

Parent-Provided Child Learning Opportunities

Young children's learning occurs anyplace, anytime, and anywhere! Providing your child everyday learning opportunities is one of the best ways to help your child learn new behavior and skills. You also will feel good about yourself as a parent when you see your child learn new things. This practice guide includes things you can do to provide your child lots of everyday child learning opportunities.

[Watch a video of this guide](#)

Everyday Child Learning Opportunities

- Everyday child learning occurs during mealtimes, parent-child play, bath times, food shopping, reading a storybook, visiting friends, and other activities. Making a list of all the activities your child experiences day in and day out is a good way of getting started.
- Children like some activities better than others. Start by figuring out which activities your child likes to do, prefers to do, and finds most interesting. The more interesting an activity is to your child, the more he or she will participate in the activity.
- It is generally a good idea to make a list of the activities your child likes to do and to use the list to remind yourself to be sure your child gets to participate in the activities as often as possible.
- As you and your child go about everyday activities, watch for the things she does in the activities such as splashing in water or pointing to pictures in a book. Respond positively to your child's actions by commenting on what he or she is doing. This will encourage your child to repeat the behaviors and stay involved in the activities.
- Imitate what your child does in the activities to get her to do the same things over and over. This is another way of getting your child to continue to do the behaviors and stay involved in the activities.
- While engaged in your-turn-my-turn play with your child, do something a little different to encourage your child to try something new. If your child points to and names a picture in a book, such as "doggie," you might respond by saying "big doggie."
- As part of all activities, remember to respond positively to your child's behavior and play. It is generally best to simply comment on your child's accomplishments while smiling and talking about what she is doing.



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A Quick Peek

Felicity is a 3-year-old who is not yet talking. Her mother, Emily, tells her daughter's speech therapist that Felicity is really interested in looking at other people and is making more sounds than usual. Mom asks the therapist if this might be a good time to work on her daughter's speech. The therapist describes how there are many opportunities throughout the day that can be used to encourage Felicity to use sounds in interactions with mom, dad, and other family members. The therapist uses video she has stored on an iPad that illustrates how other parents have used everyday activities to encourage young children to make sounds and "talk more." The speech therapist explains that the more children are interested in an activity, the more they will want to do the activity.

The therapist also points out that when parents on the video imitate their children's sounds, the more the children repeat the same sounds. Mom started doing this with her daughter in all the activities that Felicity likes to do. Mom says that Felicity now "talks up a storm" while she interacts with her daughter throughout the day. The therapist asks the mom to show her what this looks like and suggests that mom try to do the same thing in a few more activities. It isn't long before mom identifies more than a dozen activities where she can encourage her daughter to make more sounds.

You'll know the practice is working when...

- You use lots of everyday activities for promoting your child's learning
- You are responsive to your child's behavior in the activities
- Your child is interacting more often with you or other people and objects in the activities

This practice guide is based upon the following *DEC Recommended Practices*: Family 2, 5, 6, 7
 The DEC Recommended Practices are available at <http://dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>

Access this practice guide and other products at <http://ectacenter.org/decrp>
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