What young children are learning

You and your family have a vital role in what your child learns in these early years.

Self and relationships
From you and your family, your child learns that she/he’s loved and important. She/He learns trust—for example, ‘I know you’ll be there if I fall over’. She/He starts learning to understand her own needs, thoughts, feelings, likes and dislikes. Eventually, family relationships teach her/him about getting on with other children and grown-ups.

Language and communication
When you talk and listen with your child, and read and sing together, you’re helping him/her learn about language, written and spoken communication, and conversation skills like taking turns and listening.

Space, place and environment
At home with you, your child learns about her/his own size and shape—for example, ‘I’m bigger than our stool but not as big as our table’. She/He also learns about her/his place in her/his community and her/his influence on the world around her/him. For example, ‘My home is in this street, the park is down the road, and my friend lives in a different street’, or ‘The plants grew because I helped to water them’.

Health and physical fitness
When it comes to healthy eating and physical activity, you’re a key role model for your child. If you choose to have an apple rather than a snack bar for morning tea, your child is more likely to do the same. If you go for a walk rather than watching the TV, your child learns that exercise is a good, fun way to spend time together.

Numeracy, literacy, handwriting and music
You help your child build early numeracy skills with everyday counting—for example, ‘How many bears are on the bed?’ or ‘Can you put all the red pegs into this basket?’ Or you can sing nursery rhymes with your child that include counting. And your child develops early literacy through reading and storytelling with you, playing simple sound and letter games like listening for words that begin with the same sound, and looking at pictures, letters and words in the environment—for example, on signs and in catalogues.

Your child’s handwriting skills develop when you encourage him/her to draw, scribble and write. For example, if you’re writing a card or a shopping list, you could give your child some paper and a pencil so he/she can join in. ‘Writing’ also helps your child understand the connection between letters and spoken sounds.

Singing with your child, putting on music for her/him to dance to, giving her/him musical instruments to play (homemade is just fine), and finding dress-up clothes for her/him to use are all great ways to get her/him started on learning about music, drama and dance. https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/play-learning/learning-ideas/learning-baby-to-preschool

Patriotic Windsock

What you’ll need:
- Toilet paper roll
- One sheet of printer paper
- Red, white, and blue yarn
- Scissors & glue, tape

How to make your Patriotic Windsock:
- Cover 1/3 of the roll in glue and wrap red yarn around it. Repeat for white and blue yarns.
- Make rows of stars the same way you would make paper dolls:
- Fold the white paper in half twice, lengthwise.
- Accordion fold the paper into 4 equal sections.
- Draw a star on top of accordion as shown, with the 2 side points extending off the page.
- Adults cut out star shape, forming 4 rows of 4 stars each.
- Tape the top star of each row into the bottom opening of the roll. Tape a length of yarn into the top opening, to use as a hanger.


July 4, 2020
Independence Day

The 4th July celebration commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence 241 years ago on July 4, 1776.
Money management: working out what you want to save

Your budget will tell you whether you're currently spending more or less than you earn. If you're currently spending more, a simple savings plan can help you spend less. And if you're already spending less than you earn, a savings plan will help you put some of your leftover money aside for unexpected expenses, emergencies and long-term goals.

You can sit down together as a family and look at how you can save. For example, can you spend less on certain items? Do you have any high-interest credit cards or other loans? Could you pay these off as soon as possible and look into more suitable credit or loan options?

Here are some tips:

• Build a savings buffer. Before you start saving for your wants, you could keep extra savings for financial emergencies. For example, you could aim to keep some money in a separate savings account. You can use this money for unexpected or emergency expenses, which can help you avoid going into debt.

• Decide what you're saving for. What are your goals? Give yourself plenty of time – saving can seem to take forever.

• Set a deadline for your goal. But be realistic, and you'll avoid feeling pressure.

• Open a fee-free bank account, which is separate from your main account. You can use this account only for saving towards your goal. You can set up a direct debit from your main account to regularly transfer a set savings amount.

• Look into other options, like asking your employer to split your salary payment, so some of it goes into your separate savings account.

• Speak to your bank, financial institution or financial adviser if you want more advice.

Once you've come up with a savings plan, it's a good idea to review the pros and cons before you start. This way you'll know how it'll affect your family life. If there are parts of your plan you're unsure about, seek advice or double-check your calculations before you go ahead.

Dental care for baby teeth and gums

Dental care for baby teeth can start before your baby's first tooth appears. A couple of times a day, you can gently wipe your baby's gums using a damp, clean face washer or gauze. This helps your baby get ready for brushing when the first tooth arrives.

As soon as teeth arrive, you can clean them twice a day - in the morning and before bed. Use a small, soft toothbrush designed for children under two years. If your baby doesn't like the toothbrush in her mouth, keep using the face washer or gauze to wipe the front and back of each of your baby's teeth. Use only water on the toothbrush until your baby is 18 months old, unless a dentist tells you to do something else.

The best way to clean your baby's teeth

• Position your baby so you can see his mouth, and he feels secure. It might help to sit on a bed or the floor with your baby lying down so that his head is on your lap.

• Cup your baby's chin in your hands, with her head resting against your body.

• Lift your baby's lip to clean his teeth using soft, circular motions.

• Make sure you spend time on the front and back of each tooth and also the gum line.

• If your baby doesn't like having her teeth brushed, you could try make brushing more fun by singing songs or letting your baby play with a toy. Even a quick attempt at brushing is better than nothing, so your child starts to learn that brushing is a normal part of her daily routine.

Keeping the toothbrush clean

• After cleaning your baby's teeth and gums, rinse the toothbrush with tap water.

• Store the toothbrush upright in an open container to allow it to air-dry.

• You should replace toothbrushes every 3-4 months, or when the bristles get worn or frayed.

Preventing early tooth decay

Teeth cleaning alone isn't a guarantee against tooth decay. Diet and the way you feed your baby are also important. Babies aged 0-6 months need only breast-milk or formula. Breastfed and formula-fed babies older than six months can also have small amounts of water. Avoid giving your baby sugary drinks. Once you introduce solids, also avoid giving your baby foods high in sugar.

Don't put your baby to sleep with a bottle. When your baby is asleep, there's less saliva in his mouth to protect his teeth. If your baby falls asleep with a bottle, formula or milk might slowly drip into your baby's mouth and soak his teeth. This puts him at risk of tooth decay. Also note that putting your baby to sleep with a bottle is a choking risk. https://raisingchildren.net.au/babies/health-daily-care/dental-care/dental-care-babies#dental-care-for-baby-teeth-and-gums-nav-tritle
Announcements

July is Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. In these difficult times, now more than ever it is important to check on the mental health of your family and yourself. In addition to physical health, mental health is critical to living a healthy and balanced life. Even though they are small, your children can also carry big feelings. Below are several sites with information on mental health wellness activities you can do with your child and alone, as well has resources should you find yourself struggling.

Help with discussing mental health with children:


Immediate Mental Health Assistance:
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline 1-800-662-4357
National Alliance on Mental Illness Greater Orlando Helpline 1-800-273-8255
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255

Water Safety for Children

Fact: Most drownings in kids 4 and under happen in home swimming pools. Researchers looked at child drowning deaths and found that nearly 70% of the children were not expected to be at the pool, yet they were found in the water. And 46% of the children were last seen in the house!

- When children are expected to be in and around water, close, attentive supervision is most effective at preventing drowning.
- When children are NOT expected to be in or around water, 4-sided fencing is the most effective strategy to prevent drowning.
- Child-proof doors to the home so that determined little hands can’t open them.
- If a child can’t be found, check pools and hot tubs first.
- Install a permanent, (minimum) 4 foot-high, 4-sided fence that completely surrounds the pool and isolates it from the house. The fence should:
  - Be climb-proof with no footholds
  - Have vertical slats with no more than 4-inch gaps (so toddlers can’t scoot through)
  - Have a latch at least 54 inches off the ground
  - Have a self-closing, self-latching gate
  - Be locked when the pool is not in use. Be sure to put pool toys away so there’s no temptation in view.

Fact: 27% of drownings among children age 4 and under took place at the home of a friend, relative, or neighbor.

- Close, within-your-sight supervision of children at all times is the key. (And nobody’s going to judge you for a sorry-can’t-make-it RSVP because—let’s face it—constant surveillance makes for a stressful party.)
- Put your child in a properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when around water, pools, or hot tubs.

Fact: Drowning is silent. Children can drown within seconds, with barely a splash.

- Assign an adult to be Water Watcher. It’s like the designated driver of the pool party. The Water Watcher’s job is to watch all children swimming or playing in or NEAR water—such as on a backyard swing set—even if they know how to swim. This person should:
  - not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
  - put down his/her cell phone
  - avoid other activities
  - supervise, even if there are lifeguards
  - switch off with another adult for breaks
  - Turn up the volume. Swimming pool alarms can detect waves on the water’s surface and attract attention when someone has fallen into the pool.

Fact: Children can drown in as little as 2 inches of water.

- Empty water from buckets and other containers immediately after use.
- Use toilet locks to prevent the drowning of toddlers. Do not leave young children alone in the bathroom.
- Never leave young children unsupervised in the bathtub.
- Avoid using infant seats in the bathtub.

Fact: Research has found that swim lessons benefit children starting around age 1 and may lower drowning rates. But remember—even the best swim lessons can’t “drown-proof” a child.

- Look for swim programs that teach children how to get out if they end up in the water unexpectedly. Talk with your child’s health care provider about whether she is ready for swim lessons.
- When infants or toddlers are in or around the water, an adult with swimming skills should supervise and always stay within an arm’s length, providing constant “touch supervision.”
- Don’t assign older children to supervise younger children near bathtubs, pools, spas, or other open water.

https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2748-water-safety-for-children
Homemade Broccoli Tots

To make these homemade tots you’ll need fully cooked brown rice, fresh or frozen broccoli, egg, cheese, and bread-crumbs.

To make this recipe, here’s what you’ll need to do:

- Prepare your rice or plan to use leftovers. Gather the rest of the ingredients.
- Chop the broccoli into small pieces. Cook quickly.
- Drain the broccoli well.
- Add the ingredients to a food processor and grind into a uniform batter.
- Portion out tots onto a parchment-lined baking sheet.
- Bake and serve warm!

Boiled Beets

2 pounds beets (golden or red)
1 teaspoon butter or olive oil
Salt

Wash your beets and cut off the stem and the root ends.
Cut into small pieces.
Add to a medium or large saucepan and cover with water.
Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to about medium to keep at a simmer until soft.
Drain and rinse under cold water and slip off the skins.
Toss with butter (or olive oil) and sprinkle with salt.

Tip: You can add these to your favorite family meal like chicken nuggets!

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How to get more vegetables into your family’s diet

Tip 1: set a good example with vegetables

Your child learns about food choices from you, so the best way to encourage your child to eat vegetables is to let her see you eating and enjoying them yourself.

Tip 2: keep trying with vegetables

It’s normal for children to say they don’t like vegetables when they first taste them. If your child says she doesn’t like vegetables - or doesn’t like a new vegetable - keep offering them to her at mealtimes. Also keep encouraging her to try and taste them.

Your child will probably change his mind about vegetables eventually. Some children need to try a new food up to 10 times before they accept it, and another 10 times before they decide they like it.

Tip 3: use praise when your child tries vegetables

If you praise your child each time she eats or tries vegetables, she’s more likely to want to eat the vegetables he’s helped to prepare.

For example, you could let your child choose vegetables for dinner when you do the shopping. Put chopped vegetables in the steamer or saucepan before you cook them.

Arrange sliced capsicum, tomato and mushroom on a pizza base.
Wash and toss salad leaves.
Take children shopping with you when you can. Seeing lots of different vegetables can make children more curious and interested to try them.

Tip 5: offer vegetables as snacks

Vegetables make great snacks. If you stock up on vegetables for snacks and limit unhealthy snacks in your home, your child will be more likely to choose vegetables when she’s hungry.

Here are some vegetable snack ideas:

- Keep a container of chopped vegetables, like cucumber, carrots or capsicum, in the fridge. A bowl of cherry tomatoes on the bench is another option.
- Serve vegetable sticks with dip, natural yoghurt, cheese or wholemeal pita bread.

Tip 6: go for vegetable variety, taste and fun

Try to choose vegies of different shapes, colours, textures and tastes - the more variety there is, the more likely it is your child will find something that he’s interested in eating. If you serve new vegetables with food your child enjoys, the entire focus of the meal isn’t on new vegetables.

Remember that taste matters. For example, you could try roasting vegies with fresh herbs and lemon juice or use finely sliced broccoli in a stir-fry or on a pizza. This will probably appeal more to your child than large steamed pieces of vegetables.

Tip 7: get vegetables into meals in other ways

In the short term, you can disguise vegetables in foods you know your child likes to eat. For example, you could include pureed or grated vegetables in pasta sauce or soups.

This won’t change your child’s behaviour and thinking about vegetables, though, so it’s also important to regularly give your child vegetables in their original form. When you do this, your child has the chance to get familiar with and learn to like different tastes and textures.