

Brain Building

from Birth

Nurturing your child every step of the way.



Ages: Prenatal - 3

Did you know you can help your child develop before they're even born?

By fostering developmentally appropriate environments, including self-care during pregnancy, you are nurturing three key developmental areas for your baby's growth and happiness:

- Social-emotional development
- Physical development
- Language and cognitive development



As your child grows from infancy to preschool-age, every moment you share together lays the foundation for a happy and healthy life!

The Little Grower (Prenatal)

Did you know?

A baby's basic brain structure begins to form during the mother's first trimester, with one million neural connections formed every second! In just the first month of pregnancy, embryos develop a neural tube—which helps develop the brain and spinal cord.

What can you do?

Strengthen the development of your baby's brain through self-care, such as fostering positive experiences and environments, and choosing a healthy diet.



The Mover (1 year old)

Did you know?

At birth, a baby's brain weighs about one pound. The brain grows at such a rapid rate, it will double in weight by the time the baby turns one year-old.

What can you do?

As infants learn about the world around them, encourage environments and interactions that engage all five senses: hearing, sight, smell, sound, and touch.



Talk to your baby constantly. Call them by their name, verbally identify objects they see, and narrate what is happening around them.

Provide physical affection - lots of hugs, kisses, and holding your baby close.



Play peek-a-boo and shake a rattle; both are great games for teaching your child about "cause and effect."



Establish predictable routines throughout the day, allowing for 12-17 hours of sleep for your baby.



Iron and fat are key for healthy brain growth, especially during the first 6-12 months. Whether it's breastmilk, iron-fortified formula, supplements or the appropriate foods, ask your doctor about all the best ways to support your baby's iron levels.



The Explorer (2 years old)

Did You Know?

During your child's second year, their vocabulary will quadruple! This season represents a window where language is exploding; verbal comprehension and feeling understood are essential for healthy brain growth.

What Can You Do?

Begin conversations with your toddler, allowing time to respond with both verbal and non-verbal signals. Encourage your child to explore their movements freely, always in a safe environment. Grasping, carrying and climbing are natural explorations at this stage.



Cultivate environments that empower your toddler to explore the use of all five senses.



Read stories that identify emotions, boost self-confidence, and help validate your toddler's feelings.



Use educational and age-appropriate books, toys, and shows to introduce literacy and counting.



Be ready to provide comfort and security when your child approaches new & unfamiliar situations. This will build trust with caregivers and peers.

The Independent Champion

(3 years old)

Did You Know?

By age three, 85% of the brain is developed. With this growth comes a greater sense of independence and self-awareness. At this age, it is common to hear your toddler say things like "Mine!", "I do it!", or "No!"

What Can You Do?

Nurture your toddler's newfound independence by giving them the time and space to figure things out on his own.



Build on your toddler's language by expanding words into complete sentences. If they say, "Red truck!" you can respond, "Yes, that is a red and yellow fire truck."



Your child may get frustrated, but that's okay. Your child is learning how to manage their emotions and navigate new situations.



Have them play with toys that have various textures, try new snacks, or visit new places.



Talk, read, and sing! While you began this routine at infancy, expand upon all three of these activities. Now, when reading aloud, you can ask questions like, "What happens next?" or while singing, act out parts of the song.



Resources for You



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Did you know?

There are resources and programs created just for you to help you and your family during these early years.

What can you do?

Check out all of the family resources available online and in your community. Child360.org offers guides to help you find care for your baby, tips for healthy eating, questions to ask when choosing a preschool and more! You may even qualify for free early care and education through an Early Head Start program.

These quality services and child-centric resources depend upon an accurate Census count. Be sure to include all the little people in your household on your 2020 Census form. Babies and toddlers count, too!

[Child360.org/families](https://www.child360.org/families)

**For Census 2020 assistance,
contact NALEO Educational Fund: 877.352.3676**



Stein
**Early Childhood
Development Fund**
at CCF

