

Parenting NEWS & VIEWS

EARLY LEARNING AND
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Born Ready to Learn

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Frank's mother takes care of his nine-month-old daughter Grace while he works. When Frank comes home, Grace smiles and chatters excitedly while holding up her arms. He smiles, picks her up, and says, "Seeing you is the best part of my day. Did you have fun with Grandma?" Grace smiles as she babbles and points to Grandma, who laughs and says, "We had a lot of fun. We played outside and took a walk."

Frank helps Grandma make dinner and sits next to Grace so he can talk to her. Frank points to the food Grace is eating while he asks her questions like, "Is the squash good?" He listens attentively as Grace makes sounds and points to her food. Frank does not understand what Grace is saying, but he knows that listening to her will show Grace she is important to him.



Grace feeds herself with a spoon and her fingers, occasionally holding her spoon up and looking expectantly at Frank, who responds by describing what she is doing. "You're eating squash with your spoon." Even though feeding herself can be messy, Frank likes to give Grace the opportunity to be independent. When they finish dinner, Frank gives Grace a napkin to clean her face.

After dinner, Frank sits on the floor to play with Grace. She likes to bang on a large metal pot with a wooden spoon while Frank claps and sings Old MacDonald Had a Farm. When she is done playing music, Grace drops the spoon and looks around the room. Frank lays out a few different toys and asks, "Are you looking for one of these?" Grace scoots over and picks up her favorite stuffed dinosaur.

continued on back

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT TRUSTLINE?



In 1987, the California Legislature created TrustLine to be a resource for parents who are looking for unlicensed child care. TrustLine is the California registry of in-home and license-exempt child care providers, such as babysitters or nannies, who have passed a background check.



This is the only authorized screening program of in-home and license-exempt caregivers in the state that has access to fingerprint records from the California Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and California's Child Abuse Central Index.

It is free for parents to use the TrustLine Registry to check the background of a potential caregiver. TrustLine can be reached by calling **1-800-822-8490**, or by visiting the website at **www.trustline.org**.

Simple Ways to Learn and Play



Playing with your infant or toddler is the best way to help them learn and grow. Time spent playing with a trusted adult helps infants and toddlers feel secure to learn and explore. Young infants learn through their senses and experiences. When choosing a toy or play activity for infants and toddlers, make sure that it is safe and supports their development.

Play that offers the opportunity to be active (body movements or clapping), creative (stuffed animals, music, or art), or engaged in problem-solving (books, puzzles, or toys that open and close or stack) all provide support for your child's development. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Roll a soft ball to your baby. Fill an empty plastic bottle with one or more of the following: pebbles, colored water, uncooked rice, or beans, and secure the lid with glue and/or strong tape. While your infant squeezes and shakes the bottle, talk to her about the different sounds and objects inside.
- Hold a blanket in front of your face and raise it up and down to play peek-a-boo.
- Once your infant is able to hold objects in her hand, encourage her to make music by banging on a plastic or metal bowl with a wooden spoon. Encourage her further by clapping or singing along.



- Sing or read simple rhymes to your infant in order to build her language skills and further her linguistic development.
- Take walks outside and talk about the different objects you see, like trees, flowers, dogs, houses, apartments, street signs, etc.
- Use empty boxes (any size) for stacking, building, and more!
- Collect plastic or metal lids with no sharp edges in different sizes, styles, and colors. Place them in a box to be dumped, filled, organized, and explored. Make sure none of the lids are small enough to be a choking hazard.

Source: The article "Good Toys for Young Children by Age and Stage" by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was accessed from <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/play/toys> in August 2019.



RECIPES Homemade Playdough

Toddlers and preschoolers can strengthen their knowledge of math, science, and literacy while they develop fine motor skills and express themselves creatively with this simple, safe, and inexpensive playdough recipe. Allow children to drop the food coloring in the water to watch it spread. Children can also measure and pour ingredients or take turns stirring and kneading the mixture. To add interest to playing with the dough, add other items from around the house, such as cookie cutters, small rolling pins, a garlic press, spoons, and forks.



What you need

- 1 cup water
- Food coloring (optional)
- 6 cups flour
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- Measuring cups
- Mixing bowl
- Wooden spoon

Directions

1. Mix water and food coloring in bowl.
2. Add flour and oil.
3. Stir until mixture sticks together.
4. Knead until smooth.
5. If dough is too sticky, add a little more flour.
6. Store dough in the refrigerator in an airtight container to use again.

Source: Adapted from <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/playdough-power> in August 2019.



Safe Sleep and Tummy Time

In 1992, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released their first guidelines for the safe sleep of infants. These guidelines were created because of the high number of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) cases. Through research, they found that certain factors had the potential to reduce incidents of SUID. Since the safe sleep recommendations were released, the number of SUID cases has dropped almost by half. The AAP continues to conduct research on safe sleep and update their guidelines for parents and caregivers as necessary.

The AAP Safe Sleep Regulations currently state that an infant under the age of one year should always be placed on his back in an empty crib or bassinet to sleep (no pillows, blankets, crib bumpers, wedges, or toys). Instead of a blanket, infants should wear a sleeper outfit. Furthermore, the crib should be placed next to the parent's bed for the first year, or at least the first six months. Avoid letting infants sleep in car seats or other infant accessory or travel system. Research shows that a non-smoking environment, breast feeding, and using a pacifier can also reduce the risk of SUID.

It is important to plan opportunities for infants to play on their tummies. Infants who spend time playing on their tummies are less likely to develop flat spots on the backs of their heads; are more likely to develop the strong head and neck muscles they will need for sitting, crawling, and walking; and have more opportunities to develop strong motor skills. Engage babies in tummy play for short periods of time, around three to five minutes, a couple of times each day. As the infant's interest in tummy play grows, the amount of time can be increased.

To reduce risk of injury, tummy time should always be closely supervised by an adult.

Start by spreading a blanket on the floor. Place toys in a circle around the baby to encourage her to reach in different directions. Lie down on the floor face-to-face and interact with her. If needed, you can offer an infant some physical support by laying her chest on top of your lower leg as you sit on the floor and move toys within her reach. Engage your baby in play by smiling, talking, singing, and drawing her attention to different toys she can grasp and move. This type of play will help your baby develop and strengthen your relationship.

Source: Information was adapted from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/Back-to-Sleep-Tummy-to-Play.aspx> in August 2019.



After a few more minutes of play, Frank says, "Okay, it's time for bed." Frank talks to Grace about her dinosaur while he changes her diaper and puts on her pajamas. He sits next to the crib with Grace on his lap and reads her a book. He rocks her and sings a song. He lays her down to sleep and says, "Goodnight Grace. I love you."

What does this story tell us about Grace and how she is learning? In this story, Grace shows that she recognizes and is attached to her father by smiling and holding her arms up to him. Grace also shows that she trusts her father to give her information about her environment. Grace is familiar with her daily routine, recognizes familiar objects and people, communicates her needs, and joins in conversation and play with her father. All of these activities are supporting her cognitive development (thinking and logic skills).

Infants rely on attachments and social connections to build their cognitive skills. They learn how to interact and talk with others by observing their environment and the people who occupy it. Through play, infants learn how objects fit together, pull apart, and how

they can be manipulated. Infants store the information they learn in their memory by repeating tasks and continually practicing new skills until they are mastered. They use their five senses to explore their environment and determine what is similar or different between objects. Infants develop creativity by singing, engaging in art, listening to stories, and playing.

Parents can support an infant's development by keeping a consistent routine, responding to needs promptly, talking to them about what they are doing, reading books, and playing together. Infants need time to investigate and understand their environment with a trusted adult nearby for support. One of the most valuable things you can do for your baby is spend time together playing and learning.

Source: California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework, by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2012).

ABOUT CHS

For over 129 years, Children's Home Society of California (CHS) has adapted to the changing needs of children and families. Since 1891, CHS has worked diligently to protect our community's children and strengthen their families through diverse programs and services.

At CHS, we view a child not in isolation, but in the context of each family's health, stability, and resources. We believe that families are fundamentally strong and resilient. The mission of CHS is to reach out to children and families at risk with a range of services to ensure every child the opportunity to develop within a safe, healthy, and secure environment.

Therefore, CHS provides a variety of services to children and families in California and nationwide, working to improve their quality of life by offering vital information, education and resource services, and child care assistance.

CHS also serves as an expert resource for child care providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level. To learn more about CHS and resources available to you, please visit our website at www.chs-ca.org.

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