Parent-Provided Child Learning Opportunities

Young children’s learning occurs anywhere, 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 will also 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.

Learning 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.

● 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.

● As part of 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.

You’ll know you’re actively involved if...

● 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

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 uses everyday activities to encourage Felicity to make more sounds. 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 therapist also points out that when parents on the video imitate their child’s sounds, the more the child repeats the same sounds. More than a dozen activities where she can encourage her daughter to make more sounds.

Learn more about using everyday learning opportunities with your young child from free online resources such as the three “It’s a Breeze to Help Your Child Learn” handouts in versions for infants, toddlers, and older toddlers from the Windows of Opportunity curriculum.

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