



It's a Breeze To Help Your Child Learn!

Try these simple but effective strategies with your older toddler

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.

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

book! Bye-bye!” Samantha smiles and says, “Bye-bye” as the woman wanders on through the aisle.

After Samantha has spent several minutes paging through the book, Martina asks, “Would you like to carry the book or shall we put it in our shopping basket?” “Bakset,” Samantha decides as she drops the book into the basket. Martina helps Samantha carry the basket. Martina and Samantha grab the last few needed items, and then walk toward the store’s cashier. For the first time, Martina decides to let Samantha be a part of buying items. “Would you like to help Momma take the things we’re going to buy out of the basket?” Samantha eagerly nods and reaches up toward Martina. Martina gives Samantha non-breakable items, one at a time, from the basket for her to give to the cashier. When Samantha takes the Elmo book from her mother, she looks at the cashier with wary. “Is that your Mommy’s book?” asks the cashier jokingly, grinning. Samantha is familiar with this “teasing” game, “Nooooo, Manna’s book!” she replies quickly with a big smile of pride. The cashier quickly scans the book and returns it to Samantha. Martina lets Samantha give the cashier money for the items bought.

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

Martina is patient and allows her daughter the time needed to respond to small talk from another shopper. Martina allows the conversation to continue as long as needed for the shopper and Samantha to finish. These actions encourage Samantha to continue the interaction, giving her the opportunity to practice conversation.

Martina lets herself enjoy and be a part of her daughter’s experience with shopping. Martina asks Samantha questions to let her practice decision making. Martina considers what Samantha can do on her own by letting her drop items into the shopping basket and help carry it.

Martina allows Samantha to try something that she has seen her mother do multiple times, allowing her to practice something new.

Martina makes sure that her involvement matches Samantha’s interests in the activity (for example, interacting with other people). She tries to make sure there are plenty of chances for Samantha to be an active part of shopping.

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.

