

# Learning through play from birth to age 3

**Did you know that a baby's brain isn't fully developed when she is born?**

- A lot of brain development happens in the first three years of a baby's life.
- There is more brain development in the first three years of her life than at any other time.
- The experiences you give your baby in her first three years of life can help her brain grow.
- The more her brain grows in her first three years, the easier it is for her to continue to learn and to grow as she gets older, even when she is an adult.
- Give babies the attention, love and care they need to grow healthy brains!
- Let her hear, touch, taste, smell, and feel many different things.
- Hold, cuddle, rock, and smile at him so he feels safe and loved.
- Take care of her when she cries.
- Play, go for walks
- Let him explore and learn about the world.
- Talk to her, tell stories, sing songs, and read books.
- Give him a mix of interesting, colourful (not expensive) toys to look at, hold and chew.
- Be with people who love and care about her, do things with her.
- Give him safe, clean surroundings, free of things that hurt him.
- Do new things, a little more than she can already do, but not too much.
- Do the same things at the same time every day, so he knows what to expect.



# Help children learn language

Language is an early literacy skill.

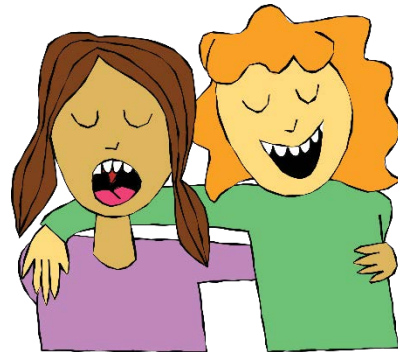
Children need language so that they can<sup>1</sup>:

- ask and answer questions
- speak so that others can understand them
- listen
- follow directions
- give directions
- tell stories
- hear stories
- hear and understand what others say



Children learn language when they<sup>2</sup>:

- sing songs
- imitate sounds
- make rhymes
- ask questions
- answer questions
- listen
- explain
- do finger plays
- pretend
- explain their ideas
- describe things
- compare things
- tell stories
- share books
- follow directions
- describe patterns
- play make believe



<sup>1</sup>From *Talk to Me!* : Oral language development with young children by the NWT Literacy Council

<sup>2</sup>From *Families at School: A Handbook for Parents* by Adele Thomas, Lynn Fazio and Betty Stiefelmeyer