

A child's interests are

Windows of Opportunity

to fun and enjoyable learning

Opportunities to
interact with people
are powerful
learning activities
for many young children



Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AT HOME**

Ordinary moments at home

- Make the most of every opportunity to include your baby or young child in interactions with visitors to your home—such as a plumber, delivery-van driver, mail carrier, or neighbor. Introduce yourself and your child to the visitor. Tell your child the visitor's name. If she has started saying words, let her try saying the name. Talk about why the visitor is at your house, what the visitor does, etc. Help her practice waving and/or saying "hello" and "bye-bye" to visitors.
- Invite another young child and his parent to visit your child at home for a "play date." Let children play together in a way that builds on their current abilities. Even infants can enjoy watching an older child at play!
- Share simple conversations with your young child about the people shown in pictures in newspapers, magazines, family photo albums, and artwork displayed in your home.

Reading aloud to your child

- Invite visiting friends and neighbors to read or talk to your child about one of his favorite picture books for a few minutes. He'll welcome a visitor performing a familiar and enjoyable activity. The visitor will enjoy supporting your child's love of books and story time.

Pretend Play

- Engage in pretend play with your child. Encourage him to try roles of different kinds of people. "You be the daddy pushing your baby stroller in the park. I'll be the man who sells balloons!" When you're playing in the sand box, you might say, "This nice sand cake looks like a yummy birthday cake. Do you want to be the one who lights the candles or the one who blows them out?"
- Join your young child in play with dolls, puppets, figurines, and other human-like toys. Show your child how she can speak in different voices for the toys. Pretend the toy you are holding can "speak" to your child or to the toy your child is holding. You can try this with stuffed animals, too!



Places to learn and activities to enjoy **AWAY FROM HOME**

Taking part in community activities

- Take your young child along with you when you attend community activities that are welcoming to children. Some examples are religious services, street parties, neighborhood festivals, seasonal celebrations, outdoor concerts, sports events, parades, and more!
- Ask for a community events calendar at your local business development or tourism office, city or town hall, community center, or public library. Don't miss these fun "happenings." They can serve as great opportunities for your little one (and your whole family!) to be out and about having fun new experiences, learning together, and getting to know other children, adults, and families in your community.



Happy to see folks in the next pew at church



Meeting Mommy's friends

Meeting parent's friends in a store or out on a walk

- Be close by to offer your young child a sense of security as she meets new people when you're out together. She'll enjoy gazing at new faces and hearing different voices while you're nearby.
- A shy child will be more open to an unfamiliar person if he's seen you talking quietly with your friend for a few minutes and if you explain to the friend that your child's most comfortable if new people don't approach him too closely.
- Your child will experience the good feelings that come from being welcomed with warmth and interest simply for being herself!

Experiencing a parent/child play group

- Ask at your pediatrician's office, health clinic, parent-resource center, or community services agency about joining a parent-child play group. If a play group isn't available, start one yourself with other moms and dads in your neighborhood, church, or other group.
- Help your little one take part in a play group's organized activities like singing, simple games, active movement, and listening to stories. Include time for her to play freely with your assistance.
- Public library story times planned especially for toddlers, preschoolers, and their parents are another great opportunity for young children to see and take part in fun activities with young peers and their parents.



Meeting someone just my size at a play group

