Child Development 0-3
REFERENCE & RESOURCE Guide

General principles of development

- Children learn from simple concepts to more complex.
- Development follows a typical sequence that predicts what skills are coming next.
- The rate of growth and development varies from child to child.
- Family relationships and the environment enhance a child's development.
- The opportunities in family routines and activities naturally enrich a child's experiences and shape the person he/she becomes.

The connections in a child's brain are most adaptable in the first 3 years of life.

- These connections become harder to change over time.
- Early intervention can change a child's developmental path and improve his outcome.
- Be familiar with milestones and red flags. If a parent expresses concern about their child's development, refer them to appropriate resources.
- Without a sturdy foundation to properly support future development, a child is at risk for a lifetime of health problems, development issues, even addiction.

To help their child's development, parents can:

- Keep up with the milestones their child has reached and those that come next.
- Engage in serve-and-return interactions with their baby to build neural connections.
- Talk to and read to their baby to build vocabulary and literacy skills.
- Set limits and provide acceptable choices.
- Limit screen time.
- Baby-proof their homes.
- Remember the magic of everyday moments!

> *By knitting together your knowledge of child development and family-centered practices, you are better prepared to support families within the context of relationships and natural learning opportunities.*

Resources

[What is Early Intervention?](#)

[Find your state or territory's early intervention program](#)

[CDC Developmental Milestones Resources for Home Visiting Programs](#) offers printable checklists and booklets, as well as a free library of photos and videos for you to share with parents.

[Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#) offers resources, tools and tutorials to use in home visiting work.

[Zero to Three](#) offers a wealth of resources on early learning and child development for professionals and parents.

[The Center on the Developing Child](#) at Harvard University website includes scientific research, best practices and practical resources to use in your work with families. *Time spent exploring this website is well worth it!*

[Guide to the Science of Early Childhood Development](#) from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University.

[CDC Child Development Research](#) provides an overview of current child development research activities.

For Parents
[CDC Milestones Tracker app,](#) for parents to access illustrated checklists, get tips for encouraging their child's development, and find out what to do if they're concerned about their child's development.

EARLY IMPACT VIRGINIA
ALLIANCE FOR FAMILY EDUCATION AND SUPPORT IN THE HOME

Developed in Partnership by

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