



Touching, talking, reading and playing are simple things you can do with your baby that will make a huge difference in his or her growth and development. These four activities help create important connections in your baby's brain that she or he will need in school and in adulthood (Yes, kindergarten readiness starts now!).

TOUCH

TALK

READ

PLAY

YOU CAN DO THIS

Parenting is a great joy as well as a big responsibility. Like many new parents, you may have heard that a child's early years are important, but you may not know exactly what to do to make the most of this special time. Research tells us there are four simple things you can start doing right now that will help your child be ready for success in kindergarten and beyond. Take a look inside to learn more...

Additional Early Childhood Parenting Resources

LeBonheur Children's Hospital
(901) 287-4700

- **Healthy Families**
- **Parent Outreach**

Neighborhood Christian Centers
(901) 881-6013

- **Operation Smart Child**

Porter Leath
(901) 577-2500 x 1159

- **Parents as Teachers**

University of Tennessee Boling Center
(901)-448-6670

- **Nurturing Parenting**



A new baby is like the beginning of all things--wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities. - Eda LeShan



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TOUCH

Holding and cuddling your baby every day makes him feel safe and loved.

- 1 Gently hold your baby's hand or let your baby hold your finger.
- 2 Cradle your baby in your arms, look into your baby's eyes and smile.
- 3 Kiss your baby's forehead.
- 4 Respond sensitively to your baby's cry. This is how he knows he can trust you to be there for him.



You can't spoil your baby.

TALK

Your baby begins to learn sounds and words when she hears your voice.

- 1 Speak softly and gently to your baby – tell her you love her.
- 2 Sing a lullaby when you are putting your baby down to sleep.
- 3 Tell your baby what is happening like, "Now I'm going to change your diaper."
- 4 Repeat familiar terms like body parts during bath time.



Speaking to your baby in at least 5-word sentences will help her learn more words.

READ

Reading to your baby now will greatly improve his reading and writing later.

- 1 Read a favorite story to your baby at the same time each day.
- 2 If you don't like to read, just pick up any book or magazine and talk about the pictures.
- 3 Give your baby a few books that are safe to hold and explore.
- 4 Use a playful or sing-song voice when you read to your baby.



Reading to your baby is a proven factor for kindergarten readiness.

PLAY

Even simple games help build your baby's future problem-solving and creative thinking skills.

- 1 Play "peek-a-boo" with your baby.
- 2 Crawl on the floor and play "chase."
- 3 Dance to playful music together.
- 4 Give your baby a rattle or other baby toy that makes noise. Even pots and pans can be fun!



Unstructured play improves your baby's attention span.