



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Connect with Love Languages

According to the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, there are three types of temperament:

- ♥ The easy or flexible child: tends to be happy, has regular sleeping and eating habits, and tends to be calm and easy-going in nature.
- ♥ Active or feisty child: may be fussy, has irregular sleeping and eating habits, fears new situations, and gets easily upset.
- ♥ Slow to warm up or cautious child: may be less active and prefers to observe activities for a while before joining in.

Understanding temperament is important because it helps you understand your child's preferences, desires, and feelings. Additionally, this information can help identify your child's strengths and support her with succeeding in new relationships and environments.

One important concept is "goodness of fit," or adapting your approach to meet the temperament, abilities, and needs of your child. A helpful strategy for doing this is highlighted in Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell's "5 Love Languages of Children."

- ♥ **Physical touch** - Physical contact such as hugs, holding hands, or a special handshake can help the child feel wanted, loved, and secure.
- ♥ **Words of affirmation** - Using spoken or written words that encourage and affirm the child's efforts and achievements.
- ♥ **Quality time** - Giving undivided attention, being fully present in the moment, and spending meaningful time together.
- ♥ **Gifts** - The act of giving and receiving physical tokens of love and appreciation,



which is different from just wanting to obtain material things.

- ♥ **Acts of service** - Doing things for others to show love and support such as helping her with tasks, or chores, or doing something for her without being asked.

In this newsletter, we will introduce the 5 love languages and ways to use them to connect with keiki to individualize your care and response to your child.

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, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Even when your child is very young, you can find clues of her temperament in everything she does. For example, does your child seem more alert during certain times of the day? Does she take short or long naps? Does your child have regular eating habits? The answers to these questions can help you determine her activity level and how she would respond to routines and change, which are traits of your child's temperament. By observing your infant's cues and responding appropriately, you're building a trusting and caring relationship.

The use of love languages will help you adapt your approach to meet your child's temperament, abilities, and needs. Here are ways to connect with your infant:

- ♥ **Physical Touch** – Engage in interactive games such as peek-a-boo while holding your infant. Rock her to sleep, or count her fingers and toes when changing her diaper.
- ♥ **Words of Affirmation** - Keep eye contact and smile when you talk with your infant during routines and tell her how happy you are to be with her. You can also do this using infant sign language.
- ♥ **Quality Time** – Focus your complete attention on your infant when doing routine things like diaper changing and feeding. Engage with



her by establishing eye contact, talking, and smiling, thus making the routine task a special time together.

- ♥ **Gifts** - Choose a gift that creates adult-child interaction. Give your infant a book you can read together or an interactive toy you can play together.
- ♥ **Acts of Service** – For the cautious child, you can try to make her more comfortable to ease the transition in new situations. For example, give her a favorite blanket if you notice that she is uncomfortable.

Activity for Infants: *Sign language for love and hug*

What to Do:

1. To sign *I love you*, put up your thumb, index finger, and pinkie finger, while keeping your ring finger and your middle finger down. Hold the hand out, palm facing away from you, and move it back and forth slightly. Say "I love you" to the infant simultaneously as you sign it.
2. The *hug sign* is made by making each hand into a fist and crossing your arms over one another on top of your chest. This sign looks like you are giving yourself a big hug. Say "hug" to the infant simultaneously as you sign it.

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



Toddlers

As your toddler grows in her independence, her preferences and personality will become more obvious. She is learning new ways to express her needs, desires, and comfort level to you.

You will see how her temperament influences her responses to people and situations. Being aware of her temperament as well as your own can help you better understand and connect with her in ways that are supportive and appreciated.

Use the love languages to meet her needs and desires by:

- ♥ **Physical Touch** - The active or feisty child may need extra support settling down for a nap. Try a gentle back rub or massage paired with soft music and a calming atmosphere.
- ♥ **Words of Affirmation** - Describe what she is doing and why you like what she did. For example, "I see you putting the books in the basket. You are a good helper." or "You are trying the different foods on your plate."
- ♥ **Quality Time** - Do activities together such as drawing a picture, doing a silly dance, or eating her favorite food with her.
- ♥ **Gifts** - Prepare her favorite snack, create a



scavenger hunt for her to find a special gift, or make a toy from recycled items.

- ♥ **Acts of Service** - Acknowledge her and respond when she needs you. For example, "I see you are trying very hard to put on your socks, let me see if I can make this easier for you."

Activity for Toddlers: *Love Scavenger Hunt*

What You Need:

Paper, Crayons, Scissors (child-safe or adult can do the cutting)

What to Do:

1. Assist your child in drawing hearts on paper.
2. Help her cut out the hearts or you can cut out the hearts.
3. Hide the hearts around the play area.
4. Have her look around to find the hearts, giving encouragement as needed.
5. Together, count the hearts that she found.



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

Preschoolers

As your child grows into preschool age, her temperament is perceivable as she develops her ability to understand, adapt, and express her emotions in more socially acceptable ways. You can help foster healthy and positive behavior using the love languages to model positive behaviors as well as connect with your preschooler by:

- ♥ **Physical Touch** – Give hugs and high-fives for a job well done, let the child sit in your lap during story time, or hold her hand on a nature walk.
- ♥ **Words of affirmation** – By sharing words of affirmation, you will boost the child's emotional tank and give her the strength to persevere. Use words like, "You are really thinking hard! That's a creative idea. Let's try it."
- ♥ **Quality time** – The easy or flexible child often gets forgotten. Spending quality time with her can ensure that she feels heard and loved. Engage in back-and-forth conversation or interactive games like Charades. Practice active listening by letting the child talk without interruption, asking questions and summarizing, and using non-verbal cues by leaning toward her and nodding.
- ♥ **Gifts** – Gifts can be something received or



even given. Have the child think of something she would like to give to family or a friend, such as a picture or flowers from the garden, and together create the gift.

- ♥ **Acts of service** – The child is expected to do most things on her own as independence is one of the milestones for this age group, but having things done for her every so often makes her feel loved, noticed, and valued. You can do something for her to surprise her such as, "Remember you said you want to eat pineapple yesterday? I cut pineapple for your snack today!"

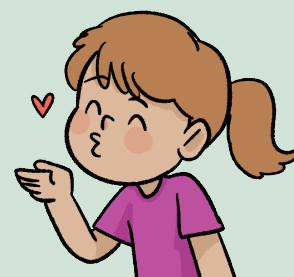
Activity for Preschoolers: *Loving Charades*

What You Need:

- Blank index cards or any blank cards of your choice
- Pictures from magazines, drawings, or pictures of people the child knows (family members, friends, neighbors) who are displaying loving actions (e.g., mommy offering food, friends feeding the dog, neighbor reading to the baby).
- Glue or tape

What to Do:

1. Glue or tape pictures of people displaying loving actions on blank cards (one picture on each card).
2. You and the child take turns picking a card, acting out the loving action without saying it out loud, and guessing what the act of love is.



(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

- ♥ Learn through her senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching
- ♥ Learn to use her body with intention

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Feel important and good about herself
- ♥ Develop a close bond with you

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Develop early reading skills and a love of reading
- ♥ Build verbal skills and vocabulary



Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her creativity and imagination
- ♥ Begin to understand cause and effect

Kids in the Kitchen

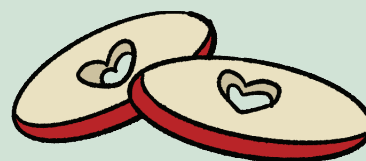
Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math (quantities, measurement), science (how matter changes), fine motor (stirring, pouring), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with the child, talk about kitchen safety. Show her how to handle items safely and allow her to do as much as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

Heart Apple Chips

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/recipes/heart-apple-chips>

Ingredients:

Apples, sliced thinly
 Knife (adults only)
 Mini heart-shaped cookie cutters
 Lemon juice (optional)
 Parchment paper
 Baking sheet



Directions:

1. Lay out your apple slices and have the child use the heart-shaped cookie cutters to cut heart-shaped apples.
2. Talk about the heart shape and experiment using other cookie cutters to make additional shapes.
3. Dip all the slices in some freshly squeezed lemon juice to prevent browning (optional).
4. Bake the apple slices on some parchment paper for an hour and 10 minutes in a 250°F oven. Some of the thicker slices might take a few minutes longer.
5. Once they are lightly browned, pull them out of the oven and let cool. They'll crisp up in no time.

Resources

The 5 Love Languages of Children

Dr. Gary Chapman and Dr. Ross Campbell share the 5 love languages to assist your child in successful learning. Use the love languages for correcting and disciplining more effectively, and building a foundation of unconditional love for your child.



Suggested Books

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

Infants and Toddlers

How Do I Love You? by Marion Dane Bauer

"How do I love you? Let me count the ways. I love you as the sun loves the bright blue days." A rhyming story about unlimited love for a child.

Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney

Little Nutbrown Hare shows his daddy how much he loves him: as wide as he can reach and as far as he can hop. But Big Nutbrown Hare, who can reach farther and hop higher, loves him back just as much.

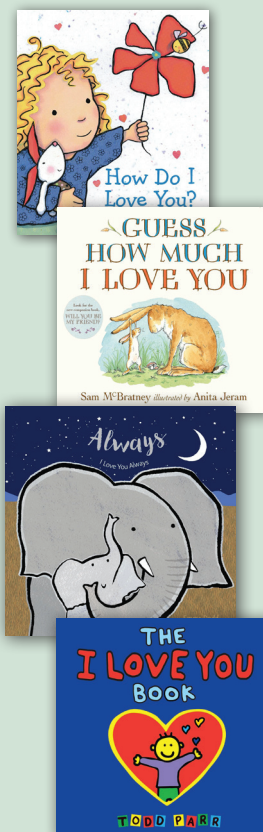
Preschoolers

Always by Emma Dodd

There is always love between a caring adult and the child. This story shares a heartwarming message of unconditional love.

The I Love You Book by Todd Parr

This book explores the meaning of unconditional love in a heartfelt, playful way. Parents and caregivers will enjoy sharing this very special book with the little ones they love.



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 and Instagram @uhlearningtogrow