



# Early

# Learning & Education PROGRAMS

## What's Inside

Empathy for All Ages ②

Healthy Teeth for Babies ③

Parents as Partners ④

Fall Treats ④

Strengthen  
Hands and Fingers ⑤

## Infants, Toddlers, and Relationships

Relationships are the foundation for infant's and toddler's social and emotional development. Strong relationships teach infants about self-care, emotions, empathy, language, and learning. They provide infants and toddlers with a "safe base" or sense of security they need in order to feel comfortable exploring and learning.

Infants first experience interactive relationships and routines with family members. Create a smooth transition between home and care by meeting with the family to develop a routine that will feel familiar to their child. Parents can also share information about their child's temperament, favorite ways to be soothed, feeding routine, and interests. Ask families to share photos of family members

and any other items from home that will help their child feel connected to their family while they are in care. Items can include a special blanket, a hat, a stuffed animal, music, or a decorative item.

Relationships with infants and toddlers are strengthened through routines. Doing the same thing, the same way, at the same time each day helps children develop expectations. When children can predict what will happen to them, they feel safe. Use routines as a way to develop the social and emotional well-being of young children. Explain what you are going to do in a calm and reassuring voice. Encourage children to participate in the routine.



*continued on page 4*

## NURTURING INFANTS AND TODDLERS

When caregivers provide nurturing and responsive care to infants and toddlers they are supporting children's social and emotional development. Consider the care you give to the infants and toddlers in your program as you reflect on the following questions:

- How do you explain social and emotional development to parents and report their child's progress?
- How does social and emotional development relate to growth in learning domains such as cognitive, language, or motor development?
- How can you make care routines socially and emotionally meaningful?

Source: *California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework*, by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2012).



## Empathy for All Ages

Empathy is the ability to understand the emotions, experiences, and perspectives of another person. Children begin learning empathy at an early age. Educators can support their development by offering learning experiences that build children's emotional literacy, capacity for kindness, and reflective thinking. Here are some activity ideas to try:

- Help infants and children recognize and learn the names of emotions until they can identify them on their own. For example, "Nicky, you are crying. Do you feel sad, frustrated, or tired?"
- Help infants learn to soothe themselves. Give crying babies the opportunity to calm themselves before picking them up by offering them a favorite blanket or toy.
- Encourage toddlers to be helpful. For example, "James, Lilia is crying. What do you think will help her feel better?" James can then be prompted to hand Lilia her blanket or favorite toy.

- Children of all ages can practice nurturing skills by playing with dolls or stuffed animals, collecting trash from outside, recycling, caring for a garden, and helping to care for a pet.
- Play emotional literacy games with preschoolers like "Guess How I Feel." Have children take turns making a face while everyone guesses the emotion.
- Select books that talk about emotions and kindness such as *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain or *Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud.
- Explore similarities and differences with preschoolers to build their understanding of uniqueness. Ask them to find things that are red and bring them to you. Ask them, "How are these alike? How are they different?"
- Play "What If" with children ages four and up. Ask questions like, "What if you spoke a language no one else knew, how would you feel? What would you do?"
- Ask school age children to write a note to each child in the room stating what they like about that person.
- School age children can keep journals where they record their acts of kindness.

Source: Adapted from <https://www.chs-ca.org/blog/entry/raising-an-empathetic-child>.







# Healthy Teeth for Babies

Practicing good dental hygiene with babies and toddlers can help them have healthy teeth for years to come. Babies are born with twenty primary (baby) teeth already in their jaw. The teeth usually begin pushing through their gums between six to fourteen months after birth. By the time toddlers are around three years old they usually have all their baby teeth showing. These primary teeth are important because they are place holders for growing permanent teeth and they help young children chew, speak, and smile.

Parents can clean their infant's gums twice a day with a clean, moist cloth. Once teeth begin to come in they can be brushed with a small smear of fluoride toothpaste. Only offer milk or formula in bottles at feeding times. If a bottle is needed for comfort, it can be filled with drinking water. Babies should visit the dentist for a checkup anytime between the first appearance of teeth and their first

birthday. The dentist can make sure that the baby's teeth and gums are healthy and teach parents how to care for teeth.

Many infants and toddlers experience pain or discomfort during teething. Symptoms of teething include being fussy, irritable, refusing food or sleep, and drooling excessively. The safest remedies for teething are: massaging the infant's gums with a clean finger, letting the baby chew on a clean, wet washcloth that has been chilled in the refrigerator, or cold baby food like applesauce (for infants eating solids). Teething rings made of solid rubber can also be used, but teethingers filled with liquid should be avoided. Over-the-counter teething remedies should only be used when recommended by the child's pediatrician.

Source: The website <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/babies-and-kids> was accessed in June 2018.



## Infants, Toddlers, and Relationships

For example, they might hold the clean diaper while being changed or choose which bib to wear.

Children will “check in” with their caregiver while they explore and play. Set up an environment that allows them to easily make eye contact and communicate with adults. This will reassure children that they are safe and cared for. Children should also be able to socialize with the other children. Create a cozy space for down time by turning a large cardboard box on its side with pillows inside and use different colored rugs to define areas. Use a combination of natural light and lamps, decorate with soothing colors, and create a comfortable space where adults can sit and hold children while they read or sing.

Designing a play area that allows for easy interactions helps young children learn to play next to other children. This environment also makes it easier for caregivers to observe play and anticipate when their assistance may be needed. You can make toys easily accessible by placing them in small baskets or buckets. Providing several versions of the same toy will also help prevent conflicts. Place photos of children, their families, and their caregivers around the room at eye level. You can also create books by sealing photos in freezer bags, punching holes in one side, and tying them together with ribbon. Build emotional literacy by including photos and books about emotions in the environment. Set up a dramatic play space where toddlers can act out social roles. This could be a housekeeping area with baby dolls to care for, a pet shop, a bus stop, or other interesting areas.

Through the relationships and routines infants and toddlers experience, they learn what it means to be cared for and how to manage their emotions. They also learn how to communicate with others and develop confidence about their own self-worth and abilities.

Source: *California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework*, by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2012).



## PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Observing children as they play and interact with others can help educators complete assessments like the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and plan a curriculum that offers each child the opportunity to learn and grow to their full potential. Assessments are also a valuable tool for engaging parents in their child's learning.

Establish daily communication with parents, plan parent conferences, and provide written assessments twice a year to inform parents about their child's progress. By communicating with parents about their child's developmental progress, educators can help parents recognize their child's strengths and share ideas for practicing skills that need improvement at home. Put together project bags children can take home to work on with parents.

Sharing information about the child's development helps parents understand their child's strengths and what areas they need to work on with their child. It also builds a partnership between the educator and parent, supports the child's well-being, and empowers the parent to create learning opportunities at home.

## RECIPES

### Fall Treats

Enjoy the flavors of the fall season by asking children to help you prepare these simple healthy snacks.

#### Apple Coleslaw

Grate 1 apple and shred one small head of cabbage. Place them in a large bowl. In another bowl make the dressing by mixing together a 1/4 cup of mayonnaise, a 1/4 cup of milk, and 1 teaspoon of lemon juice. Pour the dressing over the coleslaw and stir it in. Serve alone or with saltine crackers.

#### Corn Tortilla Chips

Take a bag of corn tortillas and let children use cookie cutters to cut them into shapes or tear them into pieces. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray and place the tortilla pieces on top. Sprinkle a little salt over the tortillas. Place the baking sheet in the oven and bake the tortillas at 500°F for 5 minutes, or until they are crispy. Allow them to cool and serve them with salsa or guacamole.

#### Pioneer Pumpkin Pudding

Clean out the insides of a small to medium sized pumpkin. Fill the pumpkin with milk and a little honey. Bake it in the oven at 350°F until the milk is absorbed into the pumpkin. Let the pumpkin cool down a little, and then cut it into chunks. Serve it warm.

Source: Recipes adapted from [http://www.preschoolexpress.com/food\\_station.shtml](http://www.preschoolexpress.com/food_station.shtml).



# Strengthen Hands and Fingers

Children need to develop muscles and coordination in their hands, fingers, and wrists in order to successfully complete self-care tasks like eating and dressing. Later on, they will need these muscles to write, type, and perform other intricate tasks. Strengthening these fine motor skills is essential to children's overall development and well-being. The following activities are ideas that can help children practice their fine motor skills.

## RIBBON PULLING SQUARE

**Age group:** Infants

**What you need:** Different colors, sizes, and textures of ribbons, a large square piece of felt (about 10x10 inches), scissors, and a hole punch.

**What you do:** Use the hole punch or scissors to create tiny holes in the felt square. Cut different lengths of ribbon and thread one ribbon through each hole. Tie thick knots on the ends of the ribbons to prevent them from being removed from the felt. Invite infants to hold the felt square. They can pull the ribbons on one side, and then change to the other side, or squeeze and tug the felt. Supervise ribbon pulling carefully as strings can be a choking hazard if left unattended. Be sure to wash the toy before it is used again.

**What they learn:** Infants can feel different textures and practice fine motor skills by grasping and pulling ribbons. They also develop the cognitive skill of understanding cause and effect.



talk with them about the shapes and colors of the blocks, and how the weight of the buckets changes when blocks are added to them.

**What they learn:** Toddlers practice grasping and manipulating the blocks. As they stack blocks they are practicing their hand-eye coordination. When buckets are emptied and filled they are learning about cause and effect, as well as the physical properties of the blocks (hard, smooth, short, long, etc.).

## PIPE CLEANER SCULPTURES

**Age group:** Preschool

**What you need:** Pipe cleaners and large plastic colanders. Optional items: stringing beads, hole punched foam shapes, large metal washers (hardware), metal nuts (hardware), and any other items that can be strung.

**What you do:** Invite children to create a colander sculpture by poking pipe cleaners through the holes of the colander and figuring out how to twist and fasten them. Once children become proficient with the pipe cleaners, introduce the other items that you have collected for stringing. Take pictures of the final creations, then ask children to take them apart so they can make new sculptures another day.

**What they learn:** Muscles in fingers and wrist are strengthened by threading, pulling, and twisting pipe cleaners through the holes. Children are also practicing hand-eye coordination, and expressing themselves creatively with three-dimensional art.

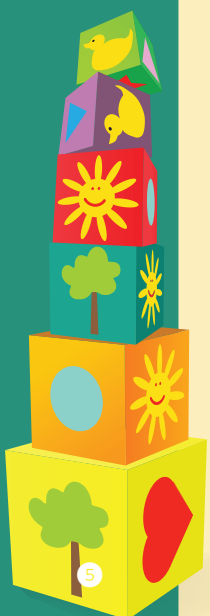


## STACK, DUMP, AND FILL

**Age group:** Toddlers

**What you need:** Cloth or foam blocks, empty dish tubs, and buckets.

**What you do:** Combine the blocks and containers in a large open area of the room. Sit with toddlers and encourage them to stack blocks. You can place some of the blocks in the containers for toddlers to practice dumping, filling, and carrying blocks around the room. As you play with toddlers,



# Strengthen Hands and Fingers

## SEWING BASKETS

**Age group:** School Age

**What you need:** A basket, burlap cut into squares with duct tape around the edges to keep it from unraveling, children's scissors, felt shape pieces with holes punched in them for sewing, different sizes and colors of ribbon and yarn, plastic yarn needles (you may need to cut off the tips so they are not sharp), large crochet hooks, and buttons with holes large enough for thin yarn or ribbon.

**What you do:** Introduce children to the sewing basket materials and demonstrate how they can be used. Children can use the yarn needle to sew yarn or string through the holes of the burlap squares or the felt pieces and buttons. They can use the scissors to cut the amount of yarn they will need. If older children want to do more complicated projects, try visiting the Craft Yarn Council website at

<https://www.craftyarnCouncil.com> to learn how to crochet, or watch a YouTube video on how to finger knit at <https://youtu.be/NulgNzKp1LY>, and then teach those skills to children.

**What they learn:** Children strengthen the muscles in their hands and wrists as they gain better control and dexterity with their fingers. They also have the opportunity to express their creativity and learn a new hobby.



## ABOUT CHS

For over 125 years, Children's Home Society of California (CHS) has adapted to the changing needs of children and families. Since 1891, CHS has worked diligently to protect our community's children and strengthen their families through diverse programs and services.

At CHS, we view a child not in isolation, but in the context of each family's health, stability, and resources. We believe that families are fundamentally strong and resilient. The mission of CHS is to reach out to children and families at risk with a range of services to ensure every child the opportunity to develop within a safe, healthy, and secure environment.

Therefore, CHS provides a variety of services to children and families in California and nationwide, working to improve their quality of life by offering vital information, education and resource services, and child care assistance.

CHS also serves as an expert resource for childcare providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level. To learn more about CHS and resources available to you, please visit our website at [www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org).

© 2018 Children's Home Society of California

If you would like additional copies of this newsletter to share with parents or other child care providers, please visit our website at [www.chs-ca.org/for-providers/provider-newsletter](http://www.chs-ca.org/for-providers/provider-newsletter).



Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
LOS ANGELES, CA  
PERMIT NO. 32415

CHILDREN'S  
HOME  
SOCIETY OF  
CALIFORNIA  
[www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org)

