



## Born Learning Tips: 9 – 18 Months

The Child Care Council of Westchester Inc. is pleased to partner with United Way of Westchester and Putnam, Inc. on *Born Learning*, an innovative public engagement campaign that helps parents, caregivers and communities create quality early learning opportunities for young children.

*Born Learning* is designed as a tool for long-lasting community change that supports young children. It has three cornerstones:

- **Awareness:** Providing important information about how young children learn
- **Education:** Providing easy, fun action steps that parents, grandparents and caregivers can use very day
- **Action:** Providing a visible platform for public policy and action

The goal of *Born Learning* is to inspire everyone who impacts young children to make the best possible decision to boost school readiness. *Born Learning* provides the tools to make long-lasting community change.

## Creating Regular Routines

### Connection to learning

Routines work wonders. Creating regular routines helps your child learn what to expect at various times. It is easy to establish regular routines with everyday activities such as feeding, sleeping, bathing and playtime. Regular routines provide comfort to children, help them feel safe and secure, and make being a parent a little easier. Here are some ways to create regular routines for young children:

### For your older baby (9 – 18 months)

Do things in order and talk about what you are doing. Older babies can help you as you (for instance) dress them: "First we put on a diaper, then an undershirt, then a shirt. Socks go on before shoes. Once we are dressed for the inside, we can put on our coats to go outside." Your older baby will start to learn what to expect and what comes before something else.

## Learning on the Go - Traveling in the Car

### Connection to learning

Are we there yet? Use the time in the car to enhance your child's natural curiosity and find ways to interact and connect with your child. What interests your child on car trips? Is it looking for signs that you are almost home or it is talking while you are together? Is it repeating new or silly words or sounds? Is it saying nursery rhymes, singing or watching for when the traffic lights change? Rather than finding toys to amuse and distract your child, use driving time to connect and enjoy being together. Here are some ways to do that:

### For your older baby (9 - 18 months)

Think of yourself as your child's greatest plaything. Your voice, your face, the things you do and your actions are the things that intrigue him/her the most. Children have a natural curiosity for the things humans do. Remember, you and your time are the most valuable gifts you can give to your child. Talk to your older baby and as they 'babble' back to you, pronounce their words correctly. This helps them remember and speak the correct words.



## **Making the Most of Meal Times**

### **Connection to learning**

Studies show that meals are one of the most important times to be together as a family. Research on literacy development showed that families who interacted with each other at meal times were more likely to have children with better literacy skills in the school-age years. Family mealtime interaction took place when caregivers extended children's interests, which helped children use language to analyze, sequence, and predict while helping children appreciate the joy of language.

### **For your older baby (9-18 months)**

As you talk to your older baby about the food you are preparing, listen to the sounds and words he/she tries to say. Try to determine what your older baby is trying to communicate and talk to him/her about the food and meal.

### **Celebrate Spring: Talk About It!**

### **Connection to learning**

Young children learn with all their senses: sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste. Spring begs us to share its delights with children - to help them see yellow daffodils & purple crocuses, smell lilacs, feel soft new grass, and listen to robins chirping. Sharing words about spring is a gift you give to your child.

### **For your older baby (9 - 18 months)**

Hold your older baby up and let him/her bat at leaves on trees. Let your baby crawl on the grass. Talk with your baby about what s/he is looking at, or touching: "that yellow flower is a dandelion." Babies this age learn by putting everything in their mouths, so watch carefully, and bring along things your baby can chew on, like rattles and teething rings.

## **Taking a Walk**

### **Connection to learning**

Taking a walk is good exercise for you and your child, plus it can also be a special time together. Focus on the present moment and being with your child, not on all of the things you have to do when you get back. Look at the walk through your child's eyes. How might a bug or a big crack in the sidewalk look to your child? What sounds do cars or birds make? Is the sun shining? Is it cloudy, warm or cold?

### **For your older baby (9-18 months)**

Your older baby may want to reach out and touch - the grass, flowers, rocks. Be sure you talk to your child about his/her interests. Be sure to tell him/her the color of each flower and let your child smell the fragrant aromas. You can make a game out of smelling the flowers that is sure to delight your child.

## **Activities to Promote Literacy**

### **Connection to learning**

Talking and listening, and reading and writing provide a lifetime of enjoyment. Catching up with family and friends through phone calls or letters, talking about your day with a loved one, and reading a good book or daily newspaper all bring pleasure to our lives. Unfortunately, current research suggests that young children may not be having the early learning experiences they need to become skilled with the tools of literacy: talking and listening, and reading and writing. All of the below activities will inspire children's delight and mastery in the tools of literacy.



### **For your older baby (9-18 months)**

Your older baby will follow your gaze and start to use gestures to alert you to her/his needs and interests. In this age range, your older baby plays with sounds and begins to recognize labels. S/he will engage in turn-taking, saying a sound that will be repeated after you say it. Name all objects your older baby points to and encourage her/him to say the words.

### **Wading Pool Play**

Note: This tip sheet is for families to use at home. Wading pools are not allowed in child care settings.

#### **Connection to learning**

Besides being cool on a hot June day, water play is full of learning opportunities. You can give children new words as they play with water: wet/dry, empty/full, float/sink, etc. When you offer measuring cups and different sized bottles for children to empty and fill, you promote fine motor skills needed for writing.

Children can drown in 2" of water. Keep your eyes and your attention on water play at all times. NEVER leave a child alone.

### **For your older baby (9-18 months)**

Wading pool safety is especially important with your older baby. He's learning to stand, sit, crawl and walk, so get in the pool with him so he can practice his new skills and you can catch him if he slips.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

#### **Connection to learning**

Take your child to visit the person or program where you'll be leaving him so the caregiver isn't a complete stranger. Never leave without telling your child. Always say goodbye, even though she may cry. This helps her trust you and become secure. Make up a "goodbye" routine you follow every day, such as a hug, then blown kisses. This helps your child know what to expect.

### **For your older baby (9-18 months)**

Fear of strangers is common. With baby in your lap, suggest that the "stranger" talk with you while holding a toy the baby can reach. Playing with the toy gives the baby time and space to warm up.

### **Helping Your Children Learn**

#### **Connection to learning**

Helping your children learn is easy. Creating an environment that helps your child grow and explore can be an exciting time for both parent and child. Here are some ways to help make your environment conducive to helping your children learn.

### **For your older baby (9-18 months)**

Mobile infants still use their senses to learn and will creep, crawl, pull themselves up and maybe even waddle. Be sure to provide lots of safe floor space to move on, and sturdy things to pull themselves up on. Lock away any 'no-no' that the infant can reach. Continue talking to your older baby using full sentences and the correct words for all items. As your older baby learns how to talk, he/she needs to hear more and more words.

### **Making Grocery Shopping Fun**

#### **Connection to learning**

Ensuring you and your child are prepared and ready for that shopping trip helps both of you have a more enjoyable time. Here are some ways to help make your trip to the grocery store fun and a



learning opportunity for your child. When grocery shopping with children of all ages, be sure you bring a toy or book that will keep your child busy and learning while you shop. Plan trips when your child is rested and not hungry.

**For your older baby (9 – 18 months)**

Show your baby an item, then talk about it. Pick up a pear and say “Do you know what this is?” Pause and then say “It’s a pear. Pears are fruits. Pears are green, yellow or brown. Pears are sweet and yummy.” Let your baby hold or touch the pear.

**Increasing Literacy Skills with Children**

**Connection to learning**

Good literacy beginnings help to ensure children's later success as readers and writers. Literacy can include the creation of trusting relationships, two-way communication, exploration and play to figure out how things work, as well as the enjoyment of stories, books, rhymes, and songs. Children who hear lots of stories become the best readers. Read and talk to your children every day. Children who hear lots of words have an easier time learning how to read.

**For your older baby (9 – 18 months)**

Your baby is starting to learn the names of things, like 'broccoli' and 'apricots' and 'mozzarella cheese', 'Tyrannosaurus Rex' and 'great big red block', as well as place words like 'up' and 'down' and 'over'. Your baby learns that someone s/he trusts will listen.

**Holiday Stress Management**

**Connection to learning**

Maintaining schedules at home and in programs is a tough balancing act that becomes even tougher at holiday time when all the excitement can have a negative impact on children. If staff and/or parents are experiencing an increase in stress, then so are the children. Children reflect the mood of the classroom/household and the ideas and values presented to them. If the staff/parents are spinning out of control, the kids will spin out of control, too. Here are some ways to emphasize the fun and enjoyment holidays can bring while maintaining normalcy for young children.

**For your older baby (9 - 18 months)**

Hands down laughter is still the number one way to relieve stress at any age. Laugh it up with your baby and their mood will shift from bad to good in no time. Laughter is still the best way to beat stress and change everyone's mood from bad to good. Take time to create dances to music, make puppets and create a puppet show or sing songs with silly lyrics.