



Communication, Language, and Literacy

Infants and Toddlers

Young children gradually learn to express themselves, starting with the ability to express their needs through crying, gesturing, and facial expressions, and later using words. Check out these strategies to help with communication, language, and literacy!

Communicating and Oral Language Development

Make sure your baby can see or feel your mouth when you hold them and talk to them.

Talk with your child in a positive tone, and speak about what they are hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and tasting.

Listen attentively; don't rush your child's speech. Follow your child's lead in the conversation, and show interest by moving down to their level.

Give your child simple directions and visual cues. Say "Pick out your favorite book, and I'll read it to you" while pointing to the bookshelf.





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Foundations for Reading

Give your child consistent access to books. Provide books that young children can put in their mouths and books with pages that turn easily, such as cloth and board books.

Establish daily reading routines. When reading with your child, point to pictures and words, ask simple questions and make comments about the book's content.

Encourage your older toddler to say repetitive words or phrases in simple, predictable books, like *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*.

Foundations for Writing

Provide your child activities that support fine motor development (blocks, shape sorters, feeding themselves, etc.).

Give your toddler the opportunity to scribble.

Model writing for a variety of reasons, such as making lists or writing a note, to show your child that writing is fun and useful. Say the words aloud while writing to help your child understand the process of writing.

Learning New Languages

Use simple greetings from other languages, such as "Hola" (*Hello* in Spanish) or "Anpetu Waste" (*Good Day* in Lakota).

Sing simple songs in other languages to help children hear the sounds of the language, such as "Frere Jacques" in French. Use motions to go along with songs to help children learn words.

Provide opportunities for your child to hear stories in another language using CDs or computer applications.



This information was adapted from the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines. To learn more, talk to your childcare provider or visit sdstepahead.com.