



# Birth *to* 8 months

## APPROACHES TO LEARNING

*What skills help children learn?*

### Infant/Toddler Introduction

*What skills do infants and toddlers use to solve problems?*

One important problem-solving skill that infants and toddlers develop is the ability to pay attention to things they find interesting, even when there are distractions. For example, young infants can make eye contact with their family members even while there is music playing. Older toddlers can continue to stack a few blocks even when someone nearby is folding the laundry. This ability to concentrate on something helps them observe, gather information, build on their learning experiences and find solutions to problems.

- Infants can pay attention to things and people around them.
- They can play with one toy for a few minutes before focusing on a different toy.
- Infants can focus on a toy that is out of reach and repeatedly reach for it.
- They show interest in looking at colorful board books for a few minutes.
- They watch other children play.
- Infants can put things into a container, dump them out and fill the container again.
- Infants may stop moving their arms and legs for a moment when an adult comes over to talk to them.



In the months leading up to 8 months:

- Infants can remain calm and focused on people, toys and sounds for a minute or so.
- Infants will explore a toy by banging, putting it in their mouth or looking at it.

***Tips for families in helping children focus their attention:***

- Spend time talking with your baby; make eye contact. Say a few words and listen to your baby's sounds. Stay with your baby for at least a few minutes during each interaction so he has a chance to pay attention to your face and voice. Interactions with you give your baby a chance to begin to communicate and to learn how back-and-forth communication works.

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- Provide several simple toys that your baby can explore by holding, banging and putting in her mouth. Keep the toys near to her so she can reach them on her own.
- Observe your baby to see how he plays. While observing, give him some uninterrupted time to see how he explores toys on his own. When he looks over at you, you can smile or describe how he is using the toy: "I see you putting that in your mouth. How does it feel?" Observing your baby helps you to understand what learning is happening and to respond appropriately when your baby looks over at you to "check-in."

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- Offer several simple board books for your baby to reach and to look at with you. You can even lay on your back on the floor with your baby so you can both look up and "read" the book together.
- Make sure your baby gets to spend some time in a quiet place where she can focus on you and her toys without distractions.

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