



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Concerned About Your Child's Development?

Children's growth and development generally falls into four categories: physical, social/emotional, cognitive or thinking, and communication or language. While development typically follows a sequence, each child is unique and develops at her own pace.

You know your child best and sometimes you have a gut feeling that something may not be right. If you think there could be a problem with the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, talk to your child's health care provider about your concerns. It is crucial to address any developmental issues early because intervention is likely to be more effective when it is provided sooner rather than later, and it can improve outcomes for your child.

In addition to talking to your child's health care provider, you can:

- ♥ Complete a Milestone Checklist – Use the app or checklist from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website. You can share the results with your child's health care provider and it can help describe some of the concerns you have.
- ♥ Ask about Early Intervention
 - The Early Intervention Section is a federal and state-mandated program that provides free services to support the development of children birth to three years of age. You can call the information and referral line at (808)594-0066 (Oahu) or 1-800-235-5477 (neighbor islands)
 - Hawai'i Department of Education provides special education services at no cost



to families to anyone aged three to 22. Families can contact their home school, the neighborhood school that is in your child's assigned district, and request an evaluation.

This newsletter will highlight some information about development as well as provide some information of how early intervention services could support your child. In addition, we included ideas of age-appropriate activities you may enjoy doing together.

This newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Typically, children develop their motor skills from the head down. First, comes head control and then control over the upper body. The following are some signs of a child's physical developmental or early motor delay:

- ♥ Delayed rolling over, sitting, or walking
- ♥ Poor head and neck control
- ♥ Difficulty swallowing
- ♥ Muscle stiffness or floppiness

If you have some concerns about your child's physical development, talk to your child's health care provider. The health care provider may connect you with early intervention services. These services include a variety of different resources and programs that provide support to families to enhance a child's development. These services are specifically tailored to meet a child's individual needs, and most commonly include pediatric physical, occupational, and speech/language therapy. Here are some ways early intervention could support an infant with physical delays:



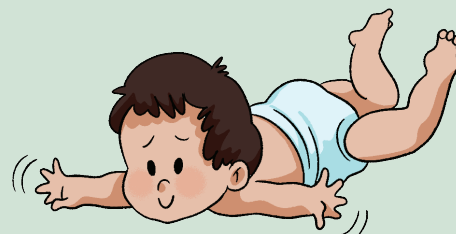
- ♥ If she is delayed in large motor skills such as sitting up or walking, she may be referred to a physical therapist that may work with strengthening her muscles and teaching different strategies to interact with materials and the environment.
- ♥ If she is having trouble with fine motor skills, visual motor skills or independent living skills, such as feeding herself or picking up small objects, she may be referred to an occupational therapist to help with abilities such as opening and closing things; stacking and building, and even picking up and releasing toys of various sizes and shapes.

Activity for Infants: *Tummy Time*

What You Need:
None

What to Do:

1. If your baby is only a few weeks old, start with your baby lying face-downward on your chest as you recline on a sofa, bed, or comfortable chair. Sing or talk with your baby so she wants to lift her head to look at you.
2. Progress to placing your baby on her stomach on a blanket or play mat. Get down on the floor with her so she has the incentive to lift her head and look at you as you sing or talk.
3. Never leave your baby unsupervised during tummy time, and be ready to move your baby or finish this portion of tummy time if she begins to complain and becomes frustrated.
4. Your baby should have short periods of tummy time spread throughout each day.



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Toddlers

Children all learn language in the same way, but not always at the same time. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, delays in language are the most common types of developmental delay. In fact, one out of 5 children will learn to talk or use words later than other children their age.

Typically, by age 2, a child can say sentences with 2-4 words, follow simple instructions, and repeat words overheard in conversation. In addition, she can point to things or pictures when they are named. If you feel that your child has a speech or language delay, talk to your health care provider. The health care provider may refer you to a speech-language pathologist who may do a comprehensive assessment of your child's expressive language (e.g., ability to use words to request objects, make choices, ask and answer questions) and receptive language (ability to understand language and words or concepts). The therapist may also recommend other exams such as a hearing exam to see if your child has a hearing impairment.



In addition to the support from your child's health care provider, you can encourage language development in your child by:

- ♥ Talking to your child, narrating what you are doing as you do it.
- ♥ Reading favorite children's books aloud daily.
- ♥ Listening to your child. Look at her when she talks to you and give her time to respond.

Activity for Toddlers: *Make Your Own Special Book*

What You Need:

- Photos or pictures from magazines
- Pencil, pen, or washable markers
- Glue or tape

What to Do:

1. Use photos of an outing such as a trip to the beach or Popo's (Grandma's) house. Or cut out pictures from old magazines of common objects your child likes.
2. Glue or tape the pictures onto sheets of paper.
3. Staple or punch holes on one side of the pages and tie them together to make a book.
4. Write the names of each picture.
5. Look at the book together. Name an object in a picture and ask the child to point to it: "I see the blue ocean. Where is the blue ocean?"
6. Point to each picture and ask your child who or what it is.
7. Take turns thinking of a sentence or two for each picture and write them above or below the picture. Describe the objects or make up simple stories about them

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Preschoolers

According to Dr. Clarissa Willis, associate professor at University of Southern Indiana and author of “Teaching Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder”, most children learn social skills through experience and observation. They watch how other children act and what other children do in social settings. Then, based on their observations, they imitate the behavior of others. By age 5, children typically:

- ♥ Show a wide range of emotions
- ♥ Can separate from their parents easily
- ♥ Want to play with other children

For children who have social and emotional delays, they often have trouble getting along with adults or other children or have restricted or repetitive behaviors. Many times, the child must learn techniques that will help her respond appropriately in social settings. Your child’s health care provider may refer you to specialists that can help with strategies that may include:

- ♥ Setting a routine
- ♥ Providing opportunities to play in proximity with other children
- ♥ Teaching age-appropriate ways to express feelings
- ♥ Minimizing distractions and possible over-stimulation
- ♥ Teaching turn-taking play experiences and activities



Activity for Preschoolers: *Cup Phones*

What You Need:

- 2 disposable cups (paper, plastic, or foam)
- String (about 3-4 feet)
- 2 toothpicks
- Tape

What to Do:

1. Make a small hole in the bottom of each cup.
2. Thread one end of the string through the hole in one of the cups, from the outside in.
3. Tie the end of the string around a toothpick to keep it anchored inside of the cup. Place a piece of tape over the toothpick to secure it to the bottom of the cup.
4. Repeat with the second cup, connecting it to the other end of the string.
5. Have your child hold up one cup to her ear.
6. Speak into the other cup, standing far enough away so that the string does not sag. You can say simple phrases such as “touch your nose” or “wave at me.”
7. Ask your child to speak into the cup to tell you what she heard or to answer a question you asked, while you listen with your cup.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Use and strengthen small muscles
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop a close bond with you
- ♥ Develop her unique identity

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Increase her observation, listening and understanding skills, and attention span
- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her creativity and imagination
- ♥ Develop her thinking and problem-solving skills.



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math (quantities, measurement), science (how matter changes), fine motor (stirring, pouring), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with your child, talk about kitchen safety. Show her how to handle items safely and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Praise her efforts, and ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

Froyo Fruit Cups

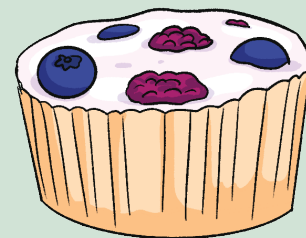
Adapted from: <https://tasty.co/recipe/froyo-fruit-cups>

Ingredients:

- 1 tray of blueberries
- 1 tray of raspberries
- 1 ½ cups vanilla Greek yogurt

Directions:

1. Have your child arrange 12 cupcake liners in a muffin tin.
2. Together, put two tablespoons of yogurt into the bottom of each liner.
3. Encourage your child to top yogurt with blueberries and raspberries.
4. Freeze for at least two hours. Talk about how the yogurt will get cold and solid.
5. Discover how the mixture has changed. Enjoy!



Resources

Early Intervention Section

<https://health.hawaii.gov/eis/>

Read more about Hawai'i's Early Intervention Section. If you are concerned about a child's development or would like to make a referral, please call our Early Intervention information and referral line at 808-594-0066 for Oahu or 1-800-235-5477 for Neighbor Islandss.

Special Parent Information Network

<https://spinhawaii.org/>

This website provides links to resources, support, and information for families with children with disabilities. You can find SPINS's Parent Guide to Special Education, SPIN Resource Guide, current and archived SPIN Newsletters, infographics and more!



Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

***Chengdu Can Do* by Barney Saltzberg**

Chengdu, a little panda, tries to do as much as he can on his own. Follow his adventures and see that he learns that it's also OK to use some help.

***I Am Me* by Karla Kuskin**

This book highlights all the features a child inherits from members of her family and how it makes her a special and unique person. It's a great book to highlight diversity and pride in who each child is.

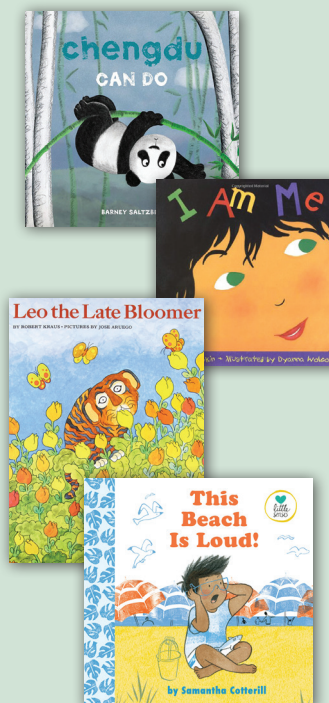
Preschoolers

***Leo the Late Bloomer* by Robert Kraus**

Leo the tiger has yet to draw, speak, or write, and his father is getting worried. His mother, however, knows that Leo is just taking his time and he'll bloom when he's good and ready. This story is great for children to learn that everyone develops in their own special way – and that's just fine!

***This Beach Is Loud!* by Samantha Cotterill**

This book describes the sights and sounds of a typical day at the beach - hot sun, grains of sand, laps of the water, and people everywhere. Sometimes it gets overwhelming for little ones. This book offers practical advice for coping with new experiences to children on the autism spectrum and/or with sensory sensitivities.



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowhawaii.org or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii