

## The little things matter most.

Simple daily interaction is all it takes. Just be present. Talk baby talk. Interact. Keep them engaged. Even that strange flubbing noise you make when you blow on their stomach stimulates them and activates brain cells.



## Brain development begins now.

Your child will develop the first 1000 words they'll use in their life during the period from 0 to 3.

In fact, their brains grow 80% of the size of an adult brain during this time. Your child will gain 2 million new brain connections every second between the ages of 1 and 2.

# Steps

Great strides begin with small steps.

The Office of Great Start has launched the Steps initiative. The initiative will increase parents' awareness of the importance of early learning for children ages 0 - 3.



MICHIGAN  
Department of  
Education

## The smallest things have the biggest impact on a child's life.

Even before your child is born, they become a sponge that absorbs everything around them. That's because prenatal to three is the most critical stage of your child's development. Those first three years form the foundation that shapes your child's future health, happiness and their ability to learn and succeed.



# Be the teacher your child needs.

You are the most important teacher your child will ever have. This is the most crucial stage in your child's development.

The good news is, you're the key to helping your child grow into the best possible version of themselves.



You can find Steps support materials at [michigan.gov/mikidsmatter](https://michigan.gov/mikidsmatter)

## You can also download the [CDC Milestone Tracker app.](#)

It's a resource for you to get tips, track health appointments and learn about ages and stages as your child grows.



### Ages 2 to 3

This is when your child experiments with their independence. It's natural. Encourage it. Let them choose the activities or what books to read. Have them point to pictures. Have them sound out words. Repetition is how children learn.



### TODDLER TIPS:

- Practice patience. This can be difficult, but important.
- Set up a special time to read books.
- Let them tell you about their day.
- Help them memorize songs or rhymes.
- Make up your own stories. These are family memories that will last a lifetime.



### Ages 1 to 2

Now's the time to introduce questions. Apple or pear? Ball or triangle? This or that? Engaging your child in conversation, as simple as it might seem, is a powerful way to propel them forward.



### TODDLER TIPS:

- Read to them daily. Could be a story book. Could be a street sign. Doesn't matter.
- Play matching games.
- Encourage their independence: Experiment with letting them dress themselves.

### BABY TIPS:

- Talk to your baby.
- Cuddle and hold your baby.
- Repeat the sounds your baby makes. That's how they learn.

### Zero to 12 Months

Your child learns by observing life around them: Watching faces and responding to voices. Whether in the car or at home, they absorb everything around them. In the first year, babies learn to focus their vision, explore, and learn about the world around them.



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