

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

- **Explore your community with your child. Identify places and people in the community as well as their purpose or connection to the family.**
- **Encourage your child to talk about familiar things, people and activities.**
- **Encourage your child to consider what others 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,” or “We brush our teeth to make them clean and prevent cavities.”**

Social Skills and Approaches to Learning – attentiveness during classroom activities and interactions with peers while respecting the classroom rules.

- **Encourage your child to finish activities and celebrate successes, e.g. finishing a puzzle, putting socks in the drawer or drawing a picture.**
- **Talk with your child about respect and what this means for your family. Discuss home and school rules and why we have rules.**
- **Provide opportunities for your child to play and learn with interact with other children during adult directed play and child directed play. Adult directed activities may include sports, music lessons, library events or community groups. Child directed activities may include free time at a playground, visiting the library or having friends over to play.**

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.**
- **Count with your child when going up or down stairs, selecting items at the grocery store, setting the table or putting away toys.**
- **Use words such as more/less, larger/smaller, big/bigger/biggest, beside/above/under/over when playing with your child.**
- **Point out numbers and letters around you. These could include community signs, your house or apartment number, the keypad on a phone or computer or a store flyer.**
- **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 of spoken language and the ability to express thoughts and feelings.

- **Talk, sing, chant and read books with your child and talk about the new words you come across.**
- **Look at books with your child often – every day if possible. 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, play dough, clay or bread dough.**
 - **Pick up small items such as berries, coins, beads or bread tabs and toys like 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.**