



Your Child Learns First From You!

You might think of kindergarten as the start of your child's education. But by that time, your child has already been learning for years! In fact, your child has been learning since birth: from you.

Spend just 15 minutes a day on learning activities now with your young child, and it can make a difference for life. No matter what you're doing together, your child is learning. Try some of these fun ParentTips with your child:

YOUR INFANT:

- Talk and sing to your baby anytime, anywhere: during meals, playtime, bath time.
- During bath time and dressing, say parts of baby's body aloud: point to her toes and say "toes," tickle her stomach and say "tummy." Talk to her about what you are doing (washing, putting on a diaper, etc.).
- Read every day to your infant in Spanish or English. Choose books with bold colors, big pictures and sturdy pages. Being read to, like being spoken to, teaches your child how to think and listen to information.

YOUR TODDLER:

- Read aloud. Just carry a children's book with you, and you can have "story time" with your child anywhere. Even at the bus or subway stop!
- Let your toddler use his imagination with things around the house: cardboard boxes, plastic bowls, empty plastic containers. He can pretend they're anything!
- Play with your toddler. Walk, run, play catch, or kick a ball. Let your child have fun with play clay, finger paints or building blocks.
- Hang interesting pictures at her eye level. Let her play a toy musical instrument or beat along to music on a box or a plastic bowl.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- Read to your preschooler every day in Spanish or English. Find books with simple stories, and help your preschooler start to think about what he sees and hears. Talk with him about what happens first, next and last in the story.
- While you're out walking, make up games such as counting cars, looking at the colors of signs, or noticing interesting sounds. Play "what's that sound" and let her try to guess where a sound is coming from.
- Let your child tell you a made-up story during bath time, dinnertime or any time.
- Make things together. A shoebox makes a great pretend dollhouse or car. Old socks make fun puppets. A big cardboard box can be a clubhouse.

ParentTips is a monthly resource for parents with young children.
Want more Suggestions? Visit www.readyatfive.org or call 410-727-6290.