



give your child a

*smart
start*

smart start  central oklahoma

children are born learning.

The early years are precious. What a child learns during these early years depends on the experiences she has every day. The most important part of your child's early learning is you! Parents are a child's first and most influential teacher. Through interactions and experiences with loved and trusted adults, babies begin to make sense of the world.

Early learning skills begin with everyday moments between babies and their parents. Parents can use simple, routine activities as "teachable moments" for their child. Daily routines like feeding, diaper changing, and bath time offer babies rich opportunities to have fun, connect with loved ones, and figure out how the world works.

Treasure the early years with your little one. Every moment counts. **Give your child a smart start. Read. Talk. Sing. Play. Hold.**





read

Discover. Wonder. Share a story together.

Read to your child right from birth. This helps him learn to love reading. Make it a part of your daily routine.

Let your baby read her own way. Your baby may only sit still for a few pages, turn the pages quickly, or only look at one picture. She may like to chew the book, instead of read it. This is normal for babies.

Encourage your child's participation. *"Can you find the bunny? You found the fluffy, white bunny. What do you think it feels like?"*

Notice your child's interests. If your child loves trains, look for books about trains. Make a train out of a big cardboard box, or tape pieces of paper together and let your child paint a train. Shout *"choo-choo!"* when you see a train while riding together in the car and count the number of train cars you see.

Take your child to story time at the library and get him a library card of his own.

learn more about reading with your child:

www.smartstartcentraloklahoma.org

YAK, YAK!

talk

A
B
C

BLA
BLA!



Babble. Gurgle. Make sounds together.

Talk with your child about what you are doing during everyday routines. Talk to your baby while you feed or dress her. *“It’s time to get dressed. Let’s put on your bright yellow shirt! Remember your head goes first. Which arm goes next? You chose your right arm.”*

Engage your child in conversation about what you see around him. *“Do you see the brown duck? What do ducks say? Yes, the ducks say quack quack.”*

Listen as she communicates with coos, giggles, and cries. This is her way of talking with you. When she babbles, don’t be embarrassed to babble back.

Describe her feelings and experiences. *“You are nuzzling at my shirt. You’re telling me you’re hungry. Your milk is coming right up!”*

Teach your child new words by adding details to the objects she notices. *“Yes, that’s right, it’s a ball. It’s a big, red ball that bounces.”*

learn more about talking with your child:
www.smartstartcentraloklahoma.org



★
sing

Rhyme. Dance. Play music together.

Sing to your baby as you hold and cuddle him. Your voice comforts him and makes him feel secure.

Fill your house with songs and music. Let her hear the same songs over and over again.

Sing silly, playful, or rhyming songs to your baby. These songs are easier to remember.

Use hand motions to songs like “The Itsy Bitsy Spider.” Songs that use movement help a child learn coordination and rhythm.

Add songs and rhymes into everyday routines. Sing “Rock-a-Bye Baby” at bedtime and “Rub-a-Dub-Dub” at bath time.

Let your child make her own music. Use items around the house, like pots and pans, and listen as she drums her own beat. Encourage her to make up her own words to a familiar song.

learn more about singing with your child:
www.smartstartcentraloklahoma.org



play

Imagine. Create. Play together.

Allow plenty of time for your child to play each day. Children learn through play.

Keep playtime free and spontaneous. They discover through play experiences.

Provide materials that are interesting and varied, and encourage her to explore ways to use them. Use safe items around your house for play. Toddlers love to play with boxes, wooden spoons, and pots and pans. If given the chance, children will create their own toys.

Allow your child to take the lead in play. Don't insist on a "right" way to play.

Support your child's efforts and help him feel good about his attempts. *"You worked hard to build that tall tower. Boom! It fell down. I know you can build it again. Which blocks will you use first?"*

learn more about playing with your child:
www.smartstartcentraloklahoma.org



LOVE

hold

Hug. Kiss. Cuddle together.

Give your child love and attention. This helps her feel confident, relaxed and happy. A child who feels loved has an easier time learning about the world around her.

Make eye contact with your baby about 8 to 12 inches away from you. Your baby loves to see your face.

Hold your baby close to you. Your gentle touch and warmth comforts her. Slowly rock your baby in your arms or gently bounce him on your lap.

Set limits so your child feels safe and secure. Use limits to teach your child. “It’s time to use your inside voice now,” or “Remember, use gentle touches when petting the doggie.” Give your child limits so he knows he is loved but expect him to test them!

It’s impossible to spoil a baby in the first year of life. Picking him up when he cries will help him feel secure now and become more confident when he gets older. You can never spoil a baby by holding him too much.

learn more about cuddling with your child:
www.smartstartcentraloklahoma.org

our vision for a smart future

Smart Start Central Oklahoma wants all children to have a smart start! When central Oklahoma is a nurturing and supportive community for all young children and their families, then our young children will be safe, healthy, eager to learn, and ready to succeed by the time they enter school.

A smart start is the foundation for a successful educational experience. We invite all parents to learn effective strategies that give their child a smart start. We offer a unique program designed just for parents called Early Birds. Early Birds is a family-based parent education program that focuses on a child's early learning and how parents can **Read, Talk, Sing, Play, and Hold**.

For tips, tools, and resources on how to give your child a smart start, visit us at www.smartstartcentraloklahoma.org


smart start
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