



## The Influence of Touch on Child Development

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No matter how well-nourished and intellectually stimulated a child is, going without human touch can stunt his mental, emotional and even physical growth; it potentially affects the child for years to come. In fact, according to a May 2010 article in "Scientific American," orphaned children who

experience touch deprivation early in life have altered levels of oxytocin and vasopressin, two hormones important for social bonding, even three years after being placed with a family.

### Growth and Survival

Touch is essential for human survival; babies who are deprived of touch can fail to thrive, lose weight and even die. Babies and young children who do not get touched also have lower levels of growth hormone, so a lack of touch can actually stunt a child's growth. The immune systems of children who are deprived of touch may also be weaker than those who receive plenty of physical affection; plenty of touch earlier in life can lead to physiological changes that might protect against later disease, including cardiovascular disease. However, studying touch in children is difficult, since it is hard to isolate its effects from other forms of parental attention and care; the full benefits and impact on development remain unknown.

### Brain Development

In addition to the impact on physical growth and development, touch boosts a child's brain development, too. This has an impact on everything from short-term behavior to long-term mental and emotional development. Babies who receive a lot of touching sleep better at night and are less fussy during the day, according to pediatrician Dr. William Sears. Children who are not touched enough have higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which can actually damage brain tissue in the hippocampus, the part of the brain involved with memory and learning.

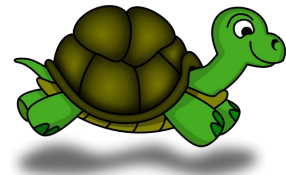


Excerpts taken from:

[www.livestrong.com/article/508221-the-influence-of-touch-on-child-development](http://www.livestrong.com/article/508221-the-influence-of-touch-on-child-development)

# Fun Things to Do With Kids This Summer

1. Bake cookies for ice cream sandwiches.
2. Make a fort out of cardboard boxes.
3. Visit a farmer's market.
4. Have a picnic at a state park.
5. Clean up trash at a local park.
6. Have a backyard campfire ... or just use the grill! Roast hot dogs on sticks, pop popcorn and finish off with s' mores.
7. Go for a walk and then make a collage from nature objects you find along the way.
8. Have a water balloon fight.
9. Interview an older relative about what life was like when they were young.
10. Plant a garden of herbs and veggies.
11. Make an indoor sandbox using colored rice: mix 4 cups of rice with 3 tablespoons of rubbing alcohol and a few drops of food coloring and let dry overnight.
12. Turn the backyard into a carnival—set up a face painting area and games like ring toss.
13. Wade through a stream and search for minnows or tadpoles.
14. Collect rocks and paint them to use as paperweights or pet rocks.
15. Catch fireflies in a jar (and let them go at the end of the night).
16. Make bird feeders by covering pine cones with peanut butter and rolling in birdseed.
17. Go camping in the backyard or at a campsite.
18. Let kids paint each other with washable tempera paint, then wash it off in the sprinklers.
19. Visit your local library....see how many books you can read over the summer break.
20. Go fishing!



## Latest research reveals the more you hug your kids - the smarter they get!

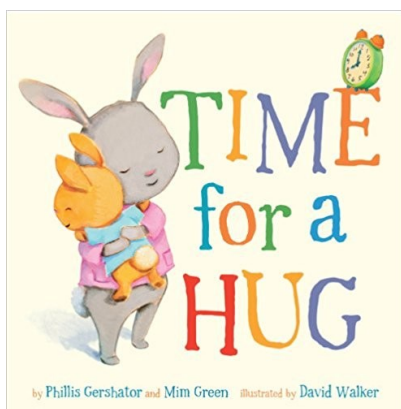
Are you the kind of parent that's always hugging your kids? If the answer is yes then don't stop doing what you're doing.

According to new research, physical affection during a baby's development period is even more important than we thought. The more you hug a baby, the more their brains grow, according to a recent survey from the Nationwide Children's Hospital in Ohio. 125 babies, both premature and full-term, were included in the study, which looked at how well they responded to being physically touched. The results indicated that premature babies responded to affection less than babies who were not born premature. What was also revealed, however, was that babies that were subjected to more affection by parents or hospital staff showed stronger brain response.

According to researcher Dr. Nathalie Maitre, this last revelation tells us that something as simple as body contact or rocking your baby in your arms will make a big difference in how their brains develop. "Making sure that preterm babies receive positive, supportive touch such as skin-to-skin care by parents is essential to help their brains respond to gentle touch in ways similar to those of babies who experienced an entire pregnancy inside their mother's womb," Maitre tells Science Daily.

Basically, affection is vital for the development of the brain. So, cuddle and hug your babies as much as you can - and don't forget to share this research to show everyone out there how important it is to be loving to our children!

Retrieved June 19, 2018 from <https://en.newsner.com/family/latest-research-reveals-the-more-you-hug-your-kids-the-smarter-they-get/>.



### GREAT BOOK TO READ!

From the moment Little Bunny wakes up in the morning until the moon comes out and the stars shine, every hour includes a warm hug from Big Bunny. Whether they bake or build, bike or hike, a caring hug always feels just right.

Time for a Hug is a book that is generous with love, and full of the sweetest illustrations you've ever seen.



# Fruit Kabobs

These fruit kabobs are beyond easy. Grab a handful of craft sticks and your favorite kid-friendly knife. You'll want to use fresh fruit that your child loves, but also try a few new fruits. It's a great way to introduce something new. Slice and wash the fruit. Start pressing the fruit onto the craft sticks. Place the fruit kabobs in a flat container. Place the lid over the fruit and wait for them to freeze. Great treat for a hot summer day!



# S'mores on a Stick

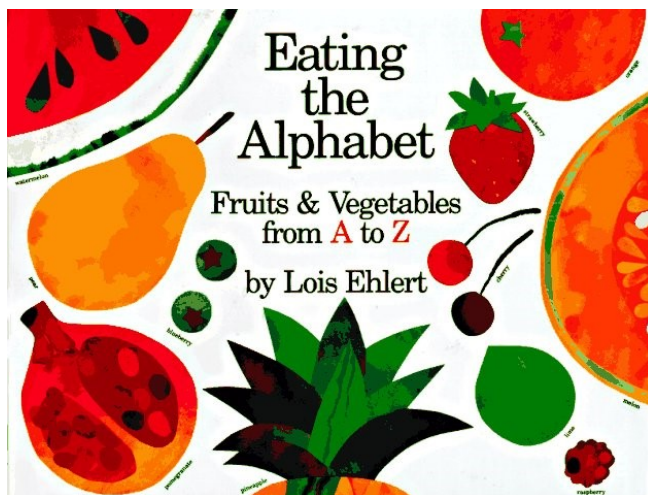
What you'll need:

- Marshmallows
- Graham Crackers
- Milk Chocolate Bar
- Straws

Crush graham crackers. I like to put in a zip-lock bag and pound with a rolling pin. Stick straws into the marshmallows. Place chocolate in a glass bowls and microwave till melted (stirring occasionally). Dip marshmallows into chocolate then roll them in graham crackers.



## GREAT BOOK TO READ!



This beautifully illustrated alphabet book introduces kids to new fruits and vegetables.



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