



Connecticut Office of  
**Early Childhood**

## Excerpt: Action Guides: What Can I Do to Support Early Learning and Development

This document is an excerpt of:

[CT ELDS Main: What Children Birth to 5 Should Know and Be Able To Do](#)

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, 2014

**Action Guides:  
What Can I Do  
To Support  
Early Learning  
and Development?**



## Cognition

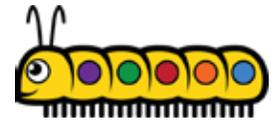
Making sense of the world, staying with something and working hard to solve problems



### What adults can do...

#### Encourage

- Exploring
- Asking Questions and Making Choices
- Pretending and Having Fun
- Remembering
- Trying New and Difficult Things



#### Infants and Toddlers

**Pretend with your child.** Pretend a banana is a phone or feed a doll.

**Give your child choices.** Let your child choose a snack or what to wear.

**Give your child lots of different experiences.** Explore your neighborhood parks, libraries and museums. Play with things that are used in different ways (to make sounds, build, etc.)

**Show your baby how things work.** “Look at how the car rolls.”

**Play games that involve back-and-forth.** As your child gets older, help them wait for a short time.

#### Preschoolers

**Use everyday routines to notice patterns.** Point out familiar routines (first we wash hands, then we eat).

**Sort and categorize throughout the day.** Picking up toys and laundry are great sorting activities.

**Wonder with your child.** “I wonder if it’s going to rain today.” Encourage your child to ask questions.

**Point out and use symbols.** Encourage your child to recognize and name signs and symbols.

**Support your child to finish things they start.** Help them plan and stick with things for longer periods of time.

## Social & Emotional Development

Understanding yourself, your feelings and how to play with other people



### What adults can do...

#### Encourage

- Caring
- Affection
- Relationships
- Safety and Security

#### Infants and Toddlers

**Spend time holding, talking and playing with your baby.** Caring contact builds a strong relationship.

**Comfort your baby when he cries.** This helps your baby feel secure and learn how to calm down.

**Talk about your baby's actions, feelings and body.** This will help your baby learn about themselves.

**Have family routines.** Routines help babies feel safe.

#### Preschoolers

**Let your child do some things on their own.** Support them to do new things and solve problems.

**Talk to your child about feelings.** Help them find ways to calm themselves.

**Help your child understand routines.** Be sure to say goodbye when you leave your child.

**Make time to play with other children.** Go to the park, have playdates or join a playgroup.



## Physical Health & Development

Learning to take care of yourself and to do things with your body and hands so that you grow strong and healthy



### What adults can do...

#### Encourage

- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Helping with Self-care

#### Infants and Toddlers

**Lay your baby on their tummy while they are awake.** “Tummy time” helps build strong muscles.

**Talk while you take care of them.** Have them be a part of healthy routines such as waking up, eating and dressing.

**Encourage exploring objects with their hands.** Give them small, but safe, items to use with their hands.

**Make sure they are healthy.** Children who get enough rest and healthy food learn better.

#### Preschoolers

**Find a time and place for your child to run and play.** Running, jumping and climbing help build strong muscles and bones.

**Have your child take part in self-care.** Talk to them about why being clean is important; show them how to use buttons and zippers, etc.

**Offer your child healthy food choices.** Talk about healthy food and eating a variety of good things.

**Make sure they get enough rest.** Preschoolers need 11-13 hours of sleep each day to stay healthy and learn.



## Language & Literacy

Communicating using your body, language, signs and written communication



### What adults can do...

#### Encourage

- Interacting with people
- Gesturing, making noise and talking
- Enjoying books, songs and writing
- Expressing ideas, needs and feelings
- Writing

#### Infants and Toddlers

**Share books everyday.** Read stories at bedtime or when riding on the bus.

**Talk and sing with your baby.**  
Encourage them to “sing” and “talk” too.

**Respond to your baby’s noises.**  
Repeat the noises they make or comment, “You sound happy.”

**Help them learn new words by naming and describing what you see.** “I see a shiny, silver mirror.”

**Read books to your child  
EVERY DAY!**

#### Preschoolers

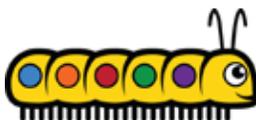
**Show interest in what your child is saying.** Look at them when they talk and comment on what they’re saying.

**Ask questions that make them think.**  
When reading a story ask, “What do you think will happen next?”

**Talk to your child about what happens during the day.** Talk about what you do together and ask about what happens when you are apart.

**Let them practice “writing.”** Ask them to draw a picture or make a list, even if they use shapes instead of letters.

**Read books to your child  
EVERY DAY!**



## Creative Arts

Enjoying music, dance and art and expressing yourself in these ways



### What adults can do...

#### Encourage

- Listening and dancing to music
- Describing art and music
  - Looking at pictures
  - Being creative
- Making music and art

#### Infants and Toddlers

**Play music for your child.** Describe the music and how it makes you feel.

**Sing to your child.** Move to the music while you're singing.

**Show your child pictures.** Talk about the picture, what's in it, its colors, the shapes...

**Encourage your child to create.** Give children art supplies that are appropriate and safe.

#### Preschoolers

**Display your child's art work.** Talk about what they did to make it.

**Give your child space to move to music.** Play music with different beats and styles.

**Encourage your child to be creative.** Don't worry about what the project looks like.

**Expose them to the arts.** Watch dancing, look at paintings, listen to music, read books about art, theater and music.



## Mathematics

Understanding numbers and how to use them,  
counting, patterns, measuring and shapes



### What adults can do...

#### Encourage

- Counting
- Measuring
- Comparing

#### Infants and Toddlers

**Use words that describe how much.**

Talk about wanting more or having one or two of something.

**Talk about shapes.** Describe everyday things such as food, toys, or household items, saying things like, “Your plate is a circle.”

**Compare sizes.** Use words such as big, little, long and short.

**Use math words.** Talk about adding one, taking away, dividing something.

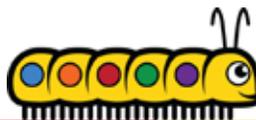
#### Preschoolers

**Count things.** Count how many steps it takes to get somewhere, how many pieces of fruit you buy at the store, etc.

**Cook together.** Let your child help measure and count what goes into the recipe.

**Sort and match.** Match clothes, sort silverware, play with shape sorters.

**Compare size, shape and position.** Talk to your child about where things are, measure and compare sizes and talk about the shape of everyday items.



## Science

Understanding the world around us,  
including living things, the earth and space and energy



### What adults can do...

#### Encourage

- Exploring
- Experimenting
- Investigating
- Learning about Living Things

#### Infants and Toddlers

**Be excited about their discoveries.**

Point out the things they see, hear or feel. “You saw the bird fly down from the nest to get food for its babies! Wasn’t that exciting?”

**Answer their questions.** Encourage them to ask about things they want to know.

**Make sure they have many different kinds of experiences.** Find opportunities to explore new places, see nature and investigate.

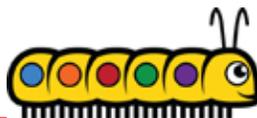
#### Preschoolers

**Give them toys that they can use to explore.** Boxes, balls, ramps, bubbles, magnets, containers, magnifying glasses, etc.

**Grow things.** Plant seeds and talk about what will happen and what seeds need to grow.

**Go outside.** Look at the sky, trees, plants, animals...collect things and talk about them.

**Ask questions.** “What do you think will happen next?” “What do you see?”



## Social Studies

Understanding the world and knowing about the people in it. This starts with knowing about your family, then the community and world.



### What adults can do...

#### Encourage

- Understanding family
- Hearing stories about the past
- Recognizing how people are the same and different

#### Infants and Toddlers

**Help them learn about themselves.**

Children need to learn about their own bodies, their family and their feelings so they can learn about others.

**Talk about family.** Talk about who is a part of your family and about other people's families.

**Talk about the places you go.** Children will learn about the community when you talk about the store, the library, the park, etc.

#### Preschoolers

**Point out where things are in the community.** Draw maps of your home or school.

**Talk about how people are the same and different.** Help your child to appreciate people who are different from them.

**Talk about when you were little.** Children love to hear stories and can begin to learn about time and history.

**Play "store."** Children can learn about buying and selling through play.

