

HELP US GROW



A young child's experiences and relationships help to form the structure of the brain, which shape the child's learning, thinking and behavior for the rest of their life.

Tune in to me.

I may not be using words yet, but I'm sending you signals through sounds, movements and expressions. Being responsive and loving makes me more likely to feel safe and secure.

Talk to me and read to me often.

Even if I'm not yet talking, hearing you read and talk to me helps my brain grow and learn.

Make sure I have regular check-ups and immunizations.

I need to be healthy if I want to reach my full potential.

Sing and play a variety of music to help my future math abilities.

Hearing rhythms now will help prepare my brain for math and problem-solving later.

Show me your love.

Show me your love through attention and affection, and through consistent limits and caring discipline.



Make a difference in the life of a child.



Donate books and toys to my neighborhood community center.

There is always a need for age-appropriate learning tools that stimulate and encourage.

Support quality child care in your community.

Support quality child care in your community by letting elected officials know that it is important to you and why.

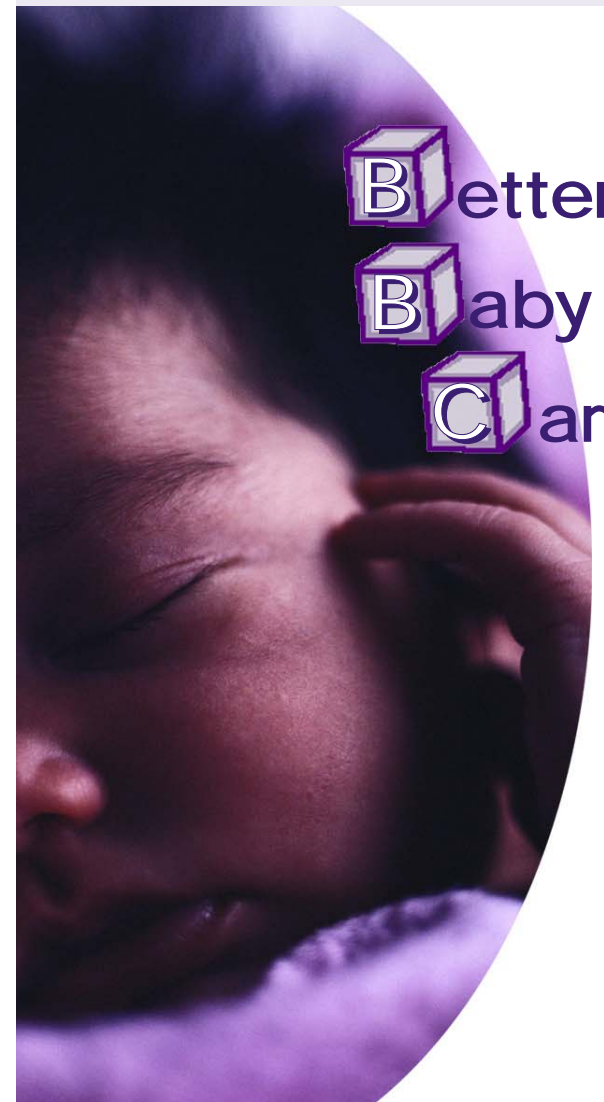
Remember that the decision you make today will last a lifetime.

Quality early care and education is essential to the healthy growth and development of your child, so staying actively involved as a parent is important. Seek child care with low staff to child ratios, engaging classroom environments and trained and credentialed staff.

Steps for Healthy Brain Development

AGE	PLAY	READ	TALK	LISTEN	RESPECT
0-6 months	Your baby loves your face! Look at your baby and make silly faces - widen your eyes or stick out your tongue. Your baby may make silly faces too!	Read to your baby. It's never too early to start! Point out familiar objects when reading.	Talk to your baby using different variations of your voice from high to low. Say your baby's name often.	Listen for sounds your baby may hear. Point to objects and imitate the sounds they make.	Respond to your baby's needs. Begin to recognize the cues he gives you to tell you he is hungry, sleepy or would like to be held.
6-12 months	Dumping and filling is fun! Let your child fill pots and buckets with safe* things such as, small blocks, balls and spoons. Dump them out and do it again! <small>* Place object into a toilet paper roll, if it falls through, it is a choking hazard to children younger than 3-years-old.</small>	Look at books with your baby. Point out familiar objects in the books. Try to "touch and feel" books that encourage your baby to explore the pages.	Hold your baby in front of a mirror. Point out baby's nose, eyes and mouth. Make sounds while looking in the mirror and see if your baby imitates you.	Listen as your baby begins to explore his voice! Have a conversation with him.	Recognize your baby is attached to you and that she needs to be close to her primary caregivers. She may not go to strangers easily.
13-24 months	Imitation and repetition are the keys. Give toddlers real life items to play with: small pots, pans, spoons and plastic plates.	Read to your toddler every day! Be prepared to read the same story over and over. Provide a basket of sturdy books that your toddler can go to at any time.	Talk to your child about what is happening during routines like dressing or bathing. Use short phrases such as, "Shirt on" or "Diaper off."	Be patient! Your toddler is just learning to talk. Listen for key words and do your best to understand. Expand on your toddler's words.	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?"
25-36 months	Encourage your child to pretend. Put the baby to bed, feed the farm animals, or have a tea party.	Read daily with your child. Point to objects in books and let your child name them. Reading is a fun, interactive experience!	Ask open-ended questions. When putting your child in a car seat you might ask, "What do you think will happen next?"	Listen to what your child is saying and kneel down so you are at her eye level.	Let toddlers do things for themselves within a safe range: choose their clothes, dress and wash their hands!

Better Baby Care

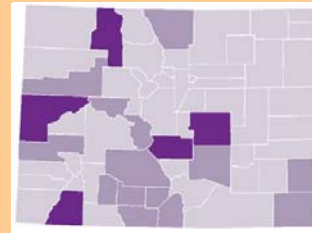


Colorado Children's Campaign
1120 Lincoln Street, Suite 125
Denver, Colorado 80203-2100
phone 303-839-1580
fax 303-839-1354
www.coloradokids.org

The **Better Baby Care™ State Advocacy Project: Investing in our Nation's Infants and Toddlers** is a movement dedicated to expanding our capacity to improve the care of Colorado's infants and toddlers through our advocacy efforts.

It's About Kids Communities in Colorado:

- * El Paso Garfield/Pitkin
- * Fremont Larimer
- * La Plata Montrose
- * Mesa Prowers/Baca
- * Routt Pueblo
- Chaffee San Luis Valley



* Represents an *It's About Kids* community that is also part of the **Better Baby Care** project.

To learn more about the **Better Baby Care** project or about becoming involved with an *It's About Kids* community near you, contact:

Colorado Children's Campaign
1120 Lincoln, Suite 125
Denver, Colo. 80203
303-839-1580
www.coloradokids.org



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Parents and caregivers have always known that the first three years of a child's life are important, but scientists are beginning to agree that these years are critical. Evolving research shows experiences during the early years help shape the way a child will learn, think and behave for the rest of his or her life. Experts also say the young child's relationships with everyone who cares for her determines whether the brain is prepared for future learning.

We can use this information to ensure that we raise children who are healthy, happy and able to reach their fullest potential. To do this, parents and caregivers must show their children plenty of love and attention, provide for their basic health and safety needs, and offer interactive environments and learning experiences.

Experts say being responsive to a child's needs is one of the most important messages we send. Even infants can communicate their needs through their wriggles, "coos" and eye contact. Activities such as playing, singing and reading help to develop a child's intelligence, self-esteem and desire to learn. Children who receive a great deal of warm, loving care during their first three years have a greater chance of developing into happy people who perform well in school and get along with others.

Every adult who cares for young children - parents, family, friends, teachers, child care providers - can use this information to help ensure Colorado's children are getting the best possible start in life.