



BRIDGES

Early Intervention...Building Bridges for a Bright Future

Winter 2020



Facts About Developmental Disabilities

Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime.

Developmental Milestones

Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving "bye-bye" are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, behave, and move (for example, crawling and walking).

Children develop at their own pace, so it's impossible to tell exactly when a child will learn a given skill. However, the developmental milestones give a general idea of the changes to expect as a child gets older.

As a parent, you know your child best. If your child is not meeting the milestones for his or her age, or if you think there could be a problem with the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves talk to your child's doctor and share your concerns. Don't wait. Acting early can make a real difference!

Developmental Monitoring and Screening

A child's growth and development are followed through a partnership between parents and health care professionals. At each well-child visit, the doctor looks for developmental delays or problems and talks with the parents about any concerns the parents might have. This is called *developmental monitoring*.

Any problems noticed during developmental monitoring should be followed up with *developmental screening*. Developmental screening is a short test to tell if a child is learning basic skills when he or she should, or if there are delays.

If a child has a developmental delay, it is important to get help as soon as possible. Early identification and intervention can have a significant impact on a child's ability to learn new skills, as well as reduce the need for costly interventions over time.

Excerpts taken from: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html>



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The Benefits of Tummy Time

By Sheryl Berk and Katherine Bowers

How important is Tummy Time?

Leaving your baby on her belly for a few minutes while she's awake helps her work all the muscles in her upper body, promoting trunk stability and head control. "Tummy time helps your infant build strength in his back, legs, arms, and neck," says Joanne Cox, M.D., a pediatrician at Children's Hospital Boston. "This helps with further development, such as rolling over and sitting."

Tummy time also encourages your little one to practice reaching and pivoting, skills that are often precursors to crawling. And research shows that a lack of tummy time can delay your baby from meeting physical development milestones like lifting her head, rolling over, sitting up, and more.

Other Benefits of Tummy Time

Regularly spending time on his stomach also helps your baby avoid developing a flat spot on the back of his head, which became more common after the AAP's aforementioned "Back to Sleep" campaign to help prevent sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). In severe cases, head flattening, or plagiocephaly, can distort facial features. Tummy time is also helpful for babies with torticollis, which causes the head to tilt unnaturally because the neck muscle is stiff and tight.

When to Start Tummy Time

Begin at 2 weeks old with short sessions of 30 seconds to one minute. Try placing your newborn belly-down on your chest or across your lap so he gets accustomed to the position. To make it part of your routine, put your baby on his tummy after each daytime diaper change. Just don't do it right after a feeding, when pressure on his stomach may cause him to spit up.

By 2 months old, aim for three 5-minute sessions daily on a flat, cushioned surface, like a play mat on the floor. If she seems uncomfortable, try rolling up a receiving blanket and tucking it under her armpits to give her support.

By 3 or 4 months, your baby should be able to lift his chest off the floor and lean on his elbows with his head upright. He may even be able to lift his arms off the floor, arch his back, and kick his feet. After 4 months, your baby may be strong enough to start rolling over during tummy time—something that will surprise and thrill him endlessly.

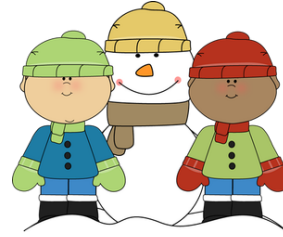


Fun Activities for Snowy Days

Coloring the Snow

You will need the following:

- A large container
- Water and food coloring
- Vinyl table cloth
- Dropper, spoons, tongs, masher, etc....



Lay the vinyl table cloth in the floor. Bring in a big bowl of snow and let the children drop food coloring into snow. They can use kitchen utensils to mash or scoop snow. For more fun, let them go outside and color the snow!

How to Be Awesome at Sensory Play: Mashed Potato Flakes

Here's a new sensory material: Mashed Potato Flakes! You can get a big box at the Dollar Store, they are a fun texture, and of course, they're edible in case your little one decides to give it a taste!

Lay a vinyl table cloth or shower curtain on the floor. Place bowls, cups or kitchen utensils down on the floor. Let them fill up bowls or scoop up flakes to help with motor skills and coordination. Your child will love the texture of the flakes. This is a great sensory experience, as they feel it leaving their hand, see, hear, and feel it hitting the ground, and they smell and even taste the flakes. It really involves all of their senses. Have Fun!

Let's Bake Cookies

Nothing is more fun than baking and eating Chocolate Chip Cookies with your child. Whether you buy ready-made cookies or make them from scratch, this is a valuable learning experience.





Toddlers Want to Help and We Should Let Them



We more often think of children as sources of extra work than as sources of help. We often think that trying to get our children to help us at home or elsewhere would be more effort than it would be worth. We also tend to think that the only way to get children to help is to pressure them, through punishment or bribery, which, for good reasons, we may be reluctant to do. We ourselves generally think of work as something that people naturally don't want to do, and we pass that view on to our children, who then pass it on to their children.

But researchers have found strong evidence that very young children innately want to help, and if allowed to do so will continue helping, voluntarily, through the rest of childhood and into adulthood. For them, helping is not because they want or expect something from it, they just want to be doing what we are doing, with us!

We parents, tend to make two mistakes regarding our little children's desires to help. First, we brush their offers to help aside, because we are in a rush to get things done and we believe (often correctly) that the toddler's "help" will slow us down or the toddler won't do it right and we'll have to do it over again. Second, if we do actually want help from the child, we offer some sort of deal, some reward, for doing it. In the first case, we present the message to the child that he or she is not capable of helping; and in the second case, we present the message that helping is something a person will do only if they get something in return.

Additional research clearly shows that by beginning to "help" in toddlerhood, children become truly helpful as they grow up. They become a "partner" in the work it takes to be a part of a family. As that partner, they value being a part of caring for their home and their family. Whether they are picking up toys, straightening the living room, or helping to care for family members and pets, the child is validated in their early role of contributing to the quality life of their family.

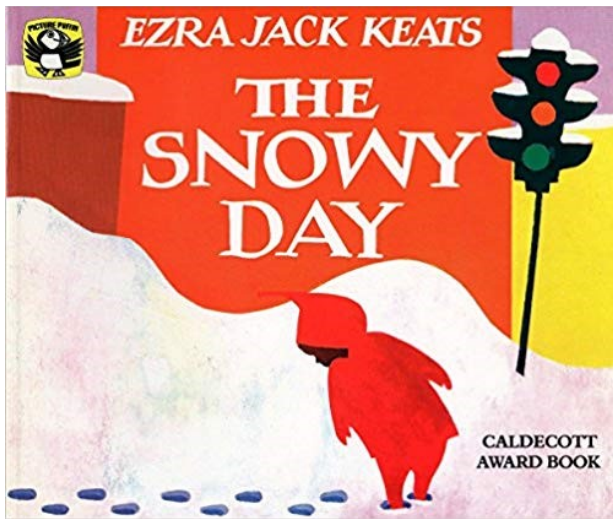
So, what are some suggestions on how to help your child become a partner with you in taking responsibility for the family work, you should do the following:

- ◆ Assume it *is* the family work, and not just your work, which means not only that you are not the only person responsible to get it done but also that you must relinquish some of the control over how it is done. If you want it done exactly your way, you will either have to do it yourself or hire someone to do it.
- ◆ Assume that your toddler's attempts to help are genuine and that, if you take the time to let the toddler help, with perhaps just a bit of cheerful guidance, he or she will eventually become good at it.
- ◆ Avoid demanding help, or bargaining for it, or rewarding it, or micromanaging it, as all of that undermines the child's intrinsic motivation to help. A smile of pleasure and a pleasant "thank you" is good. That's what your child wants, just as you want that from your child. Your child is helping in part to reinforce his or her bond with you.

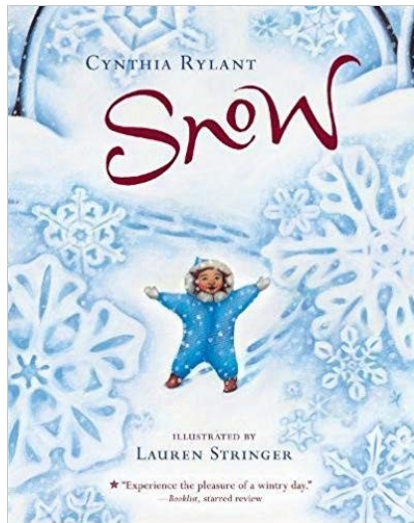
Realize that your child is growing in very positive ways by helping. The helping is good not just for you, but also for your child. He or she acquires valued skills and feelings of personal empowerment, self-worth, and belonging by contributing to the family welfare. At the same time, when allowed to help, the child's inborn altruism is nourished, not quashed.

Adapted from Psychology Today https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/freedom-learn/201809/toddlers-want-help-and-we-should-let-them?utm_sq=g6ifrxxwmgd&utm_source=FacebookPost&utm_medium=FBPost&utm_campaign=FBPost&fbclid=IwAR31MtVMTI45MigYGUje24Q_uh3JkKy1Unxk6T_w69GfpgUicptoMrU69jE&utm_content=Articles.





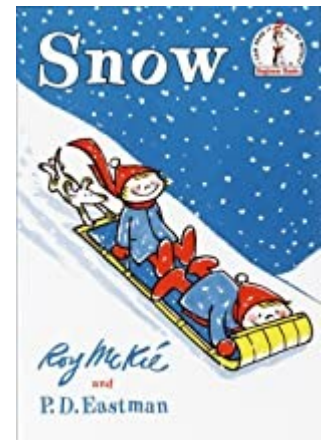
No book has captured the magic and sense of possibility of the first snowfall better than *The Snowy Day*. Universal in its appeal, the story has become a favorite of millions, as it reveals a child's wonder at a new world, and the hope of capturing and keeping that wonder forever. The adventures of a little boy in the city on a very snowy day.



Cynthia Rylant's lyrical descriptions of the sights and feelings evoked by falling snow blend gorgeously with the rich and beautiful world created by Lauren Stringer's illustrations, in which a young girl, her friend, and her grandmother enjoy the many things a snowy day has to offer.



This classic Beginner Book edited by Dr. Seuss is a delightful ode to winter. *Brrrrrr*—it snowed! From snowball fights and skiing to fort building and snowman-making, P. D. Eastman and Roy McKie's *Snow* will have young readers eager for the kind of fun only a wintry-white day can bring.



Reading daily to young children, starting in infancy, can help with language acquisition and literacy skills. This is because **reading to your children** in the earliest months stimulates the part of the brain that allows them to understand the meaning of language and helps build key language, literacy and social skills.



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