



It's a Breeze To Help Your Child Learn!

Try these simple but effective strategies with your baby

Many parents are interested in learning about ways to support their young children's learning. When used together, the strategies on this page are effective for supporting young children's involvement in day-to-day activities and helping them learn. The greater variety of these strategies you use when you interact with your child, the more you will notice positive things happening!

What you can do to **engage** your child in day-to-day activities:

- Find out about your child's favorite people, objects, and things to do.
- Give him lots of chances throughout the day to do what he likes to do.
- Allow him plenty of chances to begin and be an active part of day-to-day activities related to his interests.

What you can do to **respond** to your child in ways that will maintain her involvement in day-to-day activities:

- Pay attention to what she can do on her own.
- Let yourself be part of what your child does or says. Shift your attention to match her interests within the activity.
- Respond promptly and warmly to your child's efforts to interact with people and objects.
- Match your response to your child's excitement, attention span, and what she is trying to do or say.
- Be patient while your child tries to do or say

something on her own. Give her plenty of time to participate in activities she enjoys.

- Respond positively to your child with suggestions, comments, questions, gestures, and/or by arranging the setting and materials to help her continue her involvement in the activity.

What you can do to help your child **build** on what he understands, does, and says:

- Encourage your child to build on the ways that he is involved in day-to-day activities he enjoys. In other words, help him try something new or different, but make it related to what he's already doing to be part of the activity.
- Add new materials or arrange existing materials and space to encourage him to use his interests to try something new or different.
- Give your child chances to do just the next step for things he is learning to do (for example, when singing a familiar song, pause at the end of a verse to leave out a word and let him fill it in).
- Show him how to do something differently or try something new.
- Give him just enough help (with holding a toy, for example) so that he can try something new or different. As he gets more practice, reduce the amount of assistance you provide.
- Let your child practice what he has just learned throughout the day.

More opportunities

Let's look in as one mother puts these strategies into practice:

A special, yet ordinary, learning moment between a mother and child

Mother Angela is preparing to change her eight-month-old, Joseph's diaper. Joseph loves hearing Angela's voice, so she hums a familiar tune as she unfastens his diaper. ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

As Angela hums the last notes of the tune, Joseph "sings" emphatically, "Ahhh, Ohhh." Angela smiles widely. "Ah, you're trying to sing with mommy. Do you want Mommy to sing more?" Joseph squeals with excitement. Angela responds by beginning the tune again, this time with accompanying lyrics, "One little, two little, three little piggies; four little, five little, six little piggies..." As Angela sings, she gently wiggles each of Joseph's toes with her fingers. ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

As Angela continues singing, she notices Joseph reaching for and grabbing his feet. She gently helps Joseph to touch each of his toes as she sings, much to his fascination. ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

As Angela finishes diapering Joseph, she stops singing, and Joseph continues to "sing." Angela clears a space on the carpet, spreads out a blanket, and sits Joseph on the blanket. She quickly places children's music with a fun little rhythm in a CD player, as Joseph's face lights up, recognizing the familiar music. ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Strategies this mother uses to support her child's involvement and learning during day-to-day activities

● ● Angela has learned that by intentionally offering day-to-day activities based on Joseph's interests, Joseph works harder to be a part of the activity.

● ● Angela pays attention and is aware of Joseph's efforts to continue the interaction with her. She interprets his squeals of excitement as a request to sing the song again. She responds promptly and warmly, by acknowledging what she thinks Joseph wants, and adding lyrics to the tune. Angela shows Joseph something new by wiggling each one of his toes, counting them as part of the song.

● ● Angela considers what Joseph can do on his own by giving him time to find his feet with his hands. She provides him just the amount of help needed to touch each of his toes to help him participate in the song.

● ● By arranging a blanket and turning on a CD, Angela encourages Joseph's desire to continue singing.

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learning moment between
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Joseph and Angela “sing” along with the children’s music for a few minutes, and then Joseph lies on the blanket, looking sleepy. Angela notices her baby’s tiredness. She smiles, scoops him up, and gazes into his eyes whispering, “You’re getting sleepy, aren’t you, baby?” She switches the upbeat music with soothing music. Angela holds Joseph near to her and sways as Joseph drifts off to sleep. ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Angela gave Joseph as much time in the activity as he wanted to practice using his voice to make different sounds. Angela encouraged Joseph’s enjoyment of the activity by letting herself “sing along” with Joseph to the children’s music. When she noticed his attention shift from alertness/singing to sleepiness, she warmly, promptly, and appropriately responded by switching the mood of the music, and helped him go to sleep.

You can use this *example* to help you plan how you’d like to promote your child’s involvement and learning in everyday activities. Taken together, the strategies illustrated above make up three parts of an interaction style that supports your child’s learning:

- (1) **engaging** your child in day-to-day activities based on his interests,
- (2) **responding** to maintain your child’s involvement in activities, and
- (3) helping him to **build** on his involvement in activities. This approach is best when your goal is to help your young child enhance what he already understands, says, and does.

