<b>Self Help</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laughs aloud in play with adult</li> <li>Responds to adult mood changes</li> <li>Temporarily responds to “no”</li> <li>Shows preference for one toy over another</li> </ul>	<div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">★</div> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Months</div> <div style="background-color: gray; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">♥</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes some decisions for self</li> <li>Repeats a performance that is laughed at</li> <li>Gives affection by returning a kiss or hug</li> <li>Exhibits specific emotional behaviors, like fear, joy, and anger</li> </ul>	









# Developmental Milestones

<b>Cognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places three shapes correctly in a form board</li> <li>Identifies parts of own body</li> <li>Attends to nursery rhymes</li> <li>Points to pictures in a book upon request</li> <li>Imitates sounds, words, or body movements</li> <li>Finds object from indirect visual cues</li> <li>Activates objects directly</li> </ul>	<b>18</b> ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places five shapes correctly in a form board</li> <li>Matches familiar objects</li> <li>Enjoys short stories and describes simple pictures found in picture books</li> <li>Exhibits sense of ownership, with phrases like “it’s mine” and “my toy”</li> <li>Recognizes self in mirror</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refers to self by name</li> <li>Uses two words to describe actions</li> <li>Follows verbal instructions</li> <li>Uses two-word possessives, like “Daddy car”</li> <li>Uses one word to describe many similar things</li> </ul>	<b>to</b> ♥ <b>24</b> ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joins in with songs and rhythms</li> <li>Uses own first name; says complete name</li> <li>Uses three-word phrases</li> <li>Uses the word, “no” appropriately</li> <li>Asks questions with appropriate tone</li> <li>Carries out two-step commands</li> <li>Uses regular plurals</li> </ul>
<b>Gross Motor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walks downstairs with support</li> <li>Jumps in place</li> <li>Pushes/pulls a light object</li> <li>Sits directly in small chair</li> <li>Runs length of the room without falling</li> <li>Stands on one foot momentarily</li> <li>Picks up toy from floor when standing-up</li> </ul>	<b>Months</b> ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walks up and down stairs holding rail</li> <li>Runs, jumps and kicks ball without support</li> <li>Throws ball overhand</li> <li>Rides tricycle using pedals</li> <li>Balances on one foot</li> <li>Walks up stairs with support, alternating feet</li> </ul>
<b>Fine Motor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imitates vertical crayon stroke</li> <li>Places three shapes in a form board</li> <li>Imitates stacking tower of four cubes</li> <li>Turns pages of book one by one</li> <li>Manipulates an object with fingers and thumb alone</li> </ul>	<b>24</b> ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strings three or four beads</li> <li>Builds tower of nine blocks</li> <li>Begins to hold crayon appropriately</li> <li>Imitates drawing horizontal and vertical strokes</li> <li>Snips or makes small cuts with blunt scissors</li> <li>Completes form board of five or more pieces</li> </ul>
<b>Self Help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zips and unzips large zipper</li> <li>Attempts to put on shoes</li> <li>Removes all clothes without help</li> <li>Attempts to put familiar objects away</li> <li>Unwraps enclosed food such as crackers</li> <li>Ceases activity for naptime</li> </ul>	<b>to</b> ♥ <b>36</b> ★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gets own drink</li> <li>Eats meal with spoon; begins to use a fork</li> <li>Toilets with help and only occasional accidents</li> <li>Puts on simple clothing, like hat, pants, shoes, and socks, then all clothes; but no buttoning</li> <li>Washes and dries hands with help</li> <li>Brushes teeth with some help</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cries for short period when parent is absent</li> <li>Plays alone for extended period of time</li> <li>Enjoys accompanying adult on short walks</li> <li>Shows intense positive and negative reactions</li> <li>Becomes easily frustrated</li> <li>Shows pride in actions</li> <li>Pays attention to other children</li> </ul>	<b>Months</b> ★ ♥	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varies mood in response to reactions of others</li> <li>Plays or works alone when near other children</li> <li>Initiates own play activities; plays in simple games; attempts to take turns</li> <li>Indulges in make-believe play with others</li> <li>Requests that specific stories be read</li> <li>Avoids hazardous situations</li> </ul>







# Developmental Milestones

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matches two or three colors</li> <li>• Knows concepts like big/little and fast/slow</li> <li>• Tells a simple story</li> <li>• Matches pictures of like objects</li> <li>• Role counts up to three</li> <li>• Discriminates size, weight, and length</li> </ul>	<p><b>36</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows own age</li> <li>• Knows day from night</li> <li>• Matches and names four primary colors</li> <li>• Counts 10 objects</li> <li>• Sequences pictures in order of occurrence</li> <li>• Answers questions about a story being read</li> <li>• Names three objects from memory</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cognition</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses sentences most of the time</li> <li>• Asks questions beginning with who, what, or where</li> <li>• Uses possessives correctly, like “Mommy’s car”</li> <li>• Uses regular past tense, prepositions such as in, on, and under</li> <li>• Uses normal loudness and tone; whispers</li> </ul>	 <p><b>48</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbally calls attention to own performance</li> <li>• Carries out series of three unrelated commands</li> <li>• Regularly uses pronouns, like “he” and “she”</li> <li>• Regularly uses possessive pronouns, like “mine”</li> <li>• Uses contracted negatives, like “can’t” and don’t”</li> <li>• Uses some adverbs</li> <li>• Uses future tense</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communication</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catches a bounced ball</li> <li>• Jumps forward without falling</li> <li>• Throws ball overhand</li> <li>• Climbs to top of slide and slides down</li> <li>• Walks downstairs without support, alternating feet</li> </ul>	<p><b>Months</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gallops</li> <li>• Kicks rolling ball toward target</li> <li>• Skips, alternating feet</li> <li>• Hops on one toot</li> <li>• Catches a thrown ball</li> <li>• Walks on tiptoes for 10 feet</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gross Motor</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strings together loose beads</li> <li>• Copies a circle</li> <li>• Cuts along a line with continuous opening and closing motion</li> <li>• Laces shoes - not necessarily with pattern</li> <li>• Puts together objects requiring fine muscle control</li> </ul>	<p><b>48</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draws a picture</li> <li>• Draws stick figures</li> <li>• Demonstrates hand preference</li> <li>• Copies shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle) from example</li> <li>• Cuts out a circle and other simple shapes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fine Motor</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wipes up spills</li> <li>• Uses fork when eating meals</li> <li>• Completely cares for self at toilet</li> <li>• Completely dresses self when told what to do</li> <li>• Buttons and unbuttons larger buttons</li> <li>• Washes and dries hands independently</li> <li>• Brushes teeth with verbal assistance</li> </ul>	<p><b>to</b></p>  <p><b>60</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blows nose independently</li> <li>• Serves self at table from bowl without spilling</li> <li>• Eats with spoon and fork skillfully</li> <li>• Stays dry overnight</li> <li>• Distinguishes between front and back of clothes</li> <li>• Plays in yard with periodic monitoring</li> <li>• Hangs coat on hook</li> </ul>	<p><b>Self Help</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiates play in group and remains to play</li> <li>• Shares toys upon suggestion</li> <li>• Performs simple errands</li> <li>• Plays cooperatively with other children</li> <li>• Consciously identifies with parents</li> <li>• Shows sympathy and concern, when appropriate</li> <li>• Enjoys helping and participating</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Months</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calls attention to own performance</li> <li>• Uses social responses, like “please” and “thank you,” raises hand and stands in line</li> <li>• Prefers to be with peers rather than adults</li> <li>• Talks about family</li> <li>• Controls emotions and expresses them in acceptable ways</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social</b></p>



<b>Cognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matches sets of items to numerals, one to 10</li> <li>• Sequences up to five daily activities</li> <li>• Retells a brief story</li> <li>• Gives home address</li> <li>• Knows left from right</li> </ul>	<b>To</b>	
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tells story by describing pictures</li> <li>• Asks meaning of abstract words</li> <li>• Speaks fluently and correctly, but still confuses “s,” “f” and “th”</li> </ul>	★	
<b>Gross Motor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jumps rope</li> <li>• Roller skates</li> <li>• Hops two to three yards forward on each foot separately</li> <li>• Jumps onto toes from 12-foot landing</li> <li>• Runs with arms swinging in opposition to feet</li> </ul>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Fine Motor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prints capital letters and simple words with frequent reversals</li> <li>• Uses appropriate hand placement while cutting and writing</li> <li>• Laces own shoes</li> <li>• Prints numerals 1 to 5</li> </ul>	♥	
<b>Self Help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brushes and combs hair without assistance</li> <li>• Puts toys away in box</li> <li>• Dresses and undresses without assistance</li> <li>• Crosses street safely</li> </ul>	<b>Months</b>	
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comforts playmate in distress</li> <li>• Plans and builds constructively</li> <li>• Understands need for rules and fair play</li> <li>• Relates clock time to daily schedule</li> </ul>	★	
		♥	<p><b>For Children With Disabilities... A Little Extra Goes a Long Way</b></p> <p>If you believe your infant or young child is experiencing difficulty in any developmental area, early intervention and preschool services are available. Early intervention and preschool services are designed to help enhance your child’s potential for growth and development before he reaches school age.</p> <p>For information on early intervention and preschool services, contact the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services.</p> <p>And remember, while every child needs patience and support to grow and learn, children with disabilities may require a little more attention. Parents, educators, therapists and other must work together as a team to provide the love and support needed for a lifetime of learning.</p>  



## **The Discovery Process...**

### **How Children Learn**

#### **Exploring.**

Children discover the world through exploration. They move about exploring and discovering new faces, places and things.

#### **Touching. Tasting. Smelling. Hearing. Seeing.**

Children experience the world through their senses. They smell sweet vanilla, taste salty crackers, touch soft kittens, hear loud bangs, and see brightly colored ribbons.

#### **Experimenting.**

Children learn by experimenting with new ideas and through ‘trial and error.’ They experiment using one particular object in several different ways. For instance, a child may stack blocks on top of one other, push them along the floor like a toy train, or bang them together like cymbals. He may find that the blocks work better as a toy train than as a musical instrument.

#### **Imitating.**

Children learn by watching and imitating others. They develop new skills by first observing others then imitating the actions they observe. Repeating imitated actions eventually leads to mastery.

#### **Playing!**

Through play, children learn how things work, how to solve problems and how to make things happen— all while having fun!



## You Can Help Your Child Learn



Try the following to help your child develop new skills.

### **Go from the known to the unknown.**

Let your child work with what is familiar to him before you ask him to start something new. For instance, help him put together a familiar puzzle, then let him put together a new one on his own. Give your youngster all the cues needed to achieve success the first time. That way, the unknown becomes a playful challenge, not something to be feared.

### **Add variety to daily activities.**

Vary your child's daily routine by introducing a new food or inviting friends over for lunch.

### **Match tasks to short attention spans.**

Keep tasks simple to match your child's ability to focus. If your child's attention span does not lengthen with repeated efforts, special exercises may be needed. You may want to talk with your family doctor or contact your local school system's Child Find office to talk about any concerns in this area.

### **Know your child's limitations.**

Vary the positions in which your child plays. Make objects and textures reachable. Limit the noise level around your child. Be sensitive to your child's moods, interests, and needs. Realize that adaptations may be needed for children whose senses are impaired or whose movements are limited.

### **Praise your child's efforts.**

Set up situations for your child to be successful, then show your pleasure in her success through hugs, smiles, or special treats. Give assistance to your child if she becomes frustrated and reward her with plenty of praise for attempting the task.

### **Play with your child!**

Learning can be fun, especially for young children! Select activities and toys that are appropriate for your child's developmental level and help your child have fun while learning.

## **Make Home Your Child's First Learning Environment**

Research has shown that babies start learning from the moment they are born. Create a caring and stimulating environment in which your child can learn and grow. Your child's environment includes every space, object and person that impact his life.

The following ideas and activities are suggested as ways you can create a positive home learning environment. Always follow safety precautions and if necessary, speak with your child's early care provider, teacher or therapist to make sure activities are appropriate for your child.

**Reminder: Always select activities that are appropriate for your child's level of development.**



Select activities that match your child's level of development and encourage progression to the next level. When playing with your child, jot down what he can do alone, what he can do with a little assistance, with a lot of assistance, and what he is simply unable to do at all. For activities that require assistance, keep track of the amount of assistance you need to give.

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## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

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### When your child is an infant...

#### **Make it easy for *baby* to move around.**

Lay your infant on a rug or towel on the floor. Make sure she can move freely and safely. Play with her. Encourage her to kick her legs and reach up and out with her arms.

#### **Touch *baby* to encourage movement of the body part you are stimulating.**

Blow on your infant's legs and arms. Gently rub his legs and arms with your hand. If he does not move in response to your touch, move his arm or leg in the motion you would like him to make.

#### **Vary *baby* position to help her become familiar with her major body movements.**

Main body movements develop before your infant is able to fully use her hands or feet. Get her used to a variety of positions. Hold her in your arms. Lay her on her tummy and back. Prop her up on her side using sturdy pillows.

#### **Provide different stimuli to motivate movement of eyes, head, and body.**

Vary the scenery you use to motivate your infant. For example, hang a brightly colored mobile above his crib. Later on, when he's a little older, place a simple picture on one or both sides of his crib. Change his location in the house often.

#### **Stimulate *baby* senses.**

Engage all of your infant's senses—touching, tasting, smelling, hearing and seeing. Massage her limbs in the bathtub and let her kick and splash water. Toss a brightly colored ball between two people with your baby propped in the middle so she can follow the motion of the ball. Let her feel different textures of sponges, rubber balls, and paintbrushes.

#### **Look at the PARENT HELPER Developmental Milestones charts periodically to see how your *baby* is growing.**

Explore with your baby to see how she is developing. Provide a variety of objects to encourage responses. Use simple items like colored ribbons tied on crib posts, soft rubber balls and brightly-colored stuffed animals.

### When your child is ready to explore...

#### **Set up learning situations for success.**

Prop your child on his side at an angle that will allow him to roll over easily. Then, gradually decrease your help until he completely rolls over by himself. Entice him with a brightly-colored toy.

**Motivate your child to move.**

You may be the best motivator for your child. While your child is on her tummy, face her and encourage her to come to you. At first she may only push up on her forearms and raise her head to look at you, but eventually she should move both her arms and legs in an effort to reach you.

**Use your child's curiosity about himself.**

Play games in front of a mirror with your child on your lap. Prop him up to sit or place him on his tummy to play.

**Take advantage of everyday routines as learning opportunities.**

After your child's bath, encourage her to practice rolling over by wrapping her loosely in a towel or blanket and gently pulling the edge of the towel so that she rolls over. When she is strong enough, use a jumper chair or infant seat for her to play in while you work.

**When your child is ready to use his hands...****Stimulate hand movement.**

Let your child explore the many movements of his hands and fingers. Help him rotate his hands at the wrist, clap his hands together, grasp objects and release objects. Assist him in holding objects with his fingers.

**Encourage development of simple fine motor skills.**

Fine motor activities are a combination of several motions. Encourage your child to grasp an object then do something with it, like dropping it, placing it in something, shaking it, banging it, placing it in the other hand. Use noisy objects like bean bags, bells, and rattles and vary the texture by using rubber and cloth balls, metal and rubber dishware.

**Encourage more complex fine motor skills development.**

Fine motor behavior goes from simple to more complex—from a grasp release response to purposeful movement with an object in hand. Hold out a toy near your child's preferred hand. Assist her in grasping the toy using her fingers. Then have her release the toy into a container. As time goes on, use less assistance and smaller containers. When your child builds up her accuracy, she will be ready for stacking objects. As time goes on, she will be able to stack smaller objects like blocks, and fit small items like pegs into holes.

**Encourage exploration with fingers.**

Your child needs to explore with his fingers and with objects that he can hold in his fingers. Finger painting and water play are two activities to build upon the sensation of movement. Wide circular motions may be made with or without crayons or pencils. Wide and small scribbling should be encouraged. Imitation of movement may be introduced at this time. Just be sure to use large-handled brushes and fat crayons and pencils.

**Encourage use of thumbs and fingers to complete complex fine motor tasks.**

Use "finger pops" or small rubber squeak toys as motivators. Encourage your child to imitate your grasp on the toy. As your child's grasp improves, (typically around the preschool years), she will be ready for cutting activities. At first she will be able to snip cut, though not following lines. Later when she is ready to cut out shapes, assist her by turning the paper and helping her plan where to cut.



## Encourage Your Child's Development

Try the following activities to further encourage your child's growth and development.

### **When she makes an interesting sound**

Smile and praise your child and encourage repetition. Repeat the sound or play a game where each of you takes turns making and imitating sounds like clapping, banging and splashing.

### **When he gestures for an object**

Say the object's name, then before you give him the object, wait for him to try and imitate what you just said.

### **When she shows interest in a particular activity, place or object**

Tell her words and stories that relate to the activity or place that will add to her language. For example, if she likes to watch you bake cookies, as you prepare the cookie dough you could say, "First we pour in milk. Then we stir." Or if she likes the zoo (and who doesn't?), take her there and talk about the experience—the animals, the scenery, the smells.

### **When he becomes fussy or irritable**

Try to "interpret" his nonverbal communication, then express it to him verbally. For example, you could say "Jack needs a nap." or "Jack wants juice."

### **When she responds to a noise**

Listen with her and talk about the sound.

### **When he names objects and uses action words like "go and stop"**

Use two- and three-word sentences using some of the new words. For example, you could say, "Jane likes milk" or "play ball with Mommy."

### **When she is able to say several words**

Start a written list of words and paste it in a central location. As she learns new words, add them to the list and have your whole family use the words.

### **When he begins using three- or four-word sentences**

Add descriptive words to your sentences. For example, "Tammy likes cold milk." or "Sing the song quietly."

### **When she begins listening to music**

Show your approval and use music for games, songs, dancing and "happy times."

### **When he learns all or part of a song**

Allow him to perform the song for someone who will listen appreciatively and applaud.

### **When she begins to watch television**

Select programming to watch with her and encourage new words and ideas.

### **When he wants you to read to him**

Encourage him to say words he knows by using pictures as cues, then gradually increase his verbal participation.

### **Imitates what he hears and sees**

Use puppets to encourage imitation, imagination, and role modeling.

### **Asks you a question**

Use short, clear phrases. Answering your child's questions encourages curiosity and interest in learning!

## Around the House: Sample Teaching Activities for Children with Disabilities

Children, including young children with disabilities, can learn a lot in the home environment. Daily routines offer wonderful opportunities for learning new skills. Involve your child in household activities like preparing meals, taking out the garbage, doing laundry, and shopping for groceries. The following sample teaching activities illustrate how everyday activities can serve as great learning opportunities.

### Sample Teaching Activity #1: STACEY AND HER MOM

Stacey's mom uses the vacuum cleaner to encourage Stacey's communication.

**Description:** Stacey is almost two and has remarkably bright eyes and bouncing pony tails. She wears two hearing aids and has cerebral palsy. She cannot walk yet, but she sits well in an adapted high chair.

Stacey's doctors recognized her serious motor difficulty in the first months of her life but her hearing loss remained undetected until her parents sensed a problem. After testing by a skilled audiologist, she was fitted with hearing aids and a powerful sound transmitter that she wears on her chest. Stacey's audiologist believes she needs to learn to pay attention to loud sounds and understand what makes the sounds. Learning to listen—also called auditory training—happens at the same time Stacey is learning simple gestures and sign language.

**Activity:** Stacey and her mom play “the listening game” while vacuuming the carpet in the family's living room. The rules of the game are simple. Mom wants Stacey to respond one way each time she hears the vacuum cleaner go on and another way when she hears the vacuum cleaner go off.

Stacey's signals for “yes” and “no” are of her own creation. Stacey's parents noticed that when she wanted to be picked up or wanted more of her favorite foods, she would “reach” a little with her head. Her parents latched on to this purposeful movement and showed Stacey how she could signal “no” by putting her chin down. She practiced her “no” on spinach and beets. Stacey's gesturing was the beginning of a real communication system between Stacey and her family.

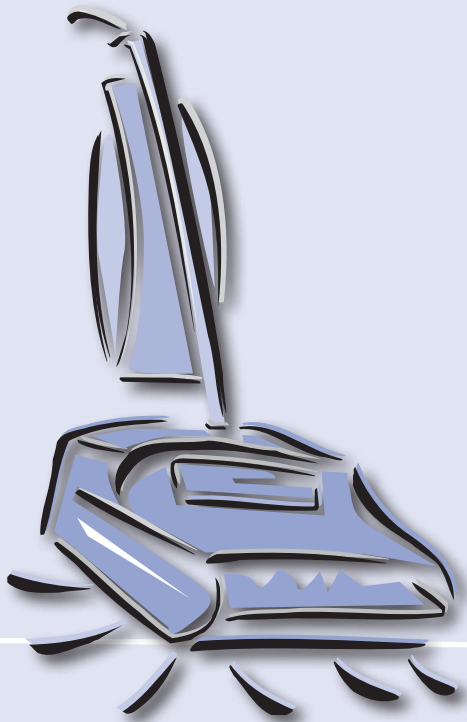
Mom begins the listening game by helping Stacey turn the vacuum “on” and helping her feel the vibration and suction of the hose. With a few Cheerios, she shows Stacey how the vacuum works. She signs and says “all gone” as the Cheerios disappear into the vacuum cleaner.



## Around the House: Sample Teaching Activities for Children with Disabilities

Because Stacey is sitting next to the vacuum and paying close attention, her mom is pretty sure she is hearing the sound. To check, she switches the vacuum off when Stacey isn't looking. She checks Stacey's face for a response, models the "no" gesture, then points to the machine and signs "all gone."

Together they switch the vacuum on and Stacey's mom models the "yes" signal while pointing to the loud machine. They practice switching it on and off together until Stacey gives the "yes" and "no" signals by herself. After Stacey has learned the rules, her mom gets down to the business of vacuuming the rugs, but pauses frequently to switch the machine on and off, checking for Stacey's signals and applauding her for good listening.



Stacey's mother gradually pushes the vacuum farther away from her across the carpet, motivating Stacey to listen more intensely (*and to eventually get the carpet clean*). Because of Stacey's age and attention span, they spend only a few minutes playing this game each day. But Stacey has learned the rules of this listening game which open up many opportunities for practice and learning around the house.

Other noisy household items to consider for use in "the listening game" include:

- dishwashers
- blenders
- mixers
- hair dryers
- electric shavers
- washing machines
- clothes dryers
- televisions
- radios

Outside the home, children can listen for sounds from such items as:

- car horns
- motorcycle engines
- fire engines
- lawn mowers

**Stacey's mom  
uses the  
vacuum cleaner  
to encourage  
Stacey's  
communication.**

## Around the House: Sample Teaching Activities for Children with Disabilities

### Sample Teaching Activity #2: MARCUS AND HIS GRANDDAD

**Description:** Marcus is a three-year-old boy with Down's Syndrome. He can understand many words and has a speaking vocabulary of about 40 words (some words he speaks more clearly than others). Although his muscle tone is poor, he can walk.

**Activity:** When Granddad comes to visit, he and Marcus have a fine time, spending much of the visit together. When they go to the grocery store, Granddad finds this a good time to help Marcus with his vocabulary development. As Granddad takes items from the shelf, he asks Marcus to name them.

Granddad always starts with items such as milk and juice because Marcus can already say the words. When he correctly names the items, Granddad smiles and claps his hands saying, "good talking, Marcus." Since Marcus delights in the approval of others, he works hard for his Granddad's smiles, claps and hugs.

When Granddad wants to introduce a new word, he tells Marcus the name of the item and asks him to repeat it. For example, when Granddad is teaching the name for banana, he says, "This is a banana. Now what is this, Marcus?" Any attempt, such as "nana," will be accepted and praised by Granddad.

Granddad is careful to introduce only one new word at a time and to allow Marcus practice on other occasions, such as dinner, so that these words will become part of Marcus' speaking vocabulary. When Marcus "owns" or can say the word, it is added to his list on the refrigerator door. Marcus feels good as he sees his list getting longer.

**Granddad takes Marcus to the grocery store to help stimulate his vocabulary.**

Marcus is a pleasant and loving little boy who enjoys playing "learning" games with his family. His family is very interested in Marcus' progress and watches very closely as new skills develop. His mother tapes a list on the refrigerator of words that Marcus can say. She adds to the list as he learns and uses new words. Marcus is very close to his Granddad.



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