

 **Music** Sing with me. Play music for me. Lullabies and simple rhymes can make me smarter. Music forms pathways in my brain that will help me understand math and improve my thinking skills.

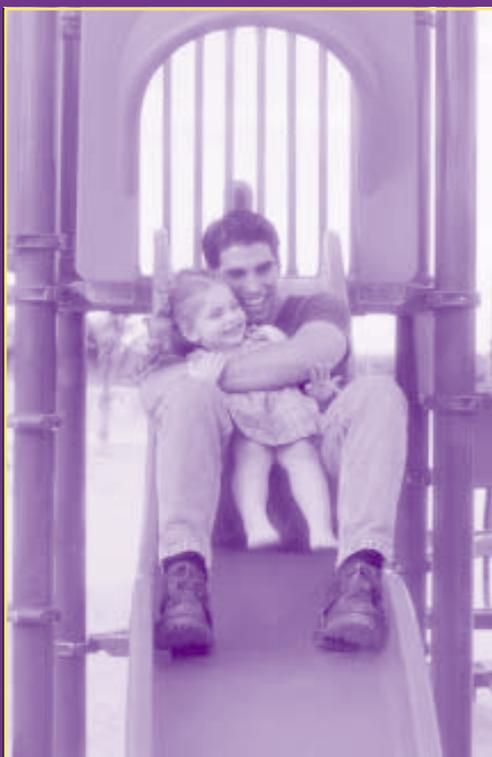
 **Read** Read books with lots of pictures to me. Don't worry if I want the same book read over and over again. Repetition is how I learn. Read to me often and I will learn to love reading forever.

 **Quality Child Care** Make sure my caregiver loves me and responds to my cues. Talking, playing, reading and singing are the activities I need. Check if my surroundings are safe, bright and happy. Be sure my caregiver is well-trained and understands my developmental needs. Quality child care will help me thrive.



 **Teach Limits with Love** I learn by seeing and doing but I need limits to make me feel safe and secure. Give me limits that teach but never shake me.

 **Take Care of Yourself** When you feel tired or upset, you will have a harder time meeting my needs. Reach out to family members, friends, neighbors, pediatricians, child care providers and others who can be helpful as I grow and learn.



**BrainNet** is a strategic alliance of public and private partners working to improve the lives of all children in Washington State by ensuring that all persons and systems who come into contact with pregnant women and children promote healthy optimal brain development.

For more information contact:  
Washington State Child Care  
Resource & Referral Network  
1-800-446-1114

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Babies  
are born  
learning

.....  
make  
every  
moment  
count



Maximizing our children's brain power



**BrainNet**™

# Help your child's brain develop through love and play

Recent research shows that a child's earliest experiences and relationships make a huge difference in the way his/her brain develops. During the first three years of life, the brain is forming connections that may determine a lifetime of skills and potential. Parents and caregivers can have a long-lasting impact by playing and talking with young children. Here are a few simple things you can do to help a child's brain grow and thrive.



**Warm, Responsive Care** Talk with me, hug me, respond to my needs. Smile at me and make me feel important and secure. Sensitive, predictable care is important for my healthy emotional development.

**Loving Touch** Cuddle me, cradle me, hold me close. Let me know that I am loved. Hugs help me learn to trust and handle stress now and when I'm grown.

**Talk** I learn from you. My brain is making connections from what I hear you say. So while we're together at home, in the store, in the car tell me what we're doing and seeing. Your words help me learn.

**Safe, Healthy Environment** Make sure I eat well, have regular check-ups with my doctor, and my immunizations are current. Provide a safe environment to explore.

**Play** Play is how I discover the world. Lots of interaction and exploration help my brain develop connections that make learning easier. From peek-a-boo to playing with pots and pans - all these activities boost my brain power.



## BrainNet™

### Steps for Healthy Brain Development



AGE	PLAY	READ	TALK	LISTEN	RESPECT
<b>Baby Birth-12 mos.</b>	<p>Listen for sounds in the world around you. Point to the objects and imitate sound.</p> <p>Make eye contact with your baby while making silly faces.</p>	<p>Read to your baby. It's never too early to start.</p> <p>Point out familiar objects when reading.</p>	<p>Talk to your baby. Use different tones of your voice: high, low, soothing and laughing.</p> <p>Hold your baby in front of a mirror. Point out mommy's nose and baby's nose, etc.</p>	<p>Respond to your baby's needs. Soothe your baby. Listen for your baby's sounds and repeat them to your baby.</p>	<p>Introduce your baby to others as you would any person.</p> <p>Tell your baby what is about to happen (pick up, bathe, diaper, feed or put in car seat).</p>
<b>Toddler 1-3 years</b>	<p>Imitation and repetition are the keys. Give toddlers real life items to play with: small pots, pans, spoons, plastic plates. Play Pat-A-Cake and This Little Piggy.</p> <p>Dumping and filling is a real favorite. Let them fill pots and buckets with safe* things: small blocks, balls, spoons, etc. Dump them out and do it again!</p>	<p>Read to your toddler every day! Be prepared to read the same story over and over.</p> <p>Provide a big basket filled with 5-10 sturdy picture books that your toddler can go to at any time.</p>	<p>Ask open ended questions (nothing that can be answered yes/no). Try this while strapping your child in a car seat. Ask "Why do we buckle up?" (to be safe, because we love you...).</p> <p>Say what you see throughout the day, while driving, walking and shopping. Let your child repeat your words.</p>	<p>Be patient! Your toddler is just learning to talk. Listen for key words and do your best to understand.</p> <p>Expand on your toddler's words. When your child points at a ball and says "Ba" respond with "Yes, that's the red ball. Want to play?"</p>	<p>Offer toddlers real choices. For instance, "Do you want milk or juice? Apples or oranges? Do you want to sit next to sister or uncle?"</p> <p>Let toddlers do things for themselves within a safe range: choose clothes, dress and wash face and hands.</p>
<b>Preschooler 3-5 years</b>	<p>Provide your child with dress up clothes, hats, shoes and your great imagination.</p> <p>Sing songs and make silly motions to the songs.</p>	<p>Read daily with your child. Take your child to the library or bookstore.</p> <p>Let your child tell you about the story. Ask questions such as "What do you think will happen next?"</p>	<p>Play word games that promote concepts such as opposites or rhyming (hot/cold, hat/cat) and teach new words.</p> <p>Tell stories with your child. Begin to get to know your child as a person.</p>	<p>Listen to what your child is saying at your child's eye level.</p> <p>Help your child use words to communicate feelings rather than pointing, crying or hitting.</p>	<p>Offer sincere praise for efforts and accomplishments, encouraging the child to think for himself or herself.</p> <p>Let your child take on more responsibility around the house: Pick up own toys, sort laundry and set table.</p>

\*Place objects into toilet paper roll, if object falls through, it is a choking hazard to children younger than 3 years old.