

**Awareness of Self and Environment** – understanding the world and the ability to make connections with home and community experiences.

- **Encourage your child to talk about familiar things, people and activities.**
- **Take your child places to provide opportunities to interact and play with other children.**
- **Encourage your child to consider what other people, or even animals, may be thinking or feeling.**
- **Explain to your child the ‘why’ behind the things we do**, e.g. “We wear mittens to keep our hands warm.” “We brush our teeth to make them clean and prevent cavities.”
- **Explain to your child, before leaving the house together, where you will be going and what you will be doing there**, e.g. “We are going to the grocery store today to buy some bread and milk.”

**Cognitive Skills** – basic math, pre-reading and problem-solving skills.

- **Point out signs in your environment and talk with your child about what they mean**, e.g. STOP, ‘TRAIN CROSSING’, CLOSED, ‘WALK,’ etc.
- **Use words such as more/less, larger/smaller, big/bigger/biggest, beside/above/under/over when playing with your child.**
- **Count with your child when going up or down stairs.**
- **Point out numbers on community signs, your house or apartment number, the keypad on a phone or computer.**
- **Point out letters such as the first letter in a child’s or family member’s name, letters in an alphabet book, or on toys such as blocks.**
- **Use opportunities when your child is feeling frustrated to encourage new ways to solve a problem**, e.g. “You seem frustrated. What would happen if you turned the puzzle piece and tried again?”

**Language and Communication** – understanding spoken language and the ability to express thoughts and feelings.

- **It is important to talk, sing, chant and read books with your child. Talk about new words that might be in songs, chants or stories.**
- **Look at books with your child every night before bed. You might read the words or just talk about the pictures together.**
- **Visit the library regularly to borrow books and attend library events such as story time.**
- **Share cultural, historic or family stories with your child, even short ones**, e.g. “When I was your age ...,” “Once upon a time ...” **Encourage your child to share stories as well.**
- **Listen carefully to your child. Reflect back with comments, ask questions and use descriptive words to encourage your child to think more deeply about ideas.**

**Physical Development** – involves two important types of movement for children, fine and gross motor.

**Fine Motor** – use of small muscles and movements that need hand-eye coordination.

- **Encourage your child to:**
  - **Squish, squeeze and pull materials such as snow, sand, play dough, clay or bread dough.**
  - **Pick up small items such as berries, coins, beads or bread tabs and toys such as building blocks, cars, animals or people.**
  - **Use spoons, forks, pencils, paint brushes, sand tools or sidewalk chalk. Your child can use tools such as screwdrivers or scissors with adult supervision.**

**Gross Motor** – use of large muscles that control arms, legs and body.

- **Allow your child to explore the environment as much as possible keeping health and safety in mind.**
- **Encourage your child to climb up and down hills and play on various types of surfaces such as dirt, grass, sand, rock, carpet, etc.**
- **Encourage your child to throw, catch and kick balls and to use other items such as racquets or scoops, etc.**
- **Take your child to parks and playgrounds where there is lots of space to run, climb and play.**
- **Allow your child to construct forts with blankets and pillows. Create imaginary objects and spaces like castles, vehicles or farm yards and encourage movement that goes along with the place, e.g. walking like different animals, marching bands in a parade, moving like a train, etc.**