

Good -ginnings

Early Child Development · Parenting Education · Learning and School Readiness Tips

the Buzz...

“**M**ama, look what I found!” “Daddy, watch me!” Is there anything more rewarding for you as a parent than seeing your child’s excitement at discovering or at doing something new? Learning can and should be an exciting process. Learning does not take place just in school. It begins the **first day** of a child’s life. Parents who know this make the home a friendly and interesting learning environment. Positive interactions with family members and interesting play experiences make up the foundation of your child’s intelligence in the early years.

Intelligence is being able to understand and learn from **every-day** situations. It is the ability to use those experiences to solve problems and to meet new challenges. In this issue of *Good Beginnings*, you will find suggestions for activities that encourage the development of your child’s intelligence.

When you find ways to make interesting sights, sounds, and movement activities a part of your young child’s daily environment, you are building a foundation for the development of her intelligence.

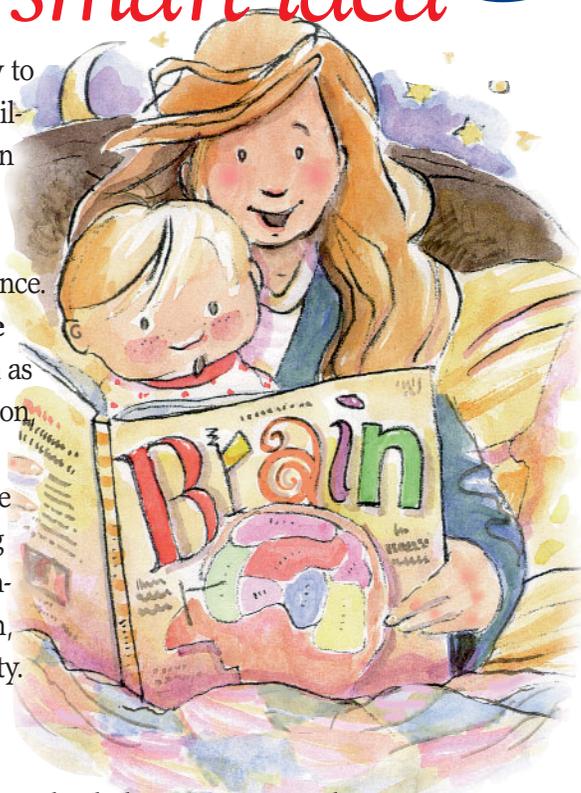

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Reading

...a smart idea

It is never too early to start reading to children. Reading is an activity that helps children develop basic skills related to intelligence. Reading can **encourage** important abilities such as learning to focus attention, remembering, noticing how things are the same and different, reasoning about ideas and relationships, using imagination, and developing creativity. Reading every day to a child is a **smart idea**.



Remember that reading a book doesn’t mean you have to say every word and every sentence as written from beginning to end. Instead, you can talk about the pictures. You can make up a different story. You can interrupt the story to ask your child questions such as “What kind of animal is this?” “Why are the people taking the train?” “Where are the flowers?”

Keep in mind that finishing the book is not as important as **enjoying** the time spent together. If your child gets restless, you can finish reading the book later. When children learn at an early age that books are fun, they are more likely to remain book lovers when they are older. ●

Curiosity is Good!

Young children are quite the busybodies! Even as infants, children are curious about the world around them. Young children handle and examine everything within reach. While this can be a problem, it is important to remember that curiosity is the source of learning. Whenever possible, respond to your child’s curiosity in a positive way. For example, holding and describing the breakable vase your child wants to touch before putting it safely away can provide a teaching moment. Talk together about its shape, size, color, or weight. Doing so creates a learning opportunity for your child and keeps her out of trouble at the same time. ●

Turning Chores into Fun



"Shopping Safari"

- Where does this food come from?
- This food helps us have strong bones and muscles.
- I spy something...

Parents can turn family chores into learning experiences for young children. A quick trip to the grocery store, for example, can be made into a fun learning activity. Ask **questions** about the colors and shapes of fruits or vegetables that you are buying. Talk about where a certain food comes from or how it grows. Let your child share his ideas about these things.

A visit to your neighborhood laundromat is another good opportunity for **learning**. Show your child how to help you sort light and dark clothes. Let him help put the coins in the machine slots. Once your clothes are dry, make a game of matching socks, folding clothes, or stacking them into piles. Talk about how clothes can be clean or dirty, light or dark, large or small, wet or dry.

Remember that **learning** is not about doing the task perfectly. Learning for a young child comes from trying new things and talking with you about what he did. ●

FABULOUS 4s!

Do you remember what it was like to be four years old? Like many children that age, you were probably very **energetic**. Very likely, you were also quite **imaginative**. Four-year-olds like to play make-believe, and sometimes they can act quite silly. All four-year-olds need help to channel their energy and imagination in **positive** ways. Here are some other facts about how fours think and learn. ●

- They are curious and ask many questions.
- They like to imitate others.
- They think that things such as trees and stars think and feel as people do.
- They have a longer attention span for things that interest them.
- They learn by doing, moving, pretending, making things, and being noticed.

Wise Words

"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all."

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

Stories tickle a child's **imagination**. They give a child the chance to connect what is happening in a story with herself. Imagination can lead a child to set goals for her future and to learn skills that will help her reach her goals.



He or She? We take turns referring to children as he or she. When we use he or she, we mean to include all children.

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References: *The Developing Child: Understanding Children and Parenting*, 7th edition, by Holly E. Brisbane. New York: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 1997.

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