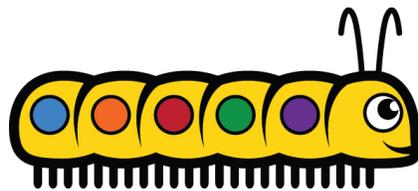




Connecticut Early Learning
and Development Standards

18-24 Months

Here are some ways that you can help your child learn and grow in all of the areas covered in the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS). You may see some ideas in different areas that are almost the same. That's because children are learning a lot of different things as they learn more about the people and the world around them. These ideas don't have to be all you do with your child! You can think of new ways to build on everything included here. Just as your child is learning, you can keep learning ways to support your child's growth. The most important thing to remember as you use these strategies is to have fun and find ways to help your child learn every day!



Connecticut Office
of Early Childhood



Cognition

Encourage your child to try another way to solve a problem

When your child is having trouble doing something, you might want to step in and solve the problem. If it's not too hard, encourage your child to keep trying. If they can't figure it out or get too frustrated, suggest a solution or show them what can be done. Working to solve problems helps your child persist and think creatively.

Guide your child to begin and finish some activities

Not all activities have a clear beginning and end, but you can plan times for your child to finish something. This helps them learn to plan, focus, and complete things. Work a simple puzzle together and celebrate when it's done. Put all the laundry in the washer and close the lid. Finish reading a book together and put it on the shelf. Saying or signing "all done" helps mark that the activity or task is done.

Provide opportunities to group alike items

Have your child help put away clean dishes, matching where spoons, forks, bowls, and/or plates belong. Ask your child to help sort laundry, putting socks in one pile and towels in another. Sort out cars and toy animals into two piles. Sorting helps your child learn to organize information and pay attention to what is the same and different.

Encourage pretend play

Your child may pretend using realistic items such as a baby doll, toy animals, cars, or dishes. Watch what your child is interested in and encourage them to pretend with things that match that interest. Model pretend play and play alongside them. It may seem like your child is just having fun, but pretend play helps your child practice a lot of skills! It is even one of the first steps toward reading and math, as they are beginning to understand that one thing can represent another.

Social and Emotional Development

Prepare your child

Whenever possible, prepare your child for what is coming in a calming way. Let them know when it's a few minutes before dinner or bedtime using a positive or neutral tone of voice. Preparing your child gives them a sense of security. Even if they don't like something that is coming next, they won't be surprised or anxious, and will learn that you are helping them through the day, including the parts that are hard.

Notice what your child's behavior tells you about their feelings

Your child may be showing you what they feel in ways that you find difficult. Young children don't always know how to handle strong emotions and talking about feelings can be difficult. Talk about how your child is feeling and help them to calm. When the strong feelings are a result of a limit you have set, reassure them while still keeping the limit (e.g. "I see that you are really sad because you can't have _____. I know that's hard, but you can _____ instead."). Model ways that your child can express these strong emotions (e.g. "You can stomp your foot and say 'I'm mad!'") or you can show them ways to calm down (e.g. "Let's sit and read a book so you can calm down.")

Provide your child with opportunities to see children interacting

Point out when you see children playing together in books or pictures. Talk about times that children in the pictures are working together or having fun. If books or pictures show conflict, you can talk about what the children are feeling or how they might solve the problem.





Physical Health and Development

Play fun but simple games to get your child moving

Play hide and seek or ask your child to find objects around the house. Add some challenges that include your child reaching, stretching, or climbing. Sing songs that include movements, such as dancing, bending, or moving body parts that are named.

Encourage your child to use their arms to build body strength

Provide opportunities for your child to paint at an easel, paint a fence using water and a paintbrush, or smear shaving cream on the wall of the shower. Play catch. Throw and catch large balls. Building body and arm strength provides the foundation for your child to better use their hands.

When you can, allow extra time for care routines

Extra time will allow your child the chance to try new parts of the routine for themselves (e.g. washing their legs and arms during bath time, brushing their own teeth for a bit before you help make sure they have all been brushed). You might not always be able to do this, but when you aren't feeling rushed you can make it a fun time and give your child a chance to learn or practice new skills.

Point out healthy behaviors you see

When you observe people choosing healthy foods, exercising, or going to bed, talk about how these things keep people healthy. Notice healthy habits in books or choose books that focus on being healthy. Healthy habits start early!

Language and Literacy

Comment on what your child is doing

Introduce new words to describe your child's actions. Ask your child what they are doing or what others are doing. Play games or sing songs that use action words (verbs).

Encourage your child to use their language to tell you what they want or need

Families are often very good at knowing what their child wants. This means that children might use simple means of communicating, such as tugging on your arm, pointing, or pouting. Encourage your child to use their language to tell you what they want. This gives them a chance to practice the language that others will understand. You can model words or expand on your child's language to continue to build their communication skills.

Ask questions or begin to have short conversations with your child

Play games that involve taking turns or passing something back and forth. Say something and encourage your child to imitate you, and try to get this happening back and forth. These chances to practice turn taking help with communication skills.

Talk about and ask questions about pictures and books

Look at pictures of family and talk about what you see. Read books together or go to story hour at the library. Listen to books on tape together and follow along. Ask your child about the books you read or listen to together.





Creative Arts

Provide your child with things they can pretend with

Toys that look like real objects (e.g. play phones, brooms, dishes) or safe adult versions of these materials allow your child to act out what they see others doing. Allow your child to create and use materials in new ways.

Allow your child to try new ways of doing things and comment on their choices

Commenting on your child's creative ways of doing things encourages them to think in new and different ways. For example, if they put a coat on their head, first comment on their new way of doing things (e.g. "Is that your new hat?") before helping them put the coat on to go outside.

Respond to the rhythms you hear

Stomp, tap your feet, or clap along to music and encourage your child to join you. Notice the sounds and rhythms around you, such as traffic or trains. Make noises to match the rhythm of the washer or dryer.

Provide opportunities to explore different textures

Touch and feel things throughout your home. Allow your child to spread shaving cream on the shower wall, to help with cooking and feel the squishy dough, or to touch the bumpy surface of the sidewalk. Talk about and explore how things look and feel.

Mathematics

Count small groups of items with your child

Your child may begin to learn the names of numbers and say the numbers in order. When you count with your child, they get to hear the number names and order, and they get to see *why* we count. Having your child point to each item with you as you count, helps them learn to use one number name for each item that is counted.

Point out the numbers you see

As you walk to your home, point out the numbers on the other apartments or houses until you get to your own. As you pick out groceries, point out the price and say the numbers. Your child probably won't begin to recognize individual numbers for a while, but they are learning what numbers look like and why we use them.

Use words to describe size, shape, and other features of the objects you encounter

Compare similar items and talk about some features that are different (e.g. talk about two washcloths that are the same size but different colors). Have your child find things that are the same color in your house. Use words such as *big, small, flat, round, long, short, empty, full*. These words describe what your child is seeing and are ways that we can compare objects.





Science

Encourage wonder

Show interest in what your child is exploring by looking, listening, or touching with them. Talk about what you are experiencing or what is happening around you. Help your child to explore how different actions have different results.

Ask questions

Ask questions that get your child thinking (e.g. "My ball doesn't bounce. Why does your ball bounce?"). Ask questions that you can find the answer to by trying something new (e.g. "What will happen if...?"). You can even ask questions that you might not easily find an answer to.

Talk about the qualities of the items around you

Your child is still learning the names for all of the things they encounter, but you can also talk about the properties, or qualities, of these items. Talk about the qualities your child can experience with their senses (e.g. feel, hear, see) such as texture, flexibility, size, tone, etc.

Provide opportunities to experience weather and nature

Find safe ways for your child to experience the world around them: feel the rain falling, stomp in a puddle, touch the bark of a tree, watch the clouds from a window, etc. You might visit a park, touch the tree outside of the library, or step in a puddle on a warm day just before heading home. Experiencing weather and the natural world will help your child learn more about the earth we live on.

