Learning Guide: Building Blocks

All children have strengths. Recognizing your child’s strengths (behavior and interests) is an important part of helping your child learn.

- Start by making a list of your child’s strengths. Note behavior your child uses to interact with you and other people and behavior your child uses to interact with toys and other objects.
- In the same way, make a list of your child’s interests. Write down the things that excite your child, things your child likes to do, and things that your child prefers to do.
- It is a good idea to observe your child in lots of everyday activities since she is likely to use different behaviors and show different interests in different activities.
- Pay particular attention to activities that keep your child involved in interactions with other people, and with toys and other objects.
- Highlight those behavior and interests.
- Equipping yourself with information about your child’s special strengths (behavior and interests) and the activities that “bring out the best” in your child is a simple way to help her learn. Find ways to provide lots of opportunities for your child to be involved in activities that encourage strengths-based learning.

You’ll know the practice is working if...

- Learning activities encourage your child to use her strengths.
- Your child is involved in everyday activities.
- Your child learns new behavior and interests.

A Quick Peek

Sixteen-month-old Austin has been receiving early intervention for the past 10 months. Austin’s mother Mandy keeps a diary of the things that keep her son involved in different activities and the things he does while involved in the activities. Austin especially enjoys playing different games with his mother — like peek-a-boo with his favorite blanket. Austin gets excited and smiles and giggles while playing the games. Austin has figured out how to engage his mother in the games by using gestures and the word “more” to let mom know he wants to play. Mandy encourages Austin to do all these things throughout the day in different activities and to use his strengths to initiate interactions and play.