

RI EARLY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



Fun Family Activities



Introduction

Children are born ready to learn. The growth and learning that happens during the first 5 years of life are very important for future learning. Providing many different opportunities for children to play, allows them to grow, explore, and develop important skills.

BACKGROUND

The Rhode Early Learning Standards were first written in 2003. The Standards provided guidance for families and teachers on what children should know and be able to do by the time they entered kindergarten.

In 2011, Rhode Island received a national Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant. This award gave the state the chance to revise its Early Learning Standards. The RI Department of Education and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services worked together with national experts and RI's early childhood community to develop a new set of high-quality early learning and development Standards.

PURPOSE

The Standards tell us what we should expect young children to know and be able to do physically, emotionally, and academically. The Standards support early childhood teachers' and caregivers' understanding of how children grow and learn. The new version of the Standards includes all children ages birth through 60 months.



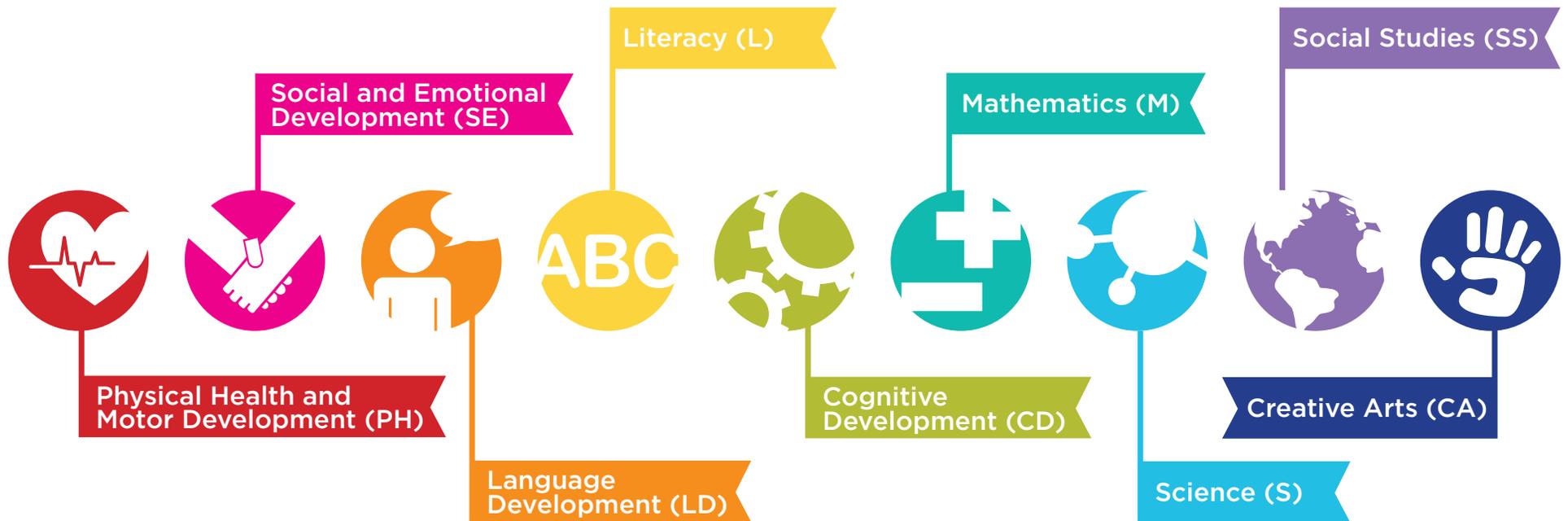
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Fun Family Activities Cards

In 2004, parents and early childhood teachers and experts worked with RIDE to make the Fun Family Activities for Preschoolers. In 2013, new Fun Family Activity cards were made to include activities for children ages birth to 60 months.

Fun Family Activities cards give parents information and enjoyable ways to support the development and learning of young children. The activities are based on Rhode Island's Early Learning and Development Standards. They are meant to help your child develop skills that are important for future learning.



All of the activities support your child's learning and development in different domains. Each activity is based on one domain, but all of the activities will help children grow and learn in other areas as well. For example, when doing a science activity, your child may also learn language, and math skills. On each activity card, you will see the main domain symbol and additional symbols showing the supporting domains. All of the concepts and terms included in the cards will support your child's readiness for kindergarten and will continue to be skills and terms supported in K-12 as well.

Domains are represented by this series of icons

How Children Grow and Develop

THIS IS WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US:

- Children grow and develop most quickly during the first 5 years of life. During this time, their experiences and relationships prepare them for future learning.
- All children are special in their own ways. All children differ in their abilities and usually develop at different rates.
- Children need positive interactions with family members and friends to develop self-confidence, a sense of security, and a love of learning.
- Children grow and develop in predictable stages.
- When a language other than English is spoken in the home, it is important for children to develop language skills in their home language. Having a strong foundation in their home language helps children more easily learn a new language.
- Children love to learn and they learn best through play.
- Each child has a unique personality. When learning new things, some children may need extra time and supports. Other children like to try things on their own.
- Children with special needs grow and develop in their own ways. When learning new things, these children may require adaptations to activities.



Play, Play and More Play

Children learn best through play. As children play, they learn the skills that help support their success in later schooling. When you begin to use these activities, your child will learn new skills and develop a love for learning. Most are made to fit into your everyday activities and can be changed to fit your family. All children grow and develop at different rates. These activity cards will allow you use the activities in different ways as your child grows.

MAKE YOUR OWN TREASURE BOX

A great way to get started is to create a Treasure Box to hold the cards. Try using a shoebox, a tissue box or other container as a special holder for the cards. Use paints, markers, or crayons with your child to decorate the box. Make your Treasure Box special by adding photos of your child. Use your imagination and have fun!

CREATE YOUR OWN ACTIVITIES

You can also create activities to add to this packet. Talk with other parents or your child's teacher about new ideas. Then use the back of these cards or make additional cards to write down your own family favorites.

SAFETY FIRST!

These activities are meant to be done together with your child. Some activities need you to pay close attention to your child. You know your child best. Only let your child play with materials that you are sure will be used safely.

ADAPTING PLAY FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Fun Family Activity Cards have been developed for use by all children. The activities have been developed with information about broad ages, rather than specific developmental months. As a result, activities may need to be adapted for individual children, particularly those with disabilities. Parents are encouraged to select and adapt activities for their child as needed. Use the cards to reflect on and take note of your child's development. Should you have concerns about your child's development refer to your health care provider or contact the RI Department of Health, listed in the Resources for Families section of the cards.



Purposeful Play

Purposeful play activities encourage children to ask questions about and explore things they are interested in. These activities also encourage children to find answers to their questions by observing, planning, and trying new things. Adults can help by thinking about what is interesting to their child and then planning some special play activities that encourage the child to explore those interests. This kind of play helps children learn the things they will need to be successful in school.

The best way for young children to understand the world and to learn new skills and practice skills they already have, is through play (Ginsburg, 2007).

When caregivers ask questions and talk with their children during these activities, children learn ideas and skills that will support future learning. Play allows children to learn skills, knowledge, and love of learning that support success in later schooling.

- **Social play** helps children learn to cooperate and share
- **Constructive play** lets children explore objects and discover patterns
- **Physical play** helps children work on large and small muscle skills
- **Expressive play** lets children learn to express feelings and emotions
- **Fantasy play** encourages children to think creatively and use their imaginations

PRETEND PLAY

When children engage in these types of play they also do what is called pretend play. Research tells us that pretend play is important for children and helps them develop skills in all learning areas.

In their pretend play, children act out situations and experiences from their everyday lives, like going to the grocery store, taking the bus, or cooking dinner. Older toddlers and preschoolers begin to use objects in their play, like pretending a block is a phone or putting on daddy's shoes and a tie to pretend to go to work. This type of play encourages brain development that will help children get ready for future learning. When parents join their children in pretend play, it encourages children to be more creative and expressive. It is important for parents to discourage the type of pretend play or use of props that imitate violence.

PLANNING PURPOSEFUL PLAY ACTIVITIES

As you plan activities with your child, here are some questions to think about:

Developmental Level:

- Does this activity build on something my child already knows so he/she can experience success?
- Will it challenge my child to learn new skills without frustrating him/her?
- How can this activity be changed so that all family members can participate?

Interests:

- Does the activity involve something that interests him/her?
- Does it introduce my child to something new and different?
- What types of activities do we enjoy doing together?
- Is this an activity we would like to do together as a family?

The Way My Child Likes to Learn:

- Does this activity take advantage of the way my child likes to learn?
- Does it help my child to discover a new way of learning?

Before You Begin

CHILD'S NAME _____

Think about the ways you want your child to grow and learn during this time in their life. Write your answers to the following questions:

WHAT ARE MY CHILD'S INTERESTS AND FAVORITE THINGS?

Baby _____

Toddler _____

Preschooler _____

WHAT DOES MY CHILD ALREADY KNOW AND WHAT IS HE/SHE READY TO LEARN?

Baby _____

Toddler _____

Preschooler _____

HOW DOES MY CHILD LEARN BEST?

Baby _____

Toddler _____

Preschooler _____



NOTE: Please be sure to print one card for each of your children.

As you review the activity cards, keep your answers in mind and choose activities that match your child's interests. Using what you know about your child, select activities that are not only fun, but will also help build the skills that you want your child to learn. As your child grows, be sure to come back to this card and record the ways your child's interests and skills have changed over time.



Physical health and muscle development are important parts of a child's overall well-being. When children and families practice healthy behaviors, this will lead to healthy development. As their large and small muscle skills develop, this allows children to better explore and discover the world around them.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Health and Safety: Over time, children learn to identify unsafe situations and ways to respond to them. As they grow, children develop basic skills that help them become independent and take care of their own needs.

Large Muscle (Gross Motor) Development: Children develop large-muscle control, strength, and coordination to help them move.

Small Muscle (Fine Motor) Development: Children develop small-muscle control, strength and coordination, which will help with writing and drawing skills.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Play Rhymes by Marc Brown

Clap Hands by Helen Oxenbury

*From Head to Toe** by Eric Carle

The Farmer and the Dell by Mary Maki Rae

Yummy Yucky by Leslie Patricelli

PRESCHOOLERS

*My Five Senses** by Alike

*Growing Vegetable Soup** by Lois Ehlert

The Edible Pyramid by Loreen Leedy

Good Enough to Eat by Lizzy Rockwell

At the Supermarket by Anne Rockwell

Ready, Set, Skip! by Jane O'Connor

Changes, Changes by Pat Hutchins

Get Up and Go by Nancy Carlson

** Available in Spanish*

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

Learning About Food

ACTIVITIES

Young children enjoy exploring foods and learning to feed themselves.



BABIES

Feeding time is a great time to bond with your baby—sing and tell stories. Babies also enjoy it when you describe the foods you are eating together. When your child begins to eat solid foods, talk about and describe the food you are eating: What does the food taste like? How does it smell? What color is it? What does it feel like?



TODDLERS

Toddlers love to mimic the adults around them. Provide opportunities for your toddler to help in the kitchen or play with items like containers, wooden spoons, pots and pans. As you do your grocery shopping, talk about the foods you are purchasing. Name the foods and their colors. Smell them and talk about how you will prepare them.



PRESCHOOLERS

Cooking with your child, whether it is pretend cooking or real cooking, is a great time for bonding. Play along when your child offers you pretend food—ask what it is, talk about how good it tastes. In the kitchen, your child can help with small tasks like setting the table, pouring, mashing, mixing, and spreading. Be sure to talk about measurements, colors, and textures, and following a recipe.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Safety first! When trying new foods, be sure to cut pieces into manageable bites. Talk with your baby's doctor about what foods to avoid when your child is young. For toddlers, work on a plan to introduce new foods. For preschoolers, be sure to cut up grapes and small tomatoes in half.
- Create a pretend kitchen by saving cleaned and empty cartons and containers like: cereal boxes, margarine, yogurt containers. Avoid using containers with sharp edges.
- Remember children may need to try things multiple times before they can decide if they like it.

REFLECTIONS

- Make a list on the back of new healthy foods your child has tried or you would like to try together. Remember children may need to try things multiple times before they can decide if they like it.
What new healthy foods has your child tried? What new foods can you try together? Use the back of the card to write down your reflections.

Watch Me Move

Young children are developing control, strength, and coordination of large muscles such as arms and legs.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies are motivated by curiosity. They explore and are attracted to objects around them. While laying, sitting, or standing comfortably with your baby, place a toy slightly out of reach. Encourage your child to reach for or move towards the toy. Observe and celebrate your baby's efforts.



TODDLERS

Toddlers are on the move and they are learning to move their bodies. Provide safe places for them to run, jump, climb, roll, and toss. Look for opportunities for your child to use their muscles, like climbing up stairs, jumping off a small curb, pushing or pulling toys, moving small riding toys, and tossing and catching balls.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers are using their large muscles when they climb, run, balance, and swing. As their skills develop, they are better able to throw, catch, or kick a ball with accuracy. Playing a game of catch or providing your child with a basket to throw into will help develop these skills.

Encourage your preschooler to explore other forms of movement—running, jumping, skipping, galloping, hopping and dancing.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- It is important that you and your child to enjoy these activities together. Repeat the activity as long as your child is interested. If at any point your child gets frustrated, take a break.
- Music is a great way to encourage your child to move. Make sure to join in and move your large muscles together.
- If you have any concerns about your child's motor development, be sure to mention it to your child's doctor.
- Make use of what is available in your community. Visit playgrounds, neighborhood community or recreation centers to encourage your child to keep active.

REFLECTIONS

- What is the newest way your child is using large muscles? What is your child still working on? Write down 1 or 2 ways you can encourage your child to help build these skills.

Putting Together and Pulling Apart

Your child will develop control, strength and coordination of small muscles, such as hands and fingers.

ACTIVITIES

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



BABIES

Babies are very interested in touching and feeling interesting objects and materials. By grasping at toys and shaking or banging things to make noise, or even holding tight to an adult's finger babies learn to use their hands and fingers for a purpose. Give your child lots of opportunities to reach for or hold to different kinds of toys. Play games where you pick different toys out of a basket to hand to your child. Encourage your child to bang two objects together or to pull things apart, like stacking cups or large knobbed puzzles.



TODDLERS

Toddlers are learning to use their small muscles to explore and get things done. They enjoy opening and closing containers, filling and emptying baskets or buckets, and stacking blocks. Give your toddler a basket of different plastic containers that have lids, and work together to match the lids to the containers. Then, help your child to pull the lids off. You can also stack the containers, put smaller ones inside of bigger ones, or find toys to put into each of the containers.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers are getting much better at using their small muscles to solve problems, like puzzles, stacking and building, and using safety scissors or pens/pencils. Give your child lots of opportunities to work on puzzles, to use play dough, or to create art with markers, crayons, safety scissors, or tape.

TIPS

- Children sometimes enjoy helping to put things away, like the silverware, or picking up toys to put in a basket. They will use their small muscles to do these things, and also learn that cleaning up together can be fun!
- Children of all ages love to put things together and then pull them apart. Don't be surprised if your child builds a tower and then knocks it over right away, or makes something with play dough and then quickly smashes it to make something new. While it may not seem like it, children are learning from both the putting together *and* the pulling apart.
- As children develop small muscle skills, they sometimes get frustrated when they can't do what they want to - like opening a container or tying shoes. Encourage them to keep trying as much as they can, but be sure to step in to help if they seem to get too frustrated.

REFLECTIONS

- Write down one or two everyday activities you would like to do with your child that will help the development of small muscles.



This domain focuses on children's relationships with adults and other children. This includes understanding and expressing emotions and learning about themselves and others. This domain is very important for young children because they learn best when they feel secure and safe, and have strong, trusting relationships with the adults in their lives.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Relationship with Others: Young children develop in the ability to participate in trusting and positive relationships with adults and other children.

Sense of Self: Young children learn to understand themselves as independent people with their own thoughts and feelings. They develop self-confidence and independence, which helps them learn.

Self-Regulation: As children grow they learn to get along with others, control emotions and impulses, and follow instructions in a variety of situations.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BOOKS

BABIES AND TODDLERS

I Can Do It Too! by Karen Baicker

Llama Llama: Mad at Mama by Anna Dewdney

I Love You Through and Through by Bernadette Rossetti-Shustack

Kitten's First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes*

Oh! David by David Shannon*

Blankie by Leslie Patricelli

Baby Faces by Margaret Miller

PRESCHOOLERS

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst*

When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry by Molly Bang

Today I Feel Silly by Jamie Lee Curtis

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn*

Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes*

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman*

How Are You Peeling by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers*

I Am Me by Karla Kuskin

The Way I Feel by Janan Cain

* Available in Spanish

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

My Family and Friends

Your child will begin to develop trust in and engage positively with adults who are familiar and consistently present. Your child will engage in positive relationships and interactions with other children.



BABIES

Your baby is beginning to recognize and respond to familiar adults and children. Nurturing these trusting relationships is very important to your baby's development. Play back and forth games with your baby like "Peek A Boo," "Pat A Cake," "This Little Piggy" or other favorite games from your childhood.



TODDLERS

Toddlers are developing the ability to interact with adults and other children. Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children like going to the playground at the park or going to story time at the library. During these activities, allow your child to choose whom to play with and model and encourage positive interactions like taking turns, playing back and forth games, and responding to the emotions of other children.



PRESCHOOLERS

Children at this age are learning that people have characteristics, thoughts, and ideas that are different from their own. This understanding allows them to develop positive relationships with family and friends. Encourage your child to make decisions in their play with family and friends. Provide your child with opportunities to play independently with other children, take turns, make decisions about their play, and come to different conclusions about their discoveries.

ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Create a photo book with the important people in your child's life. Show the book to your child every day, pointing out the people's names, how they know your baby, and anything else that is special about each person. Materials you can use for your book can include:
 - Sheet protectors and a binder
 - An old, unused, small photo album
 - Construction paper, glue and a stapler
 - Decorate it however you would like- add scraps of favorite things to it!
- When looking at pictures of and interacting with important adults, ex. grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, neighbors, etc., use their names.

REFLECTIONS

- Who are the people your child likes to be around? Plan some special time for your child to spend with a favorite friend or adult.

It's All About Me

Children develop an awareness of themselves as individuals.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies love to look at their own reflections. They are also beginning to understand that their bodies are actually separate from their caregivers'.

Look in a mirror with your baby. Ask your baby, "Who's that?" and "Where's the baby?" How does your baby react to the reflection in the mirror?



TODDLERS

Toddlers are learning they can do things on their own but also when they need to ask adults for help.

Encourage your child to do some things independently. Your toddler may be able to pick up toys, brush teeth, take off a coat, and other simple tasks. Support and guide your child's efforts as needed.



PRESCHOOLERS

Your preschooler is beginning to understand what makes people unique by noticing special characteristics like hair color, skin tone, and eye color. Your child may also be interested in physical differences between people. Encourage your child to talk about the differences and what makes people the same.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Make bath time learning time! Name your child's body parts as you wash them. Ask your toddler or preschooler to point to the body part when you name it (ex. eyes, ears, nose, and feet).
- Toddlers are focused on themselves and will begin to use terms like "ME!" and "MINE!" Your toddler may also refuse to share with others, and that's okay. It is important to talk about sharing, but this is a developing skill and your child may not always be ready to share.
- Allowing children to make choices allows them to feel more in control as well as to learn about their likes and dislikes. Try to offer no more than two to three realistic choices.
Have your preschooler draw a self-portrait on the back of this card. For your baby or toddler, attach a picture of your child. Point to and name facial features (ex. eyes, nose, mouth, chin, cheeks).

REFLECTIONS

- What has your child newly discovered about themselves and their abilities? What happened when you tried these activities?

How Are You Feeling?

Your child will learn to identify and express a range of emotions.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies love to look at and study other faces. This is how they begin to learn about emotions and social signals. When you are talking to and playing with your baby, be sure to use big facial expressions, like big smiles and opening your eyes wide. Be sure to respond to and copy your baby's facial expressions.



TODDLERS

Toddlers begin to feel and express strong emotions. Labeling and understanding these emotions helps to manage challenging situations. When your child is showing an emotion (happiness, frustration, sadness) label the feeling by saying, "I see that you are feeling ____." Also, tell your child how you are feeling. "When you ____ it made me feel ____."



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers are developing the ability to manage and express a variety of emotions. It is important for children to learn to use words to describe different feelings.

Your child is also developing the ability to understand the emotions of others. Talk with your child about emotions that others may be feeling—for example, a character in a book, a friend on the playground, a sibling or pet. Encourage your child to think about how to respond.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- At a very young age, your babies' emotions are driven by their basic needs—sleep, food, and comfort. Respond to your baby's needs in a consistent way whenever possible. This will help your child develop healthy control and expression of emotions.
- As children grow, it is important they know that it is ok to feel the way that they are feeling, even if they are emotions that might be difficult (frustrated, angry, upset).
- You may begin to hear your toddler say "no" more often. This is common when children are learning to be more independent. Many times, toddlers say "No" but then do what they are supposed to. If your toddler is saying "No" more than you like, offering a choice might help. For example, if your toddler says no to putting on shoes, you can ask, "Would you like daddy to put on your shoes or mommy?"
- Create a feelings poster with your preschooler using photos, magazine pictures, or drawings that show different emotions. At the end of the day, ask your child to point to the picture that best describes how he or she felt during the day and why.

REFLECTIONS

- Your child will learn how to show feelings by watching you. Think about the ways you show your feelings. Does your child show emotions in similar ways? What makes your child happy? What frustrates your child? How do you know these things? How do you react?



All children are born with the ability to communicate.

Helping children learn how to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas is important for brain development. These skills are also very important for helping children when they get to school. Children with disabilities may demonstrate alternative ways of meeting the goals of language development. These may include gestures, symbols, pictures, signs or other ways of communicating. When a language other than English is spoken in the home, it is important for children to develop language skills in their home language.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Receptive Language: Young children will listen to, understand and respond to language.

Expressive language: Young children grow in their abilities to use language to express thoughts and needs.

Pragmatics: Young children understand, follow, and use appropriate social rules including using facial expressions and hand gestures. Children also learn how to have a one-on-one conversation.

Language Development of Dual Language Learners: Young children in homes where English is not the primary language, learn to listen to, understand, and use language. This usually happens first in their home language. When they have the opportunity to hear and speak English, young children learn to express thoughts and ideas in English.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes by Annie Kubler*

Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown

Mother Goose by Sylvia Long

I Read Signs by Tana Hoban

From Head to Toe by Eric Carle*

PRESCHOOLERS

Listen to the Rain by Bill Martin

One Duck Stuck by Phyllis Root

Is Your Mama a Llama by Deborah Guarino*

Shout! Shout It Out! by Denise Fleming

Pepi Sings a New Song by Laura Ljungkvist

The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown*

Press Here by Herve Tullet

Own Moon by Jane Yolen

* Available in Spanish

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

Following Directions

Young children grow in their abilities to listen to, understand, and use language to express thoughts and needs.

ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- As children learn language, at first they will understand more words than they are able to say.
- When talking to your child, make eye contact and give your full attention whenever possible.
- Games are a fun way to practice following directions. There are many childhood games based on listening to words and following directions. Make practicing following directions fun by playing these games:
 - Simon Says
 - Hokey Pokey
 - Red Light, Green Light
 - Mother May I?
 - Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
 - Duck, Duck, Goose



BABIES

Babies can understand more words than they can say. When you read with your baby, point to the picture as you say the word to draw attention to it. Point to familiar people in a photograph and name them. Give your child practice following simple one-step directions, like “Come here” or “Give me the ball.”



TODDLERS

Toddlers grow every day in their ability to understand what others say. When you read with your toddler, ask your child to point to different characters, objects, or animals in the book. Name familiar people in a photograph and ask your child to point to them. Without pointing or signaling, give your toddler more challenging directions to follow. For example, while getting dressed, ask your child to “Please lift your arms.” When your toddler can follow one-step directions, try asking for two things. Ex. “Find your shoes and bring them to me.”



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers develop the skill to understand a conversation and respond to questions. Preschoolers understand longer and more complex sentences. When you are reading a story together, ask your preschooler to retell a favorite part or describe what happened to a specific character. Give your child multi-step directions to follow. For example, “Wash your hands, get your plate and come to the table.”

REFLECTIONS

- Your child may have a favorite rhyme, song, or book that is requested over and over. Why do you think this is your child’s favorite? How does your child respond to it?

Words, Words and More Words

Young children learn to express thoughts through sounds and words.

ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



BABIES

Babies try to make new sounds at an early age. Babbling, begins with one letter sound, like buh buh buh. Then they try new sounds like bahbah or mahmahmah. Eventually, they learn that certain sounds mean something, like Mama and Dada. Your baby will try to tell you a whole thought with one word. Show your baby that you understand. For example, when your baby says “ball”, you can say, “Yes! I see you have the ball.”



TODDLERS

Toddlers begin to put words together and use their hands to help show what they mean. Your toddler may point to the door and say “Go out.”

You can expand your toddler’s vocabulary by adding describing words to what they say. If your toddler says “My ball,” you can say “Your red ball” or “Your round ball.” This encourages your child to add more words when speaking.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers speak in more complex sentences and use more words. Their speech is clear enough that unfamiliar people understand what is being said.

Preschoolers ask lots of “who”, “what”, “why” and “where” questions as they try to understand the world. Encourage your preschooler by responding to the questions as best you can. Or ask them, “I don’t know. Why do you think that happened?”

TIPS

- Young children learn language by hearing language spoken by others. Children not only hear the sounds and words that are spoken, but observe how the sound is created.
- Notice how your baby watches your lips when you speak. Very young children may try to touch your mouth or tongue while you speak. This is one way young children learn about how to speak.
- Young children may use their hands instead of words to communicate. As their vocabulary develops, it is important to encourage children to use words.
- If you are worried about your child’s ability to make sounds, say words, or communicate with you, share that information with your child’s doctor. The doctor will let you know if your child’s language development is where it should be.

REFLECTIONS

- During the early years, your child’s language will grow more quickly than any other time in life. What new sounds and words does your child know? Use the back of this card to document the sounds and words your child uses (for example, “baba” for bottle or “puckie” for pancake). You’ll want to remember first words, even those that were invented by your child!

Tell Me a Story

Children develop the skill to use words and language in social situations.

ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Children learn the rules of conversation in different settings by watching and talking with the adults around them. You can support your child's understanding by providing different opportunities to talk together and by helping your child take turns in conversations.
- Simple board games can help children practice the social skills they need. Talking about the game as you play encourages this. For example, "Whose turn is it?" "Can I have the dice?"

REFLECTIONS

- What went well today? What did you like most about your day (with grandma, at preschool etc.) Ask your preschooler to tell you about the day. Ask questions to help your child think about what happened first, second, and last. Talk about things your child enjoys, like what kind of snack was served, how it tasted, activities of the day and the trip home. Write the story of the day on the back of this card.

BABIES



Babies learn to speak by hearing lots of language. They use body language like kicking their legs, waving their arms and smiling as a way to show they are interested in what you are saying. Tell your baby a simple story, like what happened during your visit to the doctor. First, lay or sit your baby in front of you. Get your baby's attention by making eye contact. Watch how your baby responds to your voice with facial expressions, sounds, and movements. Respond by copying the facial expressions and sounds.

TODDLERS



Toddlers enjoy playing with and talking to adults and other children. This is how they learn to participate in simple turn-taking during one-on-one conversations. Talk with your child as you go through your day, during breakfast, while walking or driving to school, and before bed. Ask questions and encourage your child to go back and forth in the conversation with you. Say something silly to see how your child responds.

PRESCHOOLERS



Preschoolers learn how to use words in a conversation and how people relate to each other when they are speaking together. This includes things like: making eye contact, taking turns talking, using facial expressions, and using inside versus outside voices. To give your child practice in taking turns, play simple back and forth games—throwing a ball, putting a puzzle together, or playing cards games like Go Fish. While you play, take turns talking with your child, asking questions and giving answers.

LITERACY

A B

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Good Night Moon by Margaret Wise Brown*

Five Little Monkeys by Eileen Christelow*

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
by Bill Martin Jr.

Baby Cakes Baby Cakes by Karma Wilson

Pots and Pans by Patricia Hubbell

The Baby Goes Beep by Rebecca O'Connell

The Three Bears by Byron Barton

PRESCHOOLERS

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr.

Night in the Country by Cynthia Rylant

Lola Loves Stories by Anna McQuinn

LMNO Peas by Keith Baker

Alphabet City by Stephen T. Johnson

How Rocket Learned to Read by Tad Hills

City Lullaby by Marilyn Singer

Beatrice Doesn't Want To by Laura Numeroff

* Available in Spanish

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

Children learn that words can be spoken, listened to, read and written.

As children develop, they become excited about using pictures and letters to communicate.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Phonological Awareness: Children begin to notice the sounds of spoken language.

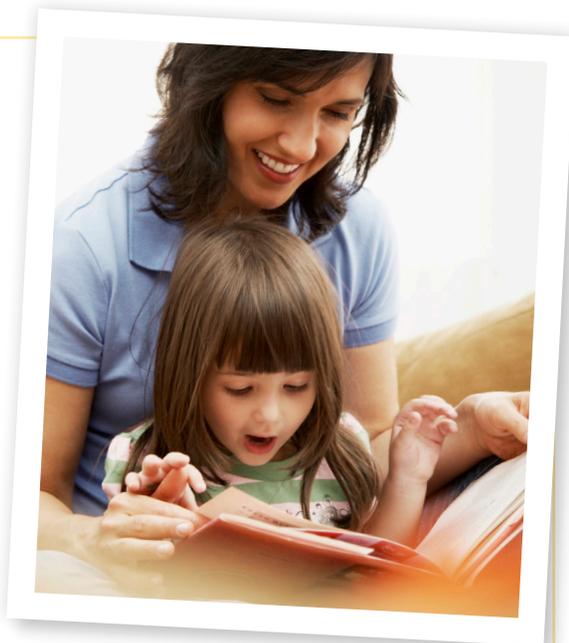
Alphabet Knowledge: Children recognize and identify letters and the sounds they make.

Print Knowledge: Children understand that spoken words are represented by the written word and that print carries meaning.

Comprehension and Interest: Children show interest in and have an understanding of literacy experiences, such as pictures and events in a book.

Literacy Development for Dual Language Learners: Young children in homes where English is not the primary language, first learn to participate in reading activities in their home language. When they have the opportunity to hear and speak English, young children learn to read and respond to books in English.

Emergent Writing: Children learn writing skills and understand that writing is a way to communicate.



Beginning to Write

Young children learn about writing as they watch others write.

ACTIVITIES

LITERACY

A B

Additional Domains:



BABIES

Babies develop skills needed for writing by reaching for and holding on to small items.

Encourage your baby to reach for and hold on to small items like rattles, blocks, or “O” shaped cereal. This will help develop the muscles needed later for writing, like holding a crayon or pencil. Once your child can pick up and hold small items, provide a jumbo crayon or marker and encourage scribbling on paper.



TODDLERS

Toddlers are curious and will watch as you write. You may notice that they begin to pretend to write when they play. Encourage your child to scribble and tell you about the picture or “words.” Give your toddler different writing tools to try, like crayons, chalk, pencils, pens and markers. Remember that toddlers are learning the rules about where it is ok to write. Besides paper, some great places to write include a sidewalk, a chalkboard, empty boxes, and paper bags.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers will begin to try to write some letters and numbers. Encourage them to write the letters of their name. At this age, they may not be able to write the letters perfectly. That’s ok!

Your child may enjoy making cards or pictures to send to family and friends. Encourage your child to draw special pictures and write some letters. Or ask what the picture is and then write the words for your child.

TIPS

- Safety first! All of the activities mentioned to the left should be conducted under close adult supervision. Remember that all small items can be choking hazards, or can be inserted where they are not supposed to go!
- When your child begins to pretend play like pretending to be at a restaurant, in a doctor’s office, or at school, you can show your child that writing is important. You can make a pretend menu together, write out a receipt, use a pad to write a pretend prescription, or write on a chalkboard and pretend to be a teacher. This helps your child to understand that writing has meaning.

REFLECTIONS

- Ask your child to tell you a favorite story and write it down on the back of this card. Be sure to give it a title. You may also want to put the date so that you can look back later and talk about it with your child. Re-read the story to show how you have captured your child’s thoughts in writing.

Tuning into Sounds

Young children begin to notice and repeat sounds they are exposed to in their homes and communities.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies will show interest in sounds of spoken language by paying close attention to the speaker. Make sure to have lots of conversations about what you are doing with your baby. Even if babies can't talk yet, they are listening closely to what others are saying! Babies will try to make their own sounds. When your baby makes a sound, repeat it back. Tell your baby stories, recite rhymes, and sing songs. As your baby grows, sounds may indicate whole words. When your baby says "Ba" to mean bottle, you can say the whole word.



TODDLERS

Toddlers will start to put two words together and begin to make the sounds of animals, objects and people they see every day in books or the neighborhood. When on a walk or riding in the bus or car, ask your child to tell you what sounds different things make, like fire trucks, dogs, birds, or airplanes. Encourage your child to use two word sentences like "More milk". Continue to sing simple songs with your child and repeat rhymes like "Pat-A-Cake." Play games with your child, like filling in the repeating phrase of a familiar song or rhyme.



PRESCHOOLERS

As preschoolers become comfortable with language, they enjoy playing with sounds. They will enjoy saying silly words and playing rhyming games. Ask your child to think of words that rhyme, like pat, sat and hat. Your child may even make up some words like gat, dat, and lat. Play word games with your child, like naming words that begin with the same sound as the first letter of your child's first name.

LITERACY

A B

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Nursery rhymes are a great way to introduce your child to sounds. As a baby, your child will enjoy the rhythmic pattern, and find it soothing. Your toddler will appreciate the rhyming sounds and knowing what words come next. Your preschooler will enjoy making a game of filling in the blank of a favorite rhyme.
- Rhyming books can be found easily at your local library. The verses for traditional rhymes can be found on the internet or by asking people you know. Rhymes and songs are a great way to pass the time in the car. Be sure to sing along with your child!
- Don't forget to take time to listen with your child to everyday sounds in your environment, like birds chirping, dogs barking, or a motor running. All of these help your child to pay attention different kinds of sounds.

REFLECTIONS

- Write the first letter of your child's name on the back of this card. Make the sound that letter makes or ask your child to make the sound. Walk around your home or neighborhood with your child and try to find things that start with that sound. What did you find?

Alphabet Games

Young children learn to recognize and identify letters and connect to the sounds the letters make.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Your baby will begin to point to pictures in books as you read together.

Read alphabet books with one letter and one picture on a page, so your child starts to hear the names of letters, for example “A is for apple.”



TODDLERS

Toddlers begin to recognize letters they see often in their environment. For example, the “S” on a Stop sign or the “E” on an Exit sign.

Remember to point out letters and their sounds as you see them. You can also make a game of finding the first letter of your toddler’s name on signs.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers begin to learn the names and sounds of lots of letters, especially those in their names. When your preschooler points out a letter don’t forget to ask about what sound it makes.

You can also ask your preschooler to find words in a book or magazine, or in the environment, that begin with a specific letter. For example, “Can you find a word that starts with a B? What other words start with the Buh sound?”

LITERACY

A B

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- While being able to identify letters is an important skill, it’s also important for children to know the sounds that letters make. You can make learning letters and sounds fun by creating games and activities that allow your child to play with letters and letter sounds.
- You can make a game for your child to play, with index cards, or by cutting up a cereal box and use the reverse side. Have your child pair the matching letters. Next you can mix up the letters and you can say, “Find the A”. Once your child can find a letter consistently then make the sound of the letter and ask your child to find it.
- For your preschooler, try putting three different letter cards on the table in front of your child. Use your finger to trace one of the three letters on your child’s back. Can your child guess what letter it is?

REFLECTIONS

- What letters does your child know? Use the back of this card to record what letters and sounds your child knows.

Nurturing a Love of Reading

From infancy, children begin to develop a love of reading. Sitting and listening to a story with a special person in your child's life creates a special bond between the listener and the reader. At the same time, a love of reading develops which will last a lifetime.



BABIES

Babies will hold books and look at them like they are reading. You can encourage your child to use senses such as touch and hearing by using books that make sounds or have interesting things to feel. One suggested book is *Pat the Bunny* by Dorothy Kunhardt. As you read, your baby may want to help turn the pages. Using board books makes it easier. Read books that have songs or finger plays and encourage your baby to make movements and sounds while reading together (ex. *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*). For very young babies, you can help them move to the verse.



TODDLERS

Toddlers may know their favorite books by the cover and even find favorite pages. Your child may ask you to read that favorite book over and over, sometimes many times in a row. They enjoy knowing what will happen in the story. This is how toddlers learn. Your toddler will begin to enjoy longer, more detailed stories. Your child may learn to say the words in a book, especially those that are repeated often. Encourage this by pausing when you get to that part, to see if your child can fill in the blanks or say it with you.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers learn to hold books in the right direction and turn pages from front to back. You can point out the name of the author of the book and the illustrator, to show your child that someone wrote the story and someone made the pictures. Offer to read different kinds of books to your child, like: make believe, stories about real people and things, and books about nature, science and everyday experiences. For example, a visit to the grocery store, fire trucks or how a crayon is made.

ACTIVITIES

LITERACY

A B

Additional Domains:



TIPS

Here are some tips to help your child develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime!

- Make sure you have at least one special place for storing your child's books that is within your child's reach.
- Encourage your child choose a favorite book.
- Sit in a cozy spot together and enjoy physical closeness while reading.
- As you read, change voices for the different characters in the story.
- After reading a few pages, ask questions like "What do you think will happen next?"
- After you finish the book, talk about the story. Ask questions and encourage your child to ask questions too.
- Have your child try to retell the story to someone else in your family.
- Tell stories and read to your child in the language that is spoken at home.
- Re-read favorite books!
- Reading can be done anywhere—you may have books in the car, kitchen or even outside.
- Share with your child the different ways you use reading—for fun, routines like cooking from a recipe or looking up information, like a bus schedule.
- Ask your local librarian to help you find books your child will love.
- There are many places to get books. Borrow some from the library, visit yard sales, and try second hand shops. You can often get wonderful, gently used books, for an inexpensive price. Ask friends or family to give your child books for special occasions. Be sure to ask them to write a personal message to your child inside the cover. This makes it special.

REFLECTIONS

Do you have books at home for your child to read? Have you been to your local library and spoken with your children's librarian? If so, what did you learn?



The cognitive domain focuses on how children pay attention to and think about the world around them.

Cognitive development (also known as brain development), happens during every day experiences and interactions. These experiences help young children learn how to solve problems, remember things, and develop self-control and reasoning skills.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Logic and Reasoning: Young children use things that they have experienced before to help them understand new things.

Memory and Working Memory: Young children build the ability to remember over time. They begin to use memories to help them complete a task.

Attention and Inhibitory Control: Young children get better at focusing on tasks, controlling their emotions and bodies, and “tuning out” distractions.

Cognitive Flexibility: Young children learn to see things from different points of view, and to accept change.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle**

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr.**

*Where's Spot? by Eric Hill**

*Blue Hat, Green Hat by Sandra Boynton**

*Freight Train by Donald Crews**

Clap Your Hands by Lorinda Bryan Cauley

PRESCHOOLERS

It Looked Like Spilled Milk by Charles G. Shaw

*The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats**

*The Napping House by Audrey Wood**

*Caps for Sale by Esphyr Stobokina**

*Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson**

*The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss**

*Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh**

You Go Away by Dorothy Corey

Where Can It Be? by Ann Jonas

** Available in Spanish*

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

NOTE: Your child's brain is constantly growing and changing and the all of the activities in these cards will support that growth in one way or another. Look for the Cognitive Domain symbol as you read through the cards. You will find that most of the activities support the cognitive skills listed above.

Remember Me

Young children learn to think about objects or people who are out of sight.

ACTIVITIES

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- As your child learns to think about you when you are out of sight, separations may be unsettling for both of you. You can prepare your child for these separations by talking about what will happen. For example, "Mama is going to go to the store for a bit. But I am going to come back soon. When I do, we can read a book together!"
- For toddlers and preschoolers, it can be helpful to talk about familiar people even when they are not around. Children at these ages are learning that people continue to exist even when they cannot be seen.

REFLECTIONS

- Does your child have a special hiding place for favorite objects? If not, create and decorate a treasure chest out of an old box, tote bag, or paper bag.



BABIES

Older babies begin to understand that objects and people still exist even when they are out of view. Play Peek-A-Boo with your baby. Hide your face behind a blanket and ask, "Where did I go?" Remove the blanket and say, "Peek- A -Boo!" This can also be done by hiding a favorite toy under a blanket and asking, "Where did it go?"



TODDLERS

Toddlers are beginning to learn where things are kept and can get them when needed.

When your child wants something, you can ask, "Where do we keep that?" Then you can go and look together. This will help your child develop the ability use memory to solve problems.



PRESCHOOLERS

Your preschooler uses memory and thinking skills to solve simple problems, like how to find a missing toy, where to find a piece of clothing or how to put a puzzle together.

Another way to develop thinking skills is to talk about every day events to help your child remember experiences in the correct order. For example, "Remember when we went to the park? What different things did we do?" Use descriptive words to recall details.

Problem Solvers!

Young children develop cognitive skills that help them respond to changes and solve problems.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Even very young babies are problem solvers. They learn to use eye contact and vocal sounds to draw attention from others. When they are old enough to grab toys, they often enjoy throwing them to see what happens or banging them on the floor or a table. Help your child to explore and solve “problems,” like “What sound does this toy make when I squeeze it or bang it?” or “I want to put that toy in my mouth, but can’t reach it.” Pay attention to your baby’s cues, like crying or grunting, and see if you can connect those sounds to a “problem” your baby is trying to solve, like “I’m hungry,” or “I want someone to come play with me!”



TODDLERS

Toddlers become very interested in solving their own problems. This means they like playing with toys or real items that pop up or make a sound when a button is pressed. They also like to solve “problems” like putting things together and pulling apart or finding out how things work, like the TV remote or the sink faucet. Give your child lots of opportunities to solve these kinds of problems. Encourage your child to do things independently, like turning the water on and off at bath time, helping to buckle or unbuckle a high chair or car seat, or trying to match lids with the correct containers.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers are learning to use what they know to help plan for and solve problems. They begin to think about how things happen in their play and make changes. When you play with your preschooler, point out “problems” like blocks that will not balance, or toys that sink to the bottom of the tub, or not having enough space to fit toys in a box. Ask your child to help you make a plan to solve the problem and then try it together. Then talk about why it did or did not work.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Remember to be patient when children are trying to solve problems. Children often do things over and over again to see what happens. For example, pushing a cup off the high chair or knocking a tower of blocks over. They also may try lots of things that don’t work before finding out what does work. They learn just as much through the “wrong” ways as they do the “right” ways. Encourage all attempts and give support if your child appears to get frustrated.
- Toddlers may be very determined to solve their own “problems.” But they also may not yet have the skills they need to solve the problems on their own. They are also still learning how to ask for help when they need it. Allow your toddler to try doing some things independently, but pay attention to whether help is needed and offer to help with some or all of the task.
- Toddlers and preschoolers enjoy sorting and comparing objects. Some “problems” children like to solve include putting things into different piles, or picking all of the things out of a pile that are in their favorite color or colors. Older children often enjoy making patterns with objects, which is another way of sorting and comparing.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about some problems you encounter each day—simple things that may be interesting to your child. For example, making sure everyone gets the same number of crackers for snack or making more room on a shelf for books. What are some problems you could talk about with your child and work together to solve?

MATHEMATICS

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

1, 2 Buckle My Shoe by Anna Grossnickle Hines
Color Zoo by Lois Ehlert
Good Night Gorilla by Peggy Rathman
The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle*
My Numbers/Mis Numeros by Rebecca Emberley
Baby Bear Sees Blue by Ashley Wolff
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
by Bill Martin Jr.*

PRESCHOOLERS

Who Sank the Boat? by Pamela Allen
Ten Black Dots by Donald Crews*
Anno's Counting Book by Mitsumasa Anno
The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins
Five Creatures by Emily Jenkins
The Three Bears by James Marshall*
The Line Up Book by Marisabina Russo
Each Orange Had 8 Slices by Paul Giganti
One Hundred Hungry Ants by Elinor Pinczes
How Many Jelly Beans? by Andrea Menotti

* Available in Spanish

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

Children begin learning about math ideas as early as their first year of life.

And while it may not seem obvious, many of children's early experiences encourage them to think about math. For very young children, math is more about observing the world and playing with interesting objects, and less about adding and subtracting. Having fun with math encourages children to be excited about and interested in learning about math.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Number Sense & Quantities: Children recognize numbers and develop counting skills. They learn that numbers can be used to figure out "how many."

Number Relationships & Operations: Children learn to use numbers to compare quantities and solve problems.

Classification & Patterning: Children learn to sort and organize objects by thinking about how things are the same or different.

Measurement, Comparison & Ordering: Children learn to measure and compare objects by length, height, weight, and volume.

Geometry and Spatial Sense: Children learn to label and talk about shapes and use what they know about shapes to solve problems. They learn to think about how to move objects to fit them together or fit them in specific spaces.



Having Fun with Shapes

Young children explore different shapes and find shapes in the world around them.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies begin learning about shapes by touching objects and putting them in their mouths. Provide your child with toys that come in different shapes and sizes, with different angles or points. Talk with your baby about what toys look and feel like, and how they are the same or different.



TODDLERS

Children this age will start to find shapes in their environment—in books and pictures, on food containers, or in the grocery store. Point out and label shapes for your child when you see them. When you play together, talk about what shapes are like (e.g., balls are round and smooth, boxes have straight sides and points, etc.).

Give your child opportunities to try to fit shapes into different places. You can use puzzles, shape sorters, different sized containers, or nesting cups.



PRESCHOOLERS

Help your child to think about what makes shapes the same or different. You can sort shapes by how many sides they have or how many points they have. Put shapes together to make new shapes. For example, sometimes two triangles make a rectangle or square. You can cut a cereal box into different shapes and then your child can put them together in different ways to make different things.

MATHEMATICS

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- We see shapes every day, everywhere we go. When you see shapes, describe them – their colors, how many sides they have, what they look like when we turn or spin them, etc.
- Lots of things come in very interesting shapes and sizes. Help your child to notice and describe things that are interesting, like the shapes of the food you are eating (peas are round like a ball, pasta is a tube, etc.), or the shape of leaves you find on a walk (long, short, fat, skinny, pointy or round spots, etc.).

REFLECTIONS

- Look around you and write down the shapes you see with your preschooler. How would you describe them? How are they the same or different?

Things That Go Together

Young children think about and describe how things are the same or different and organize materials by what they have in common.

ACTIVITIES

MATHEMATICS

Additional Domains:



BABIES

Very young children learn about how things go together by looking at them, touching them, or putting them in their mouths. As your child plays with toys, talk about how they look or feel, how they are the same or different.



TODDLERS

Children at this age enjoy putting things together that go together. Help your child to match things that go together, like socks or shoes, mommy and baby animals, or crayons that are the same colors.

Use describing words when you work together to organize things. When you put the laundry away, tell your child that socks go in one drawer and shirts go in another drawer. Ask your child to help clean up by putting all of the cars in one bin and all of the balls in another bin.



PRESCHOOLERS

Older children enjoy figuring out on their own how things should go together. They like to organize their toys in a way that makes sense to them and sometimes explain their reasoning.

You can use everyday materials, like coins or crayons or a box of bottle caps to help your child think about how items are the same or different and how they can be sorted.

TIPS

- Use describing language when talking about things that are the same or different. For example, "I am using a big spoon and plate, and you are using a little spoon and plate." or "We are both wearing clothes today that have red in them."
- Provide children with opportunities to sort and match everyday objects and materials, like putting away silverware, matching socks when the laundry is clean, putting away toys into organized bins, etc.
- Look for and point out patterns that you see, like red and blue stripes on a shirt, short and tall flowers lined up in a picture book, or different colored squares on a carpet.

REFLECTIONS

- What happened when you tried these activities? What did you learn about your child? Use the back of this card to write down some additional ways your child can help sort and organize. Write down some ways your child can help you organize things in your home.

Filling and Emptying

Young children explore and begin to understand measurement ideas like heavy and light, empty and full, more and less.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Infants begin learning about measurement ideas when they play with different sized objects and fill and empty containers. During bath time, give your child different sized containers to play filling and dumping with. You can also talk with your baby about weights, quantities and volumes during every day activities. For example, pouring milk, carrying a heavy diaper bag, or filling a plate with more.



TODDLERS

Children at this age love to fill and empty and build and knock down. They are also very interested in figuring out where things fit, like doing puzzles or trying to squeeze big toys into small containers. Give your child lots of opportunities to fill and empty containers or baskets of varying sizes, with things your child is interested in. Explore what kinds of objects fit into different spaces or fit inside each other. You can use cups or boxes that come in different sizes where the small ones fit into the larger ones.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers are interested in comparing things that are heavy or light, full or empty. Ask your child to use sand or water to try and fill several different containers to the same height. You can also ask your child to count as you fill a bucket together using a small container or cup. How many cups does it take to fill the bucket? Count again as you use a large container to fill the same bucket and compare the results. Ask your child to describe things to you using measurement language. For example, “Are these the same size or different? How can you tell?” or “How did you know that shape would fit in that space?”

MATHEMATICS

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Use describing language throughout the day as you play and run errands or do chores. For example “I will carry this grocery bag because it’s heavy. You can carry this one because it’s light.” Or, “We need to use 4 cups of water to make the pasta.” Or, “You made a really tall tower! Now I’m going to make one that is just as tall. Can you help me?”
- Toddlers begin to use the word “more” very often! This shows that they understand something about measurement. They will also begin to notice when things are very different in size and may refer to small things as “babies.” Use your hands when describing things that are really big or small or tall or short.
- Many household materials are great for exploring measurement, like clean and empty juice or milk containers, cereal boxes, yogurt cups, etc. Fill an empty drawer or cabinet in the kitchen that has different containers with lids that match, or different sized food boxes. Allow your child to explore and figure out what fits together.

REFLECTIONS

- Make a list of some of the ways you use measurement throughout the day. Think about how you can measure together and ask your child to help.

Playing with Numbers

Young children use numbers in all kinds of ways.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Infants are born ready to learn about numbers! It is never too early to start counting with your child. Babies like it when you make a game out of counting fingers and toes or count how many pieces of cereal or spoons of food they eat. Another way they begin to think about number ideas is by holding objects. Once they are able, give them a toy to hold in each hand.



TODDLERS

Children at this age are very interested in numbers and counting. Take time with your child to count during chores and errands or during play. Sing number songs together and encourage your child to count. Another way you can help your child to think about numbers is to fill and empty containers or build towers one block at a time. Use describing words like “more” and “less” and “all gone.” These are the first ideas children have about addition and subtraction.



PRESCHOOLERS

This is a great time to have fun with numbers, as your child is beginning to understand that they can be used for more than just counting. They can use them to find out answers to questions and solve problems. Ask your child to compare groups of objects—which has more or less? Before you go to the grocery store, ask your child to write down how many apples (or other fruit) you will need in order to give one to each member of the family. When you are at the grocery store, ask your child to help you count.

MATHEMATICS

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- It's important to keep counting fun! Count things children are interested in. Use counting for a purpose – to find out how many you need of something or who has more.
- Use numbers to compare and solve problems – I want to make a tower as tall as yours. How many blocks do I need?
- You can help your child to read and write numbers and understand that the number means a certain amount. Play number games – roll dice or use a number card and then move that many spaces. Or use numbers to make shopping lists together.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about the ways you measure, and can measure together. For example, counting the number of footsteps it takes you to get to the door, or keeping a growth chart on the wall.



Children are scientists from the moment they are born. They use their senses to observe and collect information about the world around them. As they get older, they become better at making predictions and trying to solve problems. Children are naturally interested in living things and interesting materials. It is important to encourage them to explore and think about what they see, to ask lots of questions, and to figure out how to find the answers.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Scientific Inquiry: Children learn to explore and investigate ideas they are interested in, to collect information, and to think and talk about their ideas.

Knowledge of Science Concepts: Children explore living and non-living things and materials that are both man-made and made by nature.

SCIENCE

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Where is Baby's Belly Button *by Karen Katz*
Goodnight Gorilla *by Peggy Rathman**
Dear Zoo *by Rod Campbell*
Haiku Baby *by Betsy Snyder*
I See *by Rachel Isadora*
What Can You Do In The Snow? *by Anna Grossnickle*

PRESCHOOLERS

Dig Wait Listen *by April Pulley Sayre*
In the Woods: Who's Been Here?
by Lindsay Barrett George
Raccoon on His Own *by Jim Arnosky*
Under Ground *by Denise Fleming*
I Love Bugs *by Philemon Sturges*
Alexander and the Wind Up Mouse *by Leo Lionni*
Animals Should Definitely NOT Wear Clothing
by Judy and Ronald Barrett
Up, Down and Around *by Katherine Ayres*
My Five Senses *by Alike**
Seven Blind Mice *by Ed Young**

** Available in Spanish*

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

Explore, Discuss, Document

Encourage your child to observe and explore interesting things, to talk about them, and to share what they have learned.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Provide interesting things to look at and play with, like toys or materials that have different textures (soft, hard, smooth, rough), different shapes, and different sounds.

Talk to your child about how things look, feel, and sound. Encourage you baby to shake, bang, and pick up or drop toys to see what happens.



TODDLERS

Everything is exciting for toddlers! They love to point out what they know and ask you to label things they don't know. Take advantage of your child's natural curiosity by allowing time to stop, look, and listen. Ask your child to tell you about what is seen or heard. Share in the excitement and expand on the descriptions (e.g., "Yes! I see the bird! He's sitting on top of the fence! I can hear him chirping!")



PRESCHOOLERS

Older children become very good at observing things and then telling you what they think about what they know. Encourage your child to share ideas—even if they do not make a lot of sense! Give your preschooler a notebook to take on walks together. You and your child can draw pictures or write words describing what you observe.

SCIENCE

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Babies learn a lot about their world by putting things in their mouths. This is how babies explore toys. Be sure to always watch babies as they play, and keep small toys and hazardous materials out of reach!
- Make an "exploration box" that has different types of objects and materials in it. Change the materials often, so there are always new things to find. Materials can include leaves or sticks, interesting toys or objects, stickers, pipe cleaners, play dough, etc.
- Help your child to become aware of the world using all of five senses. Talk about what your child sees, hears, feels, smells or tastes. Use describing words that may be new to your child.
- Preschoolers can make simple predictions about effects or results of their actions. Have your child guess what will happen if the big blocks are piled on top of the little blocks. Then have your child try it.

REFLECTIONS

- What opportunities for exploration and investigation are available in your neighborhood? For example, taking a nature walk, visiting a construction site, watching the garbage truck or observing airplanes, boats and buses. Use the back of this card to write down the things your child expresses interest in and some questions you can ask.

Exploring Nature

Encourage your child to explore and think about things that are living, non-living, man-made or naturally occurring materials.

ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE

Additional Domains:



BABIES

Infants are very observant of the world around them and they depend on adults to help them make connections and label what they observe. When you are outside, point out the things in nature that you observe, like birds flying by, trees and flowers, dogs barking, or the wind blowing the leaves. Older babies enjoy touching some natural objects, like leaves, grass, flowers, etc.



TODDLERS

Children at this age become very aware of and interested in nature. Their main way of exploring nature is through their senses. Encourage them to touch, smell, taste and listen as they explore. Point out and name objects you see, like flowers and bugs. When you are out for a walk or at the park, allow your child to stop and look at things that are interesting, like weeds growing between cracks in the sidewalk, dogs walking across the street, or butterflies floating by. Use words to describe what your child notices and share in the excitement.



PRESCHOOLERS

Older children become aware of the fact that things are either living or non-living. They develop an interest in what things need to grow. Ask your child to think about what both plants and people need to grow. Talk about non-living things like rocks and dirt that do not need food, water, and light and how they are similar or different. Plants are a great way to teach children about how things grow. You can either buy a plant or plant seeds and make a plan together for helping the plant to grow.

TIPS

- Keep a box in your house or outside where your child can collect things from nature. Materials that may appear boring or typical to you might be very exciting to your child. Take the time to look through the box together. Talk about the ways materials are the same or different, how they feel, or where they came from.
- Talk with your child about changes in the. For example, dark clouds warn us that rain might be coming. The wind getting stronger will make the trees move. Or, when it gets colder, it is important to put on a coat before going outside. You can talk about how much rain or snow fell or point out the frost on the grass or ice on the car windshield.
- Think about ways you can explore nature in your own neighborhood. Even in cities, there are parks with squirrels and birds, and flowers and trees. To find other ways to explore nature within your community see the Resources section of these cards.

REFLECTIONS

- What are your favorite things to do in nature? Do you have a favorite season because of the weather? Think about ways you can share your interests with your child.



For young children, social studies is about learning where they fit within their families and communities.

Children also develop skills that allow them to relate to the world around them. These skills include recognizing and responding to the ways people are the same or different and beginning to understand ideas of past, present and future.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Self, Family, and Community: Children learn about their families and communities. Children begin to understand social roles and responsibilities and learn to recognize and respect how people are the same or different.

History and Geography: Children understand the concepts of time (past, present, and future) and place.

SOCIAL STUDIES

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too? by Eric Carle*
Everywhere Babies by Susan Meyers
I Read Signs by Tana Hoban
Ten, Nine, Eight by Molly Bang*
Time for Bed by Mem Fox*
Peekaboo Morning and Peekaboo Bedtime by Rachel Isadora
Summer Days and Nights by Wong Herbert Yee

PRESCHOOLERS

Grandpa's Corner Store by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan
Houses and Homes by Ann Morris
All in A Day by Cynthia Rylant
Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born by Jamie Lee Curtis
On the Town by Judith Caseley
One Lighthouse, One Moon by Anita Lobel
The Big Green Pocketbook by Candice Ransom
Listen, Listen by Phyllis Gershator
Bear's Busy Family by Stella Blackstone*
What Brothers Do Best by Laura Numeroff
The Great Big Book of Families by Mary Hoffman
Kevin and His Dad by Irene Smalls
Mama Do You Love Me? by Barbara Joosse
Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See? by Eric Carle*

* Available in Spanish

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

Me, My Family and My Community

Children gain awareness of how they relate to their family and community. As young children grow older, they begin to recognize and gain an appreciation of and respect for differences.

ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL STUDIES

Additional Domains:



BABIES

Babies will be most interested in learning about themselves as well as close caregivers. They learn about themselves by putting their hands and fingers in their mouths or playing with their toes. They also enjoy holding hands or fingers of familiar people or being held by a favorite adult. When your baby recognizes a familiar adult, acknowledge your baby's reaction to the caregiver. You can also help your baby learn about how people are the same or different by making comments like, "You don't like peas but mommy likes peas" or "You have a small nose and I have a big nose."



TODDLERS

Toddlers begin to learn about rules by trying to do things they see adults do. For example, sweeping, picking up toys or sorting the laundry. They also begin to understand they are a member of a larger family and learn roles within the family. Give your child opportunities to do "pretend play." Your child will enjoy pretending to talk on the phone, order at a restaurant, dress up like daddy or give a bottle to a baby doll.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers begin to notice similarities and differences among people more often. Your child may begin to ask more questions and talk about people who are different. This is a great time to begin talking about individual differences, family, culture and community with your child. You can tell your child stories about your family, and talk about family traditions. Encourage your child to draw a picture of your house, family or friends. You can even make a simple map together of your neighborhood and label the different places that are important to your child and family, like school, grocery store, and the park.

TIPS

- Help your child make an "All About Me" poster. You will need a piece of cardboard, a paper bag, or a piece of paper to get started. Help your child pick out a picture or draw a self-portrait. Your preschooler may pick out pictures from magazines, add stickers, or draw pictures. Glue or tape the pictures onto the posters. Have your preschooler share the poster with your family.
- Children will want to re-enact roles they see every day. Your child may go through your closet and use your clothes and accessories in pretend play. For example, shoes, purses or ties.

REFLECTIONS

- What were some of your favorite childhood activities (trips, hobbies or movies)? Are these things you can do with your child?

Tick Tock Around The Block

Young children begin to understand the concept of time (past, present, and future).

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies learn about familiar routines starting at birth. Babies will begin to develop a schedule based on their needs. You can help with this by having consistent routines and by talking about the sequence of events as they happen. For example, “You just woke up, let’s see if you need a diaper change.”, or “After your nap, we will go for a walk.”



TODDLERS

Toddlers begin to learn more about the passing of time. They also learn about where familiar things are—for example, where mommy keeps her car keys or what the sign is that we stop at every day on our way to childcare. In everyday routines, you can use new words like “not now” or “later” to reference time. You can also talk about where familiar objects are, for example “The diaper bag is on top of the table” or “Can you get your teddy bear from the couch”.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers develop a simple understanding of the seasons, the passing days and concepts of “today” and “tomorrow.” They learn to talk about things that have happened in the past, like a birthday or special trip to the beach or zoo, but they may still have trouble understanding what “next week” or “in a few days” mean. Talk to your preschooler about what you will be doing during the coming weekend, and what you did last weekend. When getting dressed for the day, you can talk about the weather and the seasons. For example, “You need to wear your coat today because it is winter and cold” or “Do you think we will need to wear our coats in the summer?”

SOCIAL STUDIES

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- When choosing activities, let your child make decisions whenever possible. Decide together what you will do first, and what is next.
- You can help your child begin to understand time and make moving from one part of the day to the next by making a picture schedule. For older toddlers and preschoolers, take pictures of your child doing daily routines, like eating breakfast, getting dressed, brushing teeth, and driving to school. Print out the pictures and let your child put them in order. If your child has trouble moving from one activity to the next, you can help by pointing out the next picture and talking about it. For example, “When you are done getting dressed, you are going to brush your teeth.”
- Use these pictures to make a picture schedule. It will help your child stay on task and also provide some guidance as to what comes next. Your child will gain a sense of ownership and transition easily from one activity to the next.

REFLECTIONS

- What fun activities do you have planned that you could talk to your child about? For example, apple picking, a trip to the beach, or visiting grandma.



Music, movement, drama, and visual arts encourage children to express themselves in fun and unique ways.

Through the arts, children discover how to communicate with words, art, music and play. When children participate in the creative arts, it helps them use creativity and imagination in other areas of learning.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Experimenting and participating in the Creative Arts: Encouraging children to experiment and participate in the creative arts will help them discover new ways to communicate with the world around them.

CREATIVE ARTS

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Barnyard Dance by Sandra Boynton

Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Abdreae

Rap A Tap Tap by Leo and Diane Dillon

Mouse Paint by Ellen Walsh*

Building a House by Byron Barton

PRESCHOOLERS

Ben's Trumpet by Rachel Isadora

The Art Lesson by Tomie DePaola*

David's Drawings by Cathryn Falwell*

Dog Loves Drawing by Louise Yates

Max Found Two Sticks by Brian Pinkney

Mama Don't Allow by Thacher Hurd

The Artist Who Painted a Blue Horse by Eric Carle*

Bea at Ballet by Rachel Isadora

Dreaming Up: A Celebration of Building by Christy Hale

Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin by Lloyd Moss

* Available in Spanish

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

Music, Music Everywhere!

Young children increasingly begin to develop an appreciation of music and songs.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies begin communicating using sound as soon as they are born! Familiar sounds are comforting to babies, like mommy humming or singing a song, or a CD or music player with the same few songs repeating.

Take opportunities to sing to or play music for your child: in the tub, during meal times, playtime, and bedtimes. Encourage your baby to move arms and legs or babble along to the tune.



TODDLERS

Toddlers use music for comfort and fun. They enjoy singing a favorite song or listening to a song before bedtime. Encourage your toddler to clap, dance, hum, or sing along with you. Leave out a word or two and encourage your child to fill in the missing words to the song.

Pretend you are part of a marching band. Lead the parade and have your child lead or follow along behind you. Make your own instruments or pretend to play in your very own band. Add some dance moves as you play.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers enjoy making music for others. They are better able to use their bodies to perform music and can tap a drum and march at the same time while listening to songs they know. Encourage your preschooler to create made up songs and play or sing them for the family. You can sing and make music together. Think about props you can use to make music and to put on a show, like dress up clothes, a water bottle for a microphone, or a rug as a stage.

CREATIVE ARTS

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Share your favorite music with your child, and play different kinds of music too to find out what your child likes. Music and dance have physical benefits and help children learn rhythm, language, listening skills, mathematics and more.
- Take a look at items in your kitchen. What could you use for a musical instrument? Wooden spoons and plastic bowls make wonderful noisemakers. Play with the different sounds by using different sized bowls or cups as drums and plastic or wood spoons. Depending on what you use, how does the sound change?
- You can also use other items around the house like a tissue box and rubber bands to make a guitar or a coffee can with a lid could be used as a drum.

REFLECTIONS

- Are there types of new music you can listen to together? What songs do you and your child enjoy together? Make a list on the back of this card.

Building and Creating

Young children enjoy participating in creative arts by using different materials to build and create.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies enjoy touching, feeling, and looking at materials that come in different textures and colors. They like things that are soft, bumpy, crinkly, or squishy. They also like to look at things that are brightly colored or sparkling. You can use old water bottles and fill them with food coloring, glitter and buttons. Glue the cap on and let your baby look at the colors and movement. Show your baby colorful, contrasting pictures. You can also provide opportunities for your baby to feel a variety of textures, for example, a soft feather or fine sandpaper.



TODDLERS

Toddlers love to build their own artistic creations. They enjoy using simple materials to build and create, like scrap paper to tear, finger paints, or play dough. Together, you can build with clay or play dough. You can be creative and add food coloring, vanilla extract or other safe scents. You can also find things around your home that can be used as simple tools. For example, plastic cookie cutters, spoons, or a small rolling pin.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers love to build structures. This kind of construction can last over several days. Preschoolers may even build something as tall as they are or big enough to climb inside. Take a look in your recycle bin to see what other containers and boxes your child could use to create with, like milk jugs, plastic cups, paper towels rolls, or cardboard boxes. In addition, you can use other household items like craft sticks, paper towel rolls, wood scraps, tape and clay, or items from outside like leaves and twigs. Allow your child to build something over several days, and maybe even take a day or two to paint or decorate.

CREATIVE ARTS

Additional Domains:



TIPS

Using art materials to build and create can sometimes get messy. Make sure your child wears something that can get messy, put newspaper or tablecloth down, and do the activities by a sink or keep paper towels close by. If possible, choose one space in your house where art activities happen.

If possible, make a space in your home where you can save the structure your child creates, so it can be continued at another time.

Clay Recipe—What you Need:

- 2 cups Baking Soda
- 1 cup corn starch
- 1-1/4 cups cold water (can add food coloring to color clay)

Store in a plastic container or bag for up to one week.

When you are done creating, allow the clay to dry and have your child color or paint the creation.

REFLECTIONS

Do you have a special place for creating and building? If not, what can you use to create one? This can be as simple as a tablecloth put on one end of the dining room table and a box to hold supplies.

Appreciating Art

Young children develop an appreciation for the creative arts.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Babies enjoy looking at interesting patterns and colors as well as pictures and art. Provide pictures for your baby to look at—whether they are bright pictures from a board book or paintings at a local museum. You can also tear pictures from a magazine and tape them to the wall, ceiling or the side of a shelf—wherever your baby can see them.



TODDLERS

Toddlers enjoy looking at and sharing art they have made. It's important to show your appreciation of art by praising your toddlers efforts. Look at the art your child has made and use words to describe it. For example, describe the colors, shades, textures or shapes. Save room on a wall, the refrigerator or a window where you can hang the art for the family to enjoy.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers are developing their own sense of appreciation for the arts. This includes their favorite colors, art materials and types of pictures and art to look at. They are getting better at expressing what they like or don't like. Encourage your child to share a favorite picture or piece of art and describe what is special about it. If it is a piece of artwork, your child has created write down the description and encourage your child to think of a title. Create a family museum that includes art done by each family member. Find a special place to display the art. Take time to describe and appreciate each other's creations.

CREATIVE ARTS

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Developing an appreciation for the creative arts also includes listening to, moving to and creating a variety of music; participating in a plays; and stopping to enjoy a sculpture in the park or mural on a building.
- Create an Art Box
Take a box, laundry basket or bin and collect materials from around your house that your child might use for art exploration. Make sure you include a tablecloth for messy projects. Here are a few ideas to get started:
 - For babies – Finger paints, paint brushes, shaving cream, plastic bowls, large crayons, old cards, felt, paper towel rolls, crayons
 - For toddlers – colored chalk, glue sticks, paper, stamp pads, bingo markers, cloth scraps, safety scissors, water colors
 - For preschoolers – colored pencils, rulers, yarn, cotton balls, craft sticks

REFLECTIONS

- What types of art do you like? What are the opportunities for you and your family to enjoy the arts in your community?

Create Your Own

Think about activities that you can create and do on your own. Use the following cards to record your activities and create personal Fun Family Activity Cards. Feel free to print as many additional blank cards as needed for your activities.

ACTIVITY TITLE _____

ACTIVITY GOAL _____

DOMAIN _____

SUB-DOMAINS _____

BABIES



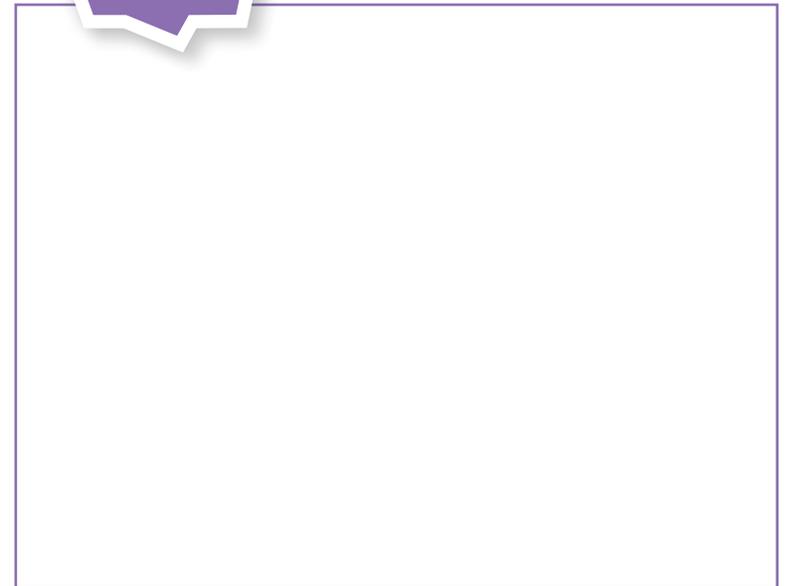
TODDLERS



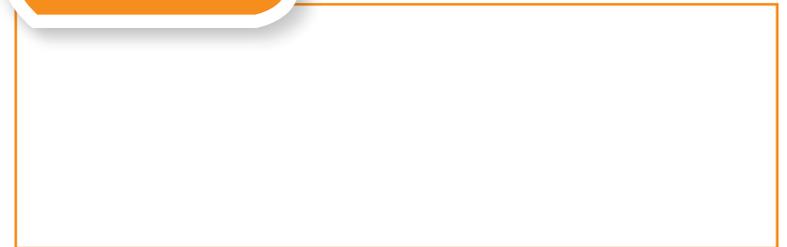
PRESCHOOLERS



TIPS

A large, empty rectangular box with a purple border, intended for writing tips.

REFLECTIONS

A large, empty rectangular box with an orange border, intended for writing reflections.

Create Your Own

Think about activities that you can create and do on your own. Use the following cards to record your activities and create personal Fun Family Activity Cards. Feel free to print as many additional blank cards as needed for your activities.

ACTIVITY TITLE _____

ACTIVITY GOAL _____

DOMAIN _____

SUB-DOMAINS _____

BABIES

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TODDLERS

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PRESCHOOLERS

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Resources for Families

STATE DEPARTMENT

RESPONSIBILITIES

CONTACT INFORMATION

RI Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)

DCYF is the state agency responsible for licensing child day care centers, family child care homes, and school-age programs to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children while in care outside of their home. If you are interested in becoming a family child care provider or opening a child care center in Rhode Island.

101 Friendship Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 528-3624
<http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/>

RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE)

RIDE establishes standards and approves community-based preschool and kindergarten programs to ensure developmentally appropriate early development and learning experiences.

255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 222-4600
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/>

RI Department of Health

The RI Department of Health is a diverse and interactive state agency with broad-ranging public health responsibilities. The RI Department of Health coordinates statewide public health activities.

3 Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 222-5960
<http://www.health.state.ri.us/>

RI Department of Human Services (DHS)

DHS manages the Child Care Assistance Program which subsidizes child care for low-income, working families, and the Early Intervention Program which promotes the growth and development of infants and toddlers who have a developmental disability or delay in one or more areas. DHS also funds and supports several local child care quality projects.

600 New London Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920
(401) 462-5300
<http://www.dhs.ri.gov/>

Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)

EOHHS runs the Early Intervention Program which promotes the growth and development of infants and toddlers who have a developmental disability or delay in one or more areas. Developmental disabilities or delays can affect a child's speech, physical ability, or social skills. Children referred to the Early Intervention Program receive a comprehensive developmental evaluation to determine if they are eligible.

74 West Road
Cranston, RI 02920
(401) 462-0316
<http://www.eohhs.ri.gov>

USING THE FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY CARDS WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

The Fun Family Activity Cards have been developed for use by all children. The activities have been developed with information about broad ages, rather than specific developmental months. As a result, activities may need to be adapted for individual children, particularly those with disabilities. Parents are encouraged to select and adapt activities for their child as needed. Use the cards to reflect on and take note of your child's development. Should you have concerns about your child's development refer to your health care provider or contact the RI Department of Health, listed in the Resources for Families section of the cards.