

The Creative Curriculum®

Guide for Home Visitors



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Foreword

Teaching Strategies is committed to providing the most effective resources to support the critical work of our colleagues who care for, teach, and empower the youngest learners and their families. While the resources we offer have evolved over the years to reflect the growing body of knowledge related to developmentally appropriate practice, our commitment to supporting early childhood professionals remains the driving force behind our mission and lies at the heart of everything we do and create.

For over 30 years, *The Creative Curriculum*® has embodied this commitment. Our approach rests on a firm foundation of theory and research and applies that knowledge to innovative solutions for all early childhood educators. *The Creative Curriculum*® *Guide for Home Visitors* continues this commitment, detailing how *The Creative Curriculum*® foundational volumes and resources for daily practice support you, the home visitor, in your work, and guiding you to build strong partnerships with families.

On the following pages, you'll have the opportunity to learn how the play- and inquiry-based learning that is the hallmark of *The Creative Curriculum*® helps you promote children's development and learning while supporting their families in their role as the first and lifelong educators of their children. Throughout this *Guide*, you will find practical guidance for using the *Daily Resources* of *The Creative Curriculum*® to inform your work with families and their infants, toddlers, twos, and preschool-age children during your home visits and socialization meetings.

Thank you for your commitment to our youngest learners and their families. We are honored to be your partners in this critically important work.

Kai-lei Berke

Kai-leé Berke
Chief Executive Officer
Teaching Strategies, LLC



Introduction

The Creative Curriculum® Guide for Home Visitors is designed for professionals who work with young children and their families. This *Guide* shows you how you can use *The Creative Curriculum® Daily Resources* to support children in every area that is critical to their future success in school. It also gives you specific guidance for using the *Daily Resources* in a home visit or socialization meeting. This guidance helps you tailor the experiences that you offer to meet the needs of each child in your caseload. It also explains how to use these resources with families and offers practical strategies that support you in your work.

Families are the most important people in their children's lives. As a child's first teacher and an ongoing source of guidance and support throughout his journey as a lifelong learner, a child's family members are intimately involved in his growth and development and are the experts on the child. The experiences that a child has at home with his family members helps him develop a sense of self and his understanding of the world around him. The quality of these family–child relationships has a significant impact on young children's development.

When families feel respected and valued as their child's foremost teacher, your partnership with them will deepen their understanding of how they can meet the needs of their young children. You can draw upon this understanding as you support families to recognize how their active interest and involvement in their children's lives affects their growth and development.

Just as you get to know individual children and build a relationship that helps them develop and learn, you begin building a partnership with families by getting to know them and discovering what makes them unique. It is important to respect differences among families and to keep in mind that families are the most important people in their children's lives. By developing and maintaining trusting, respectful relationships with families, you convey the message that you value them as partners in their children's development and learning.

Partnering with families is an essential component of *The Creative Curriculum®*. The foundational volumes offer detailed guidance to make it easy for you to apply *The Creative Curriculum®* approach (developmentally appropriate practice combined with play- and inquiry-based learning to support the “whole” child as lifelong learner) to your own practice. The curriculum's *Daily Resources* help you provide children and their families with meaningful and engaging experiences that promote children's development and learning in every area.

Introduction

The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, Third Edition helps you offer the kind of consistent, responsive care that enables infants, toddlers, and twos to develop secure attachments with the important people in their lives and gain confidence in themselves as learners. The curriculum organizes the most current research and knowledge about caring for young children into three updated volumes:

- *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, Third Edition, Volume 1: The Foundation*
- *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, Third Edition, Volume 2: Routines and Experiences*
- *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, Third Edition, Volume 3: Objectives for Development & Learning, Birth Through Third Grade*

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition helps you build the comprehensive knowledge base necessary for preparing preschool children to succeed in school and in life. It organizes the current research and knowledge about high-quality early childhood programs into six comprehensive volumes:

- *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition, Volume 1: The Foundation*
- *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition, Volume 2: Interest Areas*
- *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition, Volume 3: Literacy*
- *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition, Volume 4: Mathematics*
- *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition, Volume 5: Science and Technology, Social Studies & the Arts*
- *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition, Volume 6: Objectives for Development & Learning, Birth Through Third Grade*

Developmentally appropriate practice, together with play- and inquiry-based learning, informs every piece of *The Creative Curriculum® Daily Resources*. As an early childhood professional, you recognize that it is through play that children develop and learn, and that play supports children's brain development in important ways.

Children's first play experiences involve their families. For example, as a child watches his mother's face and reaches out to touch her mouth, and she makes a sound against his hand, play has begun! As a result, the child reaches again and again, anticipating that the same thing will happen. When children are young, the best learning occurs through play in a familiar environment with loving family members.

Introduction

Play is a familiar, nonthreatening way for family members to engage actively with their children. Through play, children demonstrate preferences; make choices; solve problems; build early literacy, math, and science skills; and become aware of the thoughts, feelings, and needs of other people. Children thrive when family members actively engage with their child in play—describing what their child does, asking questions, joining in, modeling new behaviors, and offering appropriate challenges.

The *Daily Resources* from *The Creative Curriculum*® help you to meet individual families' strengths and needs and support them as they facilitate their children's development and learning in important areas. Each component of the *Daily Resources* gives you an opportunity to engage children and families in meaningful, developmentally appropriate experiences and helps families interact with their children in joyful, yet purposeful, play experiences throughout the day.

The Creative Curriculum® *Daily Resources* include the following components, depending on your program:

- *Mighty Minutes*®
- *Intentional Teaching Cards*™
- *The Creative Curriculum*® *LearningGames*®
- *Highlights Hello*™
- *Highlights High Five Bilingüe*™
- *Book Conversation Cards*™
- *Teaching Strategies*® *Children's Book Collection*
- *Book Discussion Cards*™

All of these components enable you to strengthen family–child relationships and support families to engage in play experiences that promote their children's development and learning.

Overview of This Guide

The purpose of this *Guide* is to help you use *The Creative Curriculum*® *Daily Resources* to support your work with children and their families. The *Guide* contains the following chapters and resources.

Home Visiting Basics

As a home visitor, you have a unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of families with young children. By working directly with family members in their homes, you help them understand their child's development and help them build the skills they need to effectively care for and teach their children. This chapter describes your role as a home visitor, offers general guidelines for conducting home visits, and suggests ways you can use different resources from *The Creative Curriculum*® to provide a structure for repeated visits.

Building Relationships With Families

High-quality early childhood programs and family support programs depend on program staff building strong partnerships with families. Families will be much more receptive to learning from you, sharing information with you, and trying new ideas and resources (including *Daily Resources*) if you have established a relationship with them that is based on trust and mutual respect. This chapter describes the importance of getting to know families and their unique life experiences. It explores the influence of culture on a family's practices and values and discusses the importance of respecting families as experts on their children. Effective communication techniques are also described, including asking the right questions, being a good listener, and resolving conflicts.

Supporting Children's Relationships With Their Families

One of your most important roles as a home visitor is to support the relationships between family members and the child. *The Creative Curriculum® Daily Resources* are tools that can help families spend purposeful time playing with their children and supporting their children's development. Repeated, nurturing experiences not only increase children's abilities and skills, they also strengthen children's relationships with family members. This chapter provides a brief overview of child development and temperament so you can help families understand their child's growth and individual characteristics. It also explains why it is important for you and families to observe children and discusses ways for you to help families respond appropriately to the information they obtain by observing.

Daily Resources for Intentional Learning Experiences

The Creative Curriculum® Daily Resources help you work with families to support their children's development and learning at home. This chapter describes how to select *Mighty Minutes®*, *Intentional Teaching Cards™*, and *LearningGames®*; introduce each type of resource and experience to families; and encourage families to use these resources independently with their children.

Daily Resources for Reading With Children

This chapter details how to select appropriate read-aloud resources and share them with families. These resources include *Highlights Hello™*, *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™*, *Book Conversation Cards™*, the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection*, and *Book Discussion Cards™*. You and children's families can apply the strategies described on *Book Conversation Cards™* and *Book Discussion Cards™* to other children's books and family reading experiences as well.

Resources

This section includes handouts on child development (“What Your Child May Be Doing”) to copy and share with families; “Planning and Play Forms” for *Mighty Minutes*[®], *Intentional Teaching Cards*[™], and *Learning Games*[®]; and an “Observation Form for Families.”

Chapter

1

Home Visiting Basics

Home Visiting Basics

The care and education that young children receive during their first 5 years of life have a powerful influence on their brain development, the way they view the world, how they relate to others, and their ability to succeed as learners. As a home visitor, you have a unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of families with young children. By working directly with family members in their homes, you help them understand their child's development, and you help them build the necessary skills to care for and teach their children. You accomplish this by building a supportive partnership with each family.

You have a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with family members in a relaxed setting and work collaboratively to develop a plan that meets their particular needs. Using *Daily Resources* from *The Creative Curriculum*® as part of that plan enriches children's experiences during this key period of development and growth; helps create a solid foundation for lifelong learning and success; and teaches family members important skills for interacting with, caring for, and teaching their children. By engaging in a *LearningGames*® activity with their child, using guidance from a *Book Conversation Card*™ or *Book Discussion Card*™ to enrich a reading experience, or enjoying a *Mighty Minutes*® experience together while they prepare dinner, families learn to recognize and respond to their child's signals. That responsiveness helps children form trusting attachments, feel more secure about exploring the world around them, and develop positive relationships with others.

Home Visiting Programs

Home visiting programs support children and families in their natural and most comfortable environment: their homes. On any given day, a home visitor provides a variety of services, e.g., helping family members improve their parenting skills, sharing information about child development, and offering specific treatment or therapy. Home visiting programs recognize and build on the fact that young children's development is affected by the quality of their relationships with their families. The experiences children have at home contribute to their development of a sense of self, their understanding of the world around them, and their ability to communicate. Recognizing that children develop as part of a family unit, early childhood programs use home visiting for different purposes: for prevention, early intervention, therapeutic intervention, or simply as general family support, depending on the program and the needs of the families and children.

There are anecdotes about home visitors and families throughout this *Guide*. You may be like Monica, who works in a Head Start home-based program. Monica makes home visits to offer support, guidance, information, and child development services directly to family members in their homes. You may be like Brenda, who makes home visits as an occupational therapist working in an early intervention program, providing therapeutic services to families of infants and toddlers who have certain disabilities. You may work in a program that serves at-risk families, such as Healthy Families (Prevent Child Abuse America), Success by Six, Even Start, Early Start, and a variety of other state, local, and private initiatives. You may be like Abner. Abner's program is designed to nurture, educate, and support families who live in vulnerable environments with children from birth to age 6. The goals of his program are to promote family and child interaction, healthy child development, and positive parenting skills, and to reduce child abuse and neglect.

Whatever your program's goals, all home visitors partner with families to make positive differences in the lives of their young children. You help families understand child development; develop appropriate, supportive parenting strategies; and support their child's growth and learning in important areas.

Your Role as a Home Visitor

As a home visitor, you have the privilege of seeing a child and his family in their most comfortable setting. Your role is to support children's development and learning by building meaningful partnerships with their families. To do so, you must get to know the most important people in each child's life. The issues and goals you discuss and agree on will be guided by individual families' beliefs and practices.

During home visits, you can use play as a way for families to engage with children in ways that promote their growth and development. When you talk about play, you talk about a subject that families understand. We all remember the fun we had playing as children, and we see play as a natural part of being a child. Play is fun, but it is also important. In fact, play affects all areas of development. It is how children learn about the people and the objects around them.

The intentional learning experiences described in the *Daily Resources* guide families to play and engage purposefully with their children, and they help families understand what their children learn through such joyful interactions. These activities and experiences can help families begin to notice more about their child, including what she likes and is interested in and what she can do. As they continue to respond to and interact with their child through play, family members begin to see the developmental changes that occur and appreciate what makes their child unique. As a result, they understand more about child development and their role in their own child's development and learning.

General Guidelines for Conducting Home Visits

Home visits can make it easier to get to know children and families because families are usually more comfortable in their own homes than they are in a school, agency, or community setting. Before making a home visit, contact the family to let them know that you want to visit. This initial contact begins the process of building a relationship with the family. When you go, visit with the intention of getting to know each family and building a relationship with them. Their child is your common focus.

Planning Ahead

Decide ahead of time what you want to accomplish during your first visit. Is it simply to introduce yourself and meet the family, or do you have additional goals? In the beginning, it is important to clearly state your own purposes and expectations for the visits and invite the family to state theirs. What you both expect to happen as a result of your work together will influence the purpose of each visit.

Before the initial visit, review your administrative paperwork or enrollment materials so that you are familiar with the names of family members and basic information about them. For ongoing visits, think about whether there is something from a previous visit you want to discuss. Is there a topic you did not finish discussing or some information you offered to find for the family? Your notes from the previous visit will help you to continue the conversation.

Brenda makes home visits as an occupational therapist working in an early intervention program. She knows that play is important to motivate young children to move and explore their environment. She is getting ready to meet Jeremy's family for the first time. She reviews the information she has about Jeremy: his assessment data, family background, and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals. She wonders what he and his family will be like.

Contacting the Family

Let the family know ahead of time why you are coming. Explain your roles and responsibilities. Arrange a time that is convenient for all parties and when there will be few interruptions. Choose a time when the family member can focus on the child. Selecting a time when a younger child is sleeping or when the family member typically interacts with the child during the day will give you the best insight into their relationship. Indicate how long you are likely to stay. Families may be anxious or excited about your visit. Reassure them and help them feel comfortable about your presence in their home. Invite family members to talk about their goals for the visit. Think about how to address as many of their requests as possible.

If you will be visiting multiple times, try to be flexible in scheduling your visits. Sometimes changes in the family's or child's routine may mean that a change is necessary.

Brenda's role is to support the family and the child. She wants Jeremy's grandparents (Clara and Fritz) to see her as helpful. She knows from experience that the family is probably anxious about a county medical professional coming to see their child in their home. She wants to put everyone at ease and to learn what the family wants for Jeremy. Since Jeremy has a newborn cousin living in his home, Brenda will see if they can schedule the visit when someone else is caring for her so Jeremy's grandmother and grandfather will be free to focus on Jeremy's needs.

Gathering Materials

Gather any materials and information you will need before making the visit. An initial visit may require you to bring various forms for enrollment purposes. A calendar to identify dates for future visits is helpful to bring on every visit. You may also need to gather handouts or information on a particular topic that the family requested or that you think will be helpful. Be sure to review the most recent planning and play forms and your notes from the last visit to see if you talked about any toys or materials that you should bring.

You will probably need different sets of materials for different families, so you will need a system to organize them. Many home visitors have a folder for each family with sections for forms, observation notes, and handouts. Crates or baskets for carrying materials and your paperwork are also useful.

The IFSP gives Brenda some good information about Jeremy. Now that Jeremy is 15 months old, one of his IFSP goals is to start to pull up to stand. During the initial phone conversation, his grandmother mentioned that he likes toys that stay in one place. Brenda decides to bring a busy table because Jeremy can use it in two ways. He can use the top of it on the floor to explore the various parts with his hands, and he can use it as a table on which to pull up. She knows families can borrow it from the play library at the county office. She decides to bring the necessary contact information for enrolling in the library program so she can share it with Jeremy's grandparents.

During the Visit

During this first phase of home visiting, encourage family members to talk about their priorities with regard to the child's skills and behavior. This will help you establish rapport and begin to build a positive relationship with the family. If their goals or priorities seem developmentally unrealistic, you can discuss these issues in an open and respectful manner as you share developmental information. Asking about what the child is doing and what the family does to help her often puts families at ease. As a home visitor, you should communicate clearly that families are always the decision makers about their child.

Your first visit is a good time to describe your role as a home visitor. Let families know how you will support them during visits. Explain that, over the course of your visits together, you will select activities, games, and experiences from the *Daily Resources* and discuss ways that families can use each resource to promote their child's development and learning.

The *Daily Resources* can provide a structure for your ongoing visits. They will help you direct your attention to what the child is doing and reflect on his development. For example, you can refer back to *Intentional Teaching Card™* experiences as he gains more skills and talk with his family about how he has changed over time and how the family's caregiving practices have changed as well. During the visit, encourage family members to use *Intentional Teaching Cards™* throughout the day and to notice what happens in different settings and at various times of day. You will know that family members' skills are increasing when they tell you about the different *Intentional Teaching Card™* activities, what they observed, why and how they adapted the activities, and the results. This shows their growing confidence in their ability to interact with their child and to guide his development and learning.

During the first visit, Brenda asks Jeremy's grandparents questions about his development. It is important to Brenda that she gather as much information from Jeremy's family as possible without offering too much guidance or information herself. This helps her build the relationship with his family by acknowledging that they are the experts about their child. She also spends some time observing Jeremy at play and watching his interactions with his grandparents. She notices that Grandpa Fritz selects toys for Jeremy to choose from and then puts them away when he finishes. Toward the end of the visit, Brenda shares *Intentional Teaching Cards™* (one language and literacy, one mathematics, one physical, and one social-emotional) with Jeremy's family and explains how they can use them during future visits.

Documenting the Visit and Following Up

In addition to visiting on a consistent basis, you must work with the family to identify goals, create a plan for meeting them, and describe what is accomplished. It is important to write notes about each visit as soon as possible after the visit has ended. Note what you observed about the family and child, what you did during the visit, any family concerns, and reminders for the next visit.

Refer to the "Planning and Play" form specific to the resource you shared during your visit to plan for future visits. Use the form to make notes about how the child responds during the learning experience as well as observations about the child's development in relation to the experience. These written records also help you monitor the child's progress and note preferences and patterns over time. You may want to use these forms to show families how much their child has developed and in what ways.

Jeremy's grandparents are most concerned about Jeremy's inability to stand. Brenda talked about different ways they could help him build the muscles he needs while playing together. After the visit, Brenda reviewed some *LearningGames*® and decided that "Roll the Ball" (game 40) would be a good activity to try—not only to support Jeremy's ability to play a game with simple rules, but also to help him strengthen his back and stomach muscles. She made notes on the "*The Creative Curriculum*® *LearningGames*® Planning and Play Form" so she would remember to show the family how to challenge Jeremy to stretch and use his muscles (by rolling the ball to the side) while enjoying the give-and-take that goes with being partners.

These general guidelines will help you gather the information you need for your program's purposes, and families will gain confidence in you and look forward to your next visit. The next two chapters in this *Guide* explain how you can build relationships with families during your visits and how you can support families to build positive relationships with their children. The last chapter details the *Daily Resources* and describes the process of selecting and using each resource during your visits with families.

Chapter

2

Building Relationships
With Families

Building Relationships With Families

High-quality early childhood programs depend on every staff member building strong partnerships with families. As a professional who provides care and education to children, and works with families, your ability to partner meaningfully with families is of the utmost importance. Successful partnerships are based on trust, mutual respect, and a shared understanding that a child’s development and learning is enhanced when all of the adults who care for the child work together.

In building relationships with families, remember that your role is to make yourself available to them as a valuable resource with firsthand knowledge of their child, offering information so they can do even more to support their child at home. While you may be an expert on how children typically develop and learn, families are the experts on *their* children. When you have strong relationships with families, they are more open to sharing information with you, understanding the new information you share with them, and using the *Daily Resources* from *The Creative Curriculum*[®] to engage their children in meaningful learning experiences at home.

To create effective partnerships with families, consider the following strategies:

- Get to know families. Learn about their personalities, interests, culture, and life experiences. Respect differences.
- Focus on the family during your visit. Talk with them about what they want for their child. Recognize their role as teachers and experts on their children.
- Be a good listener. Empathize with families and share your related experiences.
- Ask questions and provide information.
- Observe family members as they play and interact with their child. Comment on specific actions and responses that promote development and learning.
- Use a partnership approach for resolving differences constructively.

Getting to Know Families

As you get to know the most important people in a child’s life, you begin building partnerships with each family. Although it might take time, becoming familiar with families’ unique characteristics, strengths, and values helps you find ways to build the necessary trust and mutual respect. Begin by recognizing the many ways families differ and the profound influence of culture. Each family’s way of communicating, playing, and level of involvement with their child will be unique. There is no “best” way.

Appreciating Family Differences

Every family is different. The “traditional” family—two parents and their biological offspring—is not as common as it once was. Many children grow up with one parent, with grandparents, or with an aunt or uncle. Other children live with two mothers or two fathers. Some children are being raised by foster parents. To appreciate differences among the families you serve, begin by keeping an open mind about what constitutes a family. Remember, to children, their family members are the most important people in the world.

Some family members are easy to get to know. They are open to meeting new people and may be eager to communicate with you about their child. Others are uneasy and unsure of themselves. This may be their first experience with home visiting, and they don't know what to expect. Some may have had a bad experience with a home visit in the past. Their communication styles may be different from yours. For example, they may be uncomfortable with direct questions and reluctant to answer them. Because the time you have with some families is limited, it may take longer to establish trusting relationships. Some families may view you as an authority figure and wonder why you are asking their advice when you are the expert. Others may be embarrassed to have a stranger asking about their lives and wonder if you are judging them. Try to understand these differences and not to assume that the same approach will work with every family.

Families bring a wide range of life experiences that shape who they are and how they relate to others. The levels of education that family members have achieved, socioeconomic status, health problems, and length of time in this country also account for differences among families. Some are new parents, and some are very young. Some have taken on guardianship of grandchildren and are older. Others are caring for elderly or ill family members as well as their young children. Some are facing challenging circumstances such as unemployment, substance abuse, low literacy skills, unstable or unsafe housing, depression, or lack of access to a phone or transportation. Others are experiencing long separations from loved ones who are away for military service or in prison. You may have families who have only recently come to this country, do not know the language, and are trying to understand how to fit in. They may expect to be here permanently or plan to return to their countries of origin. The families you work with may have jobs that are very demanding. They may be struggling to balance the demands of work and finding that they have little time for their child.

These life experiences will affect how families respond to information you share with them and the amount of time they can devote to creating and sharing intentional learning experiences with their children. Your sensitivity to a family's particular circumstances will affect the way they relate to you.

When Abner visits Carlos's home for the first time, Marisol, Carlos's mother, invites Abner to sit in the large chair by the window while she sits on the couch. Carlos is on a blanket on the floor, playing under a toy gym. Marisol tells Abner that she borrowed the gym from a neighbor. She looks down and quietly says that she doesn't have many toys for Carlos. Abner tells her that some of the best toys are common household objects that a baby can explore safely. Marisol adds a ring of measuring spoons to the gym with a thick shoestring, hanging them just low enough for him to reach. Carlos grabs them right away. Marisol smiles and exclaims, "He likes them!" Abner makes a note to remember to pull *Intentional Teaching Cards™* and *LearningGames®* that use household objects to introduce these experiences to Carlos's mother on the next visit.

As you think about your caseload and plan individual home visits, consider how each of the following factors affects the families and children you serve:

- family composition, including the number and gender of parents, guardians, primary caregivers, and other family members present in the home
- number of children, their birth order, and their spacing
- any chronic health problem or disability of a family member
- exposure to violence, abuse, addiction, or neglect
- home languages
- type of community in which the family lives
- kind of work family members do
- age of the family member(s) when the child was born, when the child was adopted, or when the child came into the home
- economic status
- living situation, including history
- parent's (guardian's or primary caregiver's) level of education
- parent's (guardian's or primary caregiver's) job history, including work-related travel
- special circumstances such as marital separation or divorce, absence of a family member for reasons not related to marriage, a new sibling, a new living situation, how many different people the child is around, and how many places the child moves between each day

Be aware and mindful of each child's circumstances as you begin to work with the family. Your home visiting program may have some forms to help you learn more about individual families. Talking with families and taking notes about what you learn is an important first step. Encourage families to communicate with you about anything new taking place in their children's lives. This process will take time as you develop a trusting relationship with the family. Remember to honor the confidentiality of the information family members share with you. If a family member shares information with you that makes you uncomfortable, seek advice from your supervisor or a specialist in your program.

Understanding the Influence of Culture

Culture involves the customary beliefs, values, and practices people learn from their families and communities. They learn through example (watching what others do) or through explicit instruction (being told what is expected). Culture affects the way people communicate and interact with others, and it shapes their expectations of how others will respond. Because every culture has its own set of rules and expectations, various cultures interpret differently what is said and done. Culture has a very strong influence on practices, beliefs, and goals for raising children. Your belief system was probably influenced by those directly responsible for raising you. Think about your own beliefs and how they influence your practice.

It will help you to learn as much as possible about the different cultures of the families you serve. Remember that every family is different. Try not to generalize about any group's characteristics. Consider the many factors that influence the practices and values of an individual family, including the family's country of origin, its social class there and here, family members' educational background, and whether extended family members live in the home. Rather than making assumptions about cultural influences, it is better to keep an open mind and consider the values behind each family's beliefs.

To appreciate how and why families respond as they do, be aware of your own personal experiences and how they have influenced your thinking and actions. Think about the messages you received growing up and the experiences you had in your own family and community.

- How did you become aware of your personal identity, nationality, culture, and ethnicity?
- What early messages did you receive about different groups?
- How did you define a *family* when you were growing up? Has your definition changed today?
- What messages did you receive about your family's socioeconomic status?
- Were girls treated differently from boys in your family? What do you think your family's expectations were for you?
- How and when were you encouraged to express your ideas and feelings?
- Was it acceptable to be noisy and active in your home, or were children expected to be seen and not heard?
- How was discipline managed?
- Was independence encouraged?

Thinking about these considerations will help you know what questions to ask each family. Be selective about the kinds of questions you ask. You can learn a lot about families simply by observing them as they interact with one another.

As you get to know families, you will find answers to questions such as these:

- Who are the people in the child's immediate family?
- Who are the decision makers in the family? Are decisions made by one person or by several people?
- Do all family members live in the same household?
- Who is the primary caregiver of the family's young children?
- How does the family balance children's independence with doing things for them?
- What, when, and how are children fed?
- How is discipline managed?
- Do family members have different roles in raising children?
- Are boys and girls treated differently?
- Is it acceptable for children to be noisy and get dirty?
- What kinds of questions are children asked?
- How do adults respond to children's questions?
- How do people interact with one another? Do they look each other in the eye? Are they taught to pause and think carefully about a response before giving it? Do they touch each other as they communicate?
- How do families show respect for elders? For children?

As Brenda enters Jeremy's home, his grandfather, Fritz, is feeding him applesauce with a spoon. Brenda comments, "That looks good." Fritz explains, "I like to feed my big boy. I don't want him to get dirty." Later, Brenda notes this observation so she can remember this family practice. She will need to keep this in mind as she and Jeremy's family select *Daily Resources* for intentional learning experiences. It will be important to honor the family's practice of doing many things for the child and not urge the family to have Jeremy practice personal skills independently without first discussing particular skills with family members.

Families as Experts

Families are their child's first teachers and are intimately involved in their child's growth and development. The family's interests, values, and priorities are reflected in their daily routines and in their interactions with their children. As an interested partner, you will want to know as much about the family as possible—their views, goals, and needs—in order to share the most useful information with them.

Here are some positive assumptions that can be made about families:

- They are experts on their children.
- They are the constant in their child's life.
- They want to do what is best for their children.
- They have taught their children most of what the children know.

As a home visitor, you will exchange information with the family about their concerns and discuss supports that can help address them. Emphasizing that all children grow through play will help everyone focus on the child's strengths and interests. As families learn to use the *Daily Resources*, they will feel more confident about their involvement in their child's development and learning.

The activities and strategies that you share with a family depend on what the family identifies as their most important goals for their child. The most successful supports respond to the priorities that the family identifies for their child. You will work together to develop and carry out a plan.

Families are interested in helping their children learn and grow, and most family members are comfortable playing with their children. Helping them to recognize the different kinds of learning opportunities that children experience through play and other engaging experiences will empower them as experts and as their child's first and most important teachers.

Monica carefully plans her visit to Isaiah's home, thinking that she and Isaiah's father, Jackson, will talk about sharing books with Isaiah. She is prepared to discuss the importance of books and how to read to him so that he can participate in the experience as much as possible. When Monica arrives, Jackson expresses concern about Isaiah not sharing toys and other items with his brother, Otis. Monica sets aside her thoughts about books and instead talks about sharing, which is an appropriate topic to approach with a 4-year-old. She notes to bring the *LearningGames*® activity "We Play Relay" to the next home visit so Jackson can play a game that encourages cooperation between Isaiah and Otis.

Effective Communication

Effective, ongoing communication forms the basis of productive partnerships. Families love to hear about their child's development, learning, and experiences. As you share information with families and listen to their concerns, you build the trust that is essential to partnerships. Through shared experiences with *Daily Resources*, you can comment on how the child is doing, share information about his development and learning, and discover which strategies work best for the family. Give examples of how different learning experiences described in the *Daily Resources* can support their child and invite them to share their ideas. These learning experiences provide a basis for continuing discussions as they are repeated, varied, tailored, and expanded according to the child's response.

As you share *Daily Resources* with families and continue making home visits, be willing to ask questions as well as to share knowledge. Trust is built over time and is based on many positive and respectful experiences. By building strong partnerships, home visitors help families understand and support their child's development. All children need caring adults in their lives who take an active interest in their health, safety, and learning. Because each family is unique, you will communicate with each family in different ways.

Asking Questions

As you develop relationships with families, you will find that you have much to learn from one another. Families know their children: their personalities, how they respond to new experiences, what they like to do, and what new skills they are developing. You know about typical child development and learning, as well as what you have learned about their child through your observations. Families are the experts on their children, and your conversations with them will help you get to know their child better. Here are a few topics to discuss with families:

- health and growth history; how the child used to be and how she is now
- the child's relationships with other family members
- ways the child likes to be held or comforted
- food the child likes
- how the child reacts to changes in routines
- the child's fears, likes, and dislikes
- the family's lifestyle and experiences
- how the child communicates her feelings, ideas, and needs

Some of the most important factors in identifying opportunities for using *Daily Resources* are a child's interests, preferences, and capabilities. Consider asking families some of these open-ended questions to help identify a child's interests and strengths:

- What would you most like me to know about your child?
- What makes your child smile and laugh?
- What are your child's favorite things to do?
- What gets and keeps his attention?
- What gets him to try new things?
- Does your child have a favorite toy? What is it?
- What have you noticed that your child is especially good at doing on his own?
- Do you have any concerns about your child? What are they?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your child?

As you learn about a family and share information about their child, you build a positive, trusting relationship that helps the family see you as a tremendous asset and a partner in their child's progress.

Being a Good Listener

Effective communication requires that you not only ask the right questions, but also that you listen actively and listen well. In true partnerships, each individual is seen to be equally capable of expressing his or her ideas about caring for the child. During a home visit, you should spend as much time listening and learning as you do sharing your thoughts and knowledge. Active listening lets the family know that you take their concerns and ideas seriously. Use the following strategies to listen actively as families share their expertise with you.

Listen to what the family is saying about their child, including information about her accomplishments as well as any concerns about her development. Pay attention to their feelings as well as their words in order to see things from the family's perspective, to recognize their needs, and to understand what is most important to them with regard to their child.

Carlos is now crawling. He slowly crawls towards Marisol as she calls to him. Marisol shares with Abner that Carlos will only start crawling when she places him on the floor on his stomach but is reluctant to crawl past his blanket. Marisol wants to make sure she is doing everything she can to support Carlos's physical development and Abner makes a note to share certain *Intentional Teaching Cards*™ (P13, "1, 2, 3 Hops," and P20, "Bumpy Blanket") with Marisol on the next home visit.

Focus on the family member as she speaks. Look at her and listen carefully to what she is saying. Do not get distracted, interrupt, or jump to conclusions. Match her style of communication and keep an open mind about different perspectives.

As Marisol shares her observations of Carlos's physical development, she often looks away from Abner and focuses on her hands. When Abner listens to Marisol, he makes eye contact at the beginning of the conversation but will shift his gaze to Carlos when Marisol mentions Carlos directly. This lets Marisol know that she has Abner's full attention and reassures her that she and Carlos are Abner's focus.

Ask questions about what the family member is saying to let her know that you are listening. Open-ended questions—to which more than one correct answer is possible—encourage families to talk more and share their ideas. Use prompts such as, "Tell me more about..." and "How did you feel?" and "What happened next?"

Abner asks Marisol, "What happened when Carlos crawled to the edge of his blanket on the floor? What happens when you stop calling his name as he crawls?"

Restate what you hear in your own words to make sure you understand what is being said. This also helps you to build a shared language with families. If there is uncertainty about what a family member is talking about, clarify your understanding while restating it in positive terms: “Tell me whether I understand what you are saying. I think I heard you say... .” Restating helps you remember the conversation so that you can make notes at a later time.

“I think I heard you say that Carlos is unsure about the texture of the wood floor and that he will crawl off the blanket onto the floor when you are right next to him.”

Describe feelings to show empathy and to help the family member process any strong emotions. This strategy may also help families think about their feelings in the future when they are responding to a challenging situation with their child.

Marisol tells Abner about a time when Carlos would not stop crying despite her efforts to engage him in a playful activity. He responds, “It sounds like you were really frustrated when it didn’t work the way you wanted it to.”

After you have listened to family members and have acknowledged their ideas, thoughtfully respond to their questions and concerns. While communicating with families, try to be specific and factual. Vague or subjective comments can leave family members uncertain about what you mean or may make them defensive.

“It sounds like you want to make sure you are encouraging Carlos’s crawling while respecting his hesitation to crawl past his blanket or his reluctance to crawl without you right next to him.”

Share observations of positive family interactions and their child’s behaviors. This helps to build on a family’s strengths and promotes their confidence. Describing positive family–child interactions and their influence on the child’s development is a powerful way to acknowledge a family’s success. Families are more likely to remember specific information and examples you provide about their child’s development.

Carlos sits up smoothly from that position. His motor skills are really developing! See how easily he goes from crawling to sitting and back again? Using *Mighty Minutes 76*, ‘Now I’m Crawling,’ with him really gets him to move.”

Model an interaction with the child that the family can imitate.

When you do something with the child, you actively communicate to the family how to play with a child, ask a child questions, read with a child, or respond to a behavior. Showing how to interact with a child can help some families feel safe to try out new ways of interacting. It may feel less threatening than having you simply tell them what to do.

Isaiah and his father, Jackson, are sitting at a small table. Monica sits down to join them. She picks up a cup and asks Isaiah to pretend to pour juice into her cup. Then she pretend-drinks from it. Monica asks, “Will you please give Daddy some, too?” Monica comments to Jackson, “Children imitate a lot at this age. They love to role-play everyday activities like cooking and eating. It’s an important way for young children to learn.”

Working Through Differences

Despite all the positive steps you take to build a partnership with each family, you will likely encounter challenging situations. Even in the best of relationships, you will find that misunderstandings, disagreements, and conflicts emerge. Some families are struggling with difficult situations, and ongoing stress makes it difficult for them to be available to their children. Challenging situations must be handled carefully and positively in order to maintain a partnership.

Use a partnership approach. If you work with families who share your values and beliefs and have similar life experiences and personal characteristics, you are more likely to interpret what they say and do in the same way they do. If you work with families who are very different from you—and if you do not know much about their beliefs and practices—miscommunication and misunderstandings can easily take place. Understanding and respecting practices that are different from your own help you build positive relationships with all families.

You and families will not always agree. There will probably be times when you and a family member have different points of view. Families who do not understand your point of view or who feel that their values and goals for their child are not respected will not be comfortable in the partnership.

This is the important question: “How can we work out our differences in a positive way?” Through a combination of acceptance, compromise, and sensitivity to the family’s culture and beliefs, you can resolve most conflicts. The following steps may be helpful in resolving differences constructively.

Try first to understand the family's position. Ask open-ended questions and listen to learn the family's concerns. "Tell me a little about your concerns for your child. What would you like him to learn?" These questions can help you discover the real issues behind the family's requests. More than likely, they want their child to behave well and practice self-discipline.

Jackson, Isaiah's father, shares that Isaiah has been hitting and pushing his brother, Otis, a lot. Isaiah even tried to push Otis off the slide twice last week. Every time Isaiah does this, Jackson puts him in time out. Jackson says Isaiah spends more time in time out than playing. Monica is frustrated because she and Jackson had spent a great deal of time over the past few months talking about positive guidance strategies that Jackson could use besides simply putting Isaiah in time out. Instead of voicing her frustration, Monica asks, "Jackson, what do you want Isaiah to learn about hitting and pushing?"

Validate the family's concerns and wishes. Restate what you hear family members say to be sure you understand and to let them know you hear them: "What I'm hearing you say is that you want to be sure your child learns how to control himself and how to behave. This is an important goal for us as well. We spend a lot of time building children's skills in this area." The family member can then confirm or clarify your understanding.

"Okay, I understand what you are saying. It's important to you that Isaiah learns to get along with his brother and to talk about what he's feeling rather than hit and push. Is that right?"

Together, generate solutions. Once the problem is clarified and there is some agreement about goals, you will want to resolve the problem in a way that satisfies both you and the family. One way to start finding a solution is to ask for their ideas. You may have an idea of how to solve the problem, but your goal is to involve the family in the problem-solving process. By being willing to share control of the process, you send messages that the family's opinion and ideas count and that you are partners in caring for their child.

Since Jackson really enjoys using *LearningGames*® with Isaiah, Monica suggests they explore a few age-appropriate *LearningGames*® (48–60 months). The picture of the child with the puppet in "How About You?" catches Jackson's attention. Jackson reminds Monica how much Isaiah loves puppets. Monica says, "Maybe we can use the puppet game to find out why Isaiah pushes and hits his brother. Maybe he'll talk to the puppet about how he's feeling. Let's use his favorite dinosaur puppet to ask questions."

Continue the dialogue. Once a possible solution is identified, decide on a time to talk with each other about how it is going and whether to make any changes. If the solution is not working well, talk with the family again and come up with another solution. Discuss ways you can continue to work together to meet the family's goals. If possible, share information about topics of concern to the family. In some situations, you may decide that a compromise may be the best solution and that you should put aside your own beliefs to accomplish something more important. By suspending judgment, you can convey to families that you are eager to gain a deeper understanding of what they want and value. With this information, you can try an approach that suits them and gains their trust and respect without violating the values, goals, and principles of your program.

Positive working relationships require time and effort, but everyone benefits. Families feel more confident about their parenting skills and are more likely to freely share the information you need to help their children develop and learn. You can see conflicts as opportunities to understand a family's point of view and to find ways to partner with the family. The more you know about children and families, the better able you will be to determine the best approach to resolving conflicts.

Parenting a child is one of the important jobs in the world, yet there is very little training for this critical role. Adults who had caring, nurturing experiences when they were children usually have a solid foundation for becoming supportive parents. Those who had less constructive experiences still want the best for their children and are doing what they think is needed. Learn as much as you can about the strengths and needs of each family so that you have realistic expectations and can individualize your approach to the partnership. Your way of working with one family will not necessarily be the same as with another.

Chapter

3

**Supporting Children's
Relationships
With Their Families**

Supporting Children's Relationships With Their Families

One of your most important roles as a home visitor is to support the relationship between individual families and their children. This involves helping families understand child development and their child's temperament, getting to know families well, supporting families to be careful observers of their children, and sharing strategies that enable families to be responsive to their children during play. The *Daily Resources* from *The Creative Curriculum*[®] help families engage in purposeful play with their children and meet important objectives for development and learning. Your direct support of children and their families improves children's skills and abilities while strengthening their relationships with their families.

Helping Families Understand Child Development

As a home visitor, you are tasked with understanding child development and explaining it to families within the context of their children. While we know that individual children develop in different ways and at different rates, development typically follows a predictable sequence of milestones. Many factors influence how a child develops, including his interests, temperament, and the quantity and types of his experiences in and out of the home.

We can look at child development as being divided into nine broad areas: social–emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts. In reality, development is not so neatly divided; instead, these are interrelated and often overlap. Development in one area affects and is influenced by development in all other areas.

The following section provides a brief overview of the nine areas of development and notes how the *Daily Resources* support young children's development and learning in each area.

Social–Emotional Development

Social–emotional development is learning to relate to adults and other children in positive and caring ways. It involves the way children feel about themselves, their understanding of feelings, their ability to regulate emotions and express them appropriately, and their capacity for building relationships with others.

When adults are responsive, when they share the pleasures of children’s accomplishments and discoveries, and when they create an environment in which children can participate actively in daily routines and experiences, they show children that they are important, interesting, and competent. When children are loved and accepted, they feel secure. When children feel safe and secure, they become active explorers and learners. Through positive interactions, children learn about themselves and how to relate to others.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- build trust and feelings of security
- learn that they can make things happen
- build positive relationships with others
- build self-esteem and confidence
- make choices
- learn about their own and others’ families
- define their likes and dislikes
- recognize feelings in themselves and others
- play cooperatively with other children

Social–Emotional Development		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Enjoy being held and cuddled</p> <p>Respond to familiar people by smiling, cooing, and babbling (you are their favorite toy)</p> <p>Imitate people’s actions</p> <p>Explore toys by using their senses</p> <p>Pay attention to sounds and movement</p> <p>Enjoy playing “peek-a-boo”</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Find new ways to make things happen</p> <p>Follow simple requests and understand more language than they can express</p> <p>Are increasingly aware of their possessions</p> <p>Become aware of others’ expressions of emotions</p> <p>Enjoy realistic toys, e.g., baby dolls, bottles, cradles, telephones</p> <p>Initiate “peek-a-boo” activities</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Have strong feelings and may use actions instead of words to express their emotions</p> <p>Begin to learn about taking turns, but should not be expected to share toys and materials</p> <p>Interact with other children for longer periods</p> <p>Engage in simple pretend play</p> <p>Begin to use caring behaviors to help and comfort others</p> <p>Use toys (e.g., balls, blocks) with other people</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Can help make and follow a few simple rules</p> <p>Imitate adult activities</p> <p>Talk with other children in pairs and in groups</p> <p>Learn to take turns and share</p> <p>Begin to recognize and understand the feelings of others</p> <p>Enjoy simple pretend play, alone and with others</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Can follow simple instructions and sustain attention</p> <p>Can learn to solve problems through negotiation and compromise</p> <p>Have strong emotions and are learning to name and express them appropriately</p> <p>Develop friendships and may have a best friend</p> <p>Are learning to play games with rules</p>	

Physical Development

Physical development includes gaining control over large and small muscles. Large-muscle skills enable a child to roll over, sit, crawl, stand, walk, climb, run, ride a trike, and throw a ball. Small-muscle skills such as holding, pinching, and flexing fingers eventually enable children to do such things as draw, write, eat with utensils, and cut with scissors. As their physical abilities grow, children learn to use them to make new discoveries.

Although children typically develop physical skills in a predictable sequence, they develop these skills at different rates. Control of their bodies develops from head to toe and from the center of their bodies out through their arms and legs to their fingers and toes. By observing children and sharing information with families, you can keep one another up to date about each child's growing abilities.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- increase large- and small-muscle control
- move in different ways
- follow directions about how to move
- scribble, draw, make lines, and trace around objects
- use tools to build, create, draw, and write

Physical Development		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Gain control of and move their heads from side to side</p> <p>Play with their hands and feet</p> <p>Reach for, grasp, shake, mouth, and explore objects they can hold</p> <p>Move objects from one hand to the other; bang objects together</p> <p>Roll over</p> <p>Sit on a blanket, propped at first and then without external support</p> <p>Crawl to explore</p> <p>Pull themselves to standing and cruise holding on to furniture</p> <p>Roll, hold, and throw balls</p> <p>Pick up finger foods</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Pull themselves to standing and cruise holding on to furniture</p> <p>Walk steadily but may prefer to crawl</p> <p>Use carts, baby carriages, and other wheeled toys to support walking</p> <p>Begin to climb and slide</p> <p>Move rhythmically to music</p> <p>Clap</p> <p>Take objects out and put them back in containers; fill a container and then dump the objects out</p> <p>Roll and throw balls</p> <p>Reach successfully for moving objects, e.g., bubbles</p> <p>Begin to stack objects</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Develop small-muscle skills by turning pages, pouring, opening containers, and using scissors</p> <p>Stack and build with blocks</p> <p>Begin to coordinate eye-and-hand movements, e.g., threading beads on laces, manipulating snaps and zippers</p> <p>Walk smoothly, tiptoe, and begin to run</p> <p>Begin to gain large-muscle skills, e.g., throwing, catching, kicking, jumping, hopping</p> <p>Pull and push things, e.g., boxes, doll carriages, wheeled toys</p> <p>Sit on and use their feet to propel riding toys</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Walk, run, and turn with coordination</p> <p>Walk along a line, using arms for balance</p> <p>Climb stairs using alternate feet</p> <p>Jump with two feet</p> <p>Hop and balance on one foot</p> <p>Push and pedal tricycles</p> <p>Throw, catch, and kick large balls</p> <p>Use utensils to eat and serve themselves</p> <p>Dress themselves and use large fasteners</p> <p>Coordinate eye-and-hand movements, e.g., pour water into a funnel, create a tall block structure</p> <p>Turn pages one at a time</p> <p>Use tools to draw objects and simple shapes</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Demonstrate basic gross-motor skills, e.g., running, jumping, hopping, galloping</p> <p>Pedal, steer, and turn corners on a tricycle or other wheeled vehicle</p> <p>Demonstrate balance while moving</p> <p>Climb up and down stairs easily</p> <p>Demonstrate throwing, kicking, and catching skills</p> <p>Use tools for writing and drawing, e.g., drawing objects and shapes with markers, writing letters and words with colored pencils</p> <p>Fasten clothing</p> <p>Build detailed structures with smaller materials</p> <p>Use tools (e.g., scissors) successfully</p> <p>Complete interlocking puzzles</p>	

Language Development

Language development includes the sharing of ideas and feelings with others, as well as listening and speaking. Children develop language in many ways: through gestures, facial expressions, spoken words, and touch. They develop language in order to think, plan, solve problems, and figure out what others think and feel. Language becomes the principal tool for establishing and maintaining relationships with adults and other children. Developing language takes practice. By sharing your pleasure in children’s attempts to communicate—rather than correcting their mistakes—and by talking with them even before they understand what you are saying or can respond verbally, you help children build on their desire to communicate.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- engage in back-and-forth conversations
- build expressive and receptive vocabularies
- play word games
- build language skills and language comprehension
- experiment with using different voices and vocal inflections

Language Development		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Ask for care and attention by crying, laughing, and smiling, and through other vocalizations</p> <p>Vocalize to themselves, people, and toys</p> <p>Understand and respond to gestures, facial expressions, and changes in vocal tone</p> <p>Understand and respond to their names and to very simple, familiar requests</p> <p>Recognize a familiar voice before the person enters the room</p> <p>Look at favorite toy when family member labels and points to it</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Follow simple requests and understand more language than they can express</p> <p>Use gestures and sounds to communicate</p> <p>Wave good-bye</p> <p>Understand and respond to many words, simple directions, and questions</p> <p>Increase expressive vocabulary</p> <p>Name familiar people in their lives</p> <p>Play games with back-and-forth exchanges, e.g., “pat-a-cake,” “peek-a-boo”</p> <p>Point to familiar pictures in a book when prompted</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Talk in simple sentences that gradually increase from two to several words</p> <p>Increase their ability to listen and to speak</p> <p>Engage in conversation and ask questions</p> <p>Begin to express feelings verbally</p> <p>Follow simple requests</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Use language to gain information, understand concepts, express feelings, and make requests</p> <p>Participate in conversations with adults</p> <p>Use speech that is easy to understand</p> <p>Talk in three- to five-word sentences</p> <p>Follow directions involving two to three steps of a familiar task</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Learn most of the rules of grammar without direct instruction</p> <p>Take turns in conversation; listen and ask questions</p> <p>Regulate volume of voice when reminded</p> <p>Describe and talk about how to use familiar objects</p>	

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development involves how children think, how they see their world, and how they use what they learn. Children learn as they move and explore their environments. They learn as they grasp a rattle, pound molding dough, ride a bike, and smell grilled-cheese sandwiches. They learn as they play and live each day with their families. As they eat, get dressed, or move a chair across the room, children collect information about how things work. As they get older, they become curious about what they observe and experience. They ask questions, make predictions about what might happen, and test their ideas. They recall past experiences and apply what they know to new situations in order to understand them. As families notice and build on their child's interests, they promote their child's ability to learn.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- search for their own images in mirrors
- sort and match pictures and objects
- compare different items
- make predictions
- categorize objects
- gain strategies for organizing knowledge
- make decisions
- follow directions
- learn to imagine different situations

Cognitive Development		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Learn about objects by using all of their senses</p> <p>Visually follow and respond to moving objects and faces</p> <p>Notice objects with contrasting colors and patterns and those with gentle movement and sounds</p> <p>Watch mirrored images appear and disappear</p> <p>Imitate adult movements and language sounds</p> <p>Enjoy activity boxes</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Make choices between clear alternatives</p> <p>Begin to solve problems</p> <p>Learn by moving and doing</p> <p>Concentrate for longer periods of time</p> <p>Open doors and flip light switches</p> <p>Enjoy sorting and nesting toys</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Want to do things by themselves</p> <p>Enjoy sensory toys with various sounds and textures</p> <p>Sort and match objects and pictures by size, color, or shape</p> <p>Experiment to see what will happen as a result of their actions</p> <p>Complete puzzles with a few pieces</p> <p>Make sounds with musical instruments</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Use all of their senses to explore and investigate</p> <p>Enjoy gathering information about the world</p> <p>Ask <i>why</i> questions</p> <p>Sort and categorize materials</p> <p>Become interested in cause and effect (what makes things happen)</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Talk about what they are doing and explain their ideas</p> <p>Represent what they learned through drawings, constructions, and dramatic play</p> <p>Ask many questions: What? Why? How?</p> <p>Make connections between new experiences and ideas and what they already know</p> <p>Understand concepts related to number, size, weight, color, texture, distance, position, and time</p> <p>Follow two- to three-step directions</p>	

Literacy Learning

Literacy development during the early childhood years includes emergent reading and writing behaviors that form the foundation for later reading and writing. Children develop these emergent literacy behaviors through seeing and recognizing print in their homes and in their communities, having books read aloud with them, exploring picture books and storybooks, and writing (from making scribbles or marks to making controlled scribbles and letters). Exploring books and retelling stories as a cozy daily ritual encourages children (even the youngest of infants) to enjoy reading experiences and promotes their literacy learning.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- listen, watch, and participate during reading experiences
- retell stories
- create stories
- use crayons, markers, pencils, paper, and other writing tools

Literacy Learning		
<p>Infants (0–12 months) Enjoy listening to simple stories, rhymes, and songs Use their senses to explore books</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months) Point to familiar pictures in a book Learn to turn pages Hold crayons and make marks on paper Bring books to an adult to explore and read with them</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months) Enjoy books with rhymes and predictable words they can anticipate and repeat Tell very simple stories Begin to make sense of basic time concepts, e.g., before and after Orient a book correctly, i.e., right side up; front to back Recognize familiar books by their covers</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months) Tell simple stories as they look at pictures and books Pretend to read a familiar book, using illustrations as cues Enjoy a wide variety of books Learn print concepts such as reading a book from front to back and reading a page from top to bottom Fill in missing rhyming words in familiar stories, songs, and rhymes when prompted</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months) Retell familiar stories, mastering the correct sequencing of events Understand that printed words convey messages Memorize songs, rhymes, and books with repetitive language patterns Learn time concepts; talk about yesterday and tomorrow Learn print concepts, e.g., that English text is written and read from left to right</p>	

Mathematics Learning

Mathematics learning involves noticing similarities and differences, organizing information, and understanding quantity, numbers, patterns, space, and shapes. When adults encourage children’s explorations and manipulations of objects in their environment, they are supporting children’s discovery of mathematical relationships. Children learn and understand the concepts and language of math through this firsthand exploration of their world. Adults play a significant role in helping children learn mathematics vocabulary, concepts, and process skills through everyday experiences.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- explore number concepts, e.g., counting, quantity, comparisons, number order, numerals
- notice relative sizes and amounts
- recognize repeated patterns in everyday items and experiences
- recognize shapes and positions in space

Mathematics Learning		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Respond (watch you intently; smile and coo) as you count items or use words such as <i>more</i></p> <p>Place lids on each container they are playing with</p> <p>Reach for more toys or other objects</p> <p>Make a sign for “more” after finishing a snack</p> <p>Focus on the color or texture of items</p> <p>Wave arms in anticipation of receiving a bottle</p> <p>Distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar adults</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Stomp around the room singing a counting song</p> <p>Put a cup on each plate or a napkin next to each chair at the lunch table</p> <p>Know whether to go around, in, or through a structure to get to an object</p> <p>Place differently shaped blocks into the matching openings in the shape-sorter box</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Line up items of different sizes, grouping the big items together and the little items together</p> <p>Hold up fingers to indicate age</p> <p>Separate and group items by color, shape, and size</p> <p>Learn the names of basic shapes, e.g., circle, square, triangle</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of the concepts of one, two, and more</p> <p>Follow simple directions related to proximity, e.g., beside, between, next to</p> <p>Identify basic shapes, e.g., circle, square, triangle</p> <p>Compare sizes of similar objects</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Use and respond appropriately to positional words</p> <p>Relate time to daily routines</p> <p>Measure items using nonstandard measuring tools, e.g., a block to measure the table, a piece of ribbon to measure the rug</p> <p>Line up items in a color pattern</p> <p>Count up to 20 and count up to 20 items</p>	

Science and Technology Learning

Science and technology development involves learning about living things, the physical properties of materials and objects, and Earth’s environment. When adults encourage children’s hand-on explorations of the world around them, they help children engage in scientific thinking. Children love to explore and investigate. With adult support and guidance, children will expand their explorations and investigations as they connect new understandings to related experiences.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- observe and explore their immediate environment
- manipulate objects to understand their properties
- react to changes
- show awareness of living things

Science and Technology Learning		
<p>Infants (0–12 months) Grasp and mouth and shake an offered item, e.g., teething ring, rattle Interact with toys, e.g., bat at a hanging toy, pull a string attached to a toy to make it come closer, push buttons on a pop-up toy, squeeze a toy to make it squeak Discover body parts, e.g., grab their feet, play with your hair Notice various sounds outside (e.g., birds chirping, dog barking, cars honking) and look in the direction of each new sound</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months) Experiment to see what sounds they can make with instruments, e.g., xylophone, toy drum, musical bells Get excited when they see something new outside, e.g., a squirrel scampering up a tree Notice moving shadows on the wall, a curtain blown by the wind, leaves falling on the ground</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months) Use different toy tools at a toy workbench Mix paint colors to make new colors Notice the weather outside</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months) Sort household items Tilt block ramps to make cars go down faster Collect items outdoors to play with and explore, e.g., sticks from the backyard, leaves on the ground, rocks from the playground, snow Talk about what they do during the day and at night Experiment with physical items, e.g., add water to dirt to make mud</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months) Want to help a family member take care of a family pet Experiment with physical items and notice what happens, e.g., paint with water on the sidewalk and notice that the picture quickly disappears, manipulate a prism so colors appear on the wall, create shadows using a flashlight</p>	

Social Studies Learning

Social studies for young children involves learning about people and about the world around them. Young children gain an understanding of people through their interest in and awareness of themselves and their family members. Preschool children’s interest then moves from their families to other people in their community and neighborhood. Children’s experiences with their families and in their neighborhoods and communities contribute to their understanding of social studies concepts and lays the foundation for later social studies learning, in which children gain self-awareness, learn about people and how they live, explore change related to familiar people or places, and gain simple geographic knowledge.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- identify their unique characteristics as individuals
- become aware of similarities and differences among people and families
- explore how people around them live
- observe and measure change in people and places
- notice characteristics of the physical environment

Social Studies Learning		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Get excited when they see familiar people enter the room</p> <p>Gaze at photos of family members in the home</p> <p>Watch other children with great interest</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Recognize themselves in the mirror</p> <p>Act out simple life scenes, e.g., talking on a phone, feeding a baby, pushing a doll in a carriage</p> <p>Explore their surroundings by walking, climbing, and crawling through spaces and structures</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Understand the sequence of their family’s daily routines</p> <p>Show a great deal of interest in young babies and what they can and cannot do</p> <p>Begin to understand words that describe position, e.g., <i>next to, on, under</i></p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Pretend to be various people during play experiences, e.g., teacher, firefighter, doctor</p> <p>Show an understanding of the rules at home, at school, and in other places</p> <p>Use blocks to build roads and bridges, houses, and other structures</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Recognize the outside of their home</p> <p>Talk about family members and what they do</p> <p>Recognize their own physical characteristics</p>	

Learning in the Arts

Learning in the arts involves using various materials to create, design, express, and explore ideas, concepts, and feelings. When adults share children’s joy in mixing paint, molding dough, building with blocks, dancing to music, and singing, children learn another language to express themselves and learn that their ideas, feelings, and self-expression are important.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- explore painting, drawing, sculpting, and other visual arts
- show awareness of and appreciation for the creative expression of others
- dance and move to music
- take an active role in pretend play

Learning in the Arts		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Rock back and forth to music</p> <p>Smile and make noises as an adult sings to them</p> <p>Relax against an adult while listening to a lullaby being sung</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Imitate an adult’s dance movements</p> <p>Repeat a phrase from a familiar song</p> <p>Imitate an adult’s gestures as she sings</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Participate in simple dance routines</p> <p>Beat a drum, trying to keep time with the music</p> <p>Use different props to enhance pretend play, e.g., gets a toy bottle to feed the baby doll</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Clap, jump, and stomp feet while listening to music</p> <p>Use scarves and streamers while moving to music</p> <p>Sing and hum parts of a familiar song</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Move quickly and slowly as the tempo of a march changes</p> <p>Enjoy creating dance movements</p> <p>Experiment with musical instruments to make different sounds</p>	

As a child develops and grows, you will notice that what she does as an infant affects what she does as a toddler, and then as a preschool child. Children develop in different ways and at different rates. Some children begin to speak before they can walk; others are able to speak in complete sentences before they can run. *The Creative Curriculum® Daily Resources* help families understand how children typically develop and what to expect as their children grow. Understanding their child’s unique pattern of development will help them select appropriate experiences from the *Daily Resources* and set achievable, yet challenging, goals for their children.

Temperament

It is important to help families recognize that every child is unique in how he or she interacts with the world and with people. Children are born with unique behavioral styles called *temperaments*. There are significant differences in the ways children respond and play. For example, some children approach new situations cautiously, without a fuss, and adapt to new experiences slowly. Some children respond cheerfully to new situations, while others withdraw or cry. Understanding a child’s temperament means learning about her strengths, interests, challenges she enjoys, challenges that frustrate her, and ways she is comforted. With this knowledge, caring adults can respond in ways that address a child’s needs. Thinking about temperament can help families understand how their child is likely to behave in certain situations and how she will respond to the different learning experiences described in the *Daily Resources*.

There are several aspects of temperament to consider:

Activity level—How active is the child? Does she squirm while having her diaper changed? Does she prefer to explore the world by watching and listening or crawling and climbing? How long can she sit still?

Biological rhythms—How predictable are the child's sleeping and eating habits? Does he wake up, get hungry, and get sleepy at the same times each day?

Tendency to approach or withdraw—Does the child respond positively to something new or does she pull away from it? When something new happens, does she fuss, do nothing, or seem to like it? For example, does she reach for a new toy or push it away? Does she smile at a new person or move away? Does she readily join in group activities?

Adaptability—How does the child react to change? Does he have a hard time with changes in routines or with new people? How long does it take for him to get used to new foods, new people, and other new circumstances? How does he react to a new or stressful situation?

Intensity of reactions—How does the child respond to the emotions she feels? Does she react loudly and dramatically to even the most minor disappointment, or does she become quiet when she is upset? How long does it take her to calm herself down?

Sensory threshold—At what point does the child become bothered by noise or light, changes in temperature, different tastes, or the feel of clothing?

Distractibility—Is the child readily distracted from a task by things going on around her? When eating, does she look in the direction of every new sound she hears or movement she sees?

Mood—Does the child have a positive or negative outlook? Is he generally in a light-hearted mood, or does he take things very seriously?

Persistence—How long does the child stay with a task when it is challenging? How does she handle frustration or initial failure on a task? How does she react to interruptions or requests to clean up when she is playing?

Children are born with different temperaments, and you need to respond to each child accordingly. Suitable supports can make a difference. An active child can calm down, and an easily distracted child can lengthen his attention span. Helping families to take note of their child's temperament in a variety of settings will help them to make appropriate decisions.

Understanding how a child is likely to react to the people and events in his life can help families respond to their child more effectively. A child who has the tendency to withdraw and who does not adapt easily to change may need time to adjust to taking part in a *Mighty Minutes*® or a *LearningGames*® activity with family members if he is not used to playing with them. A family with a child who is extremely persistent and who is not easily distracted may need to engage in the activity for longer periods of time or repeat the activity several times in a row.

Monica notices that Isaiah is often distracted during reading experiences with his father. She discusses it with Jackson, who says he has also noticed this. He wonders if reading in a quiet place might help when they read books together. Monica agrees and suggests turning off the music as well. During the next home visit, Jackson reports that he and Isaiah together made a “book corner” in Isaiah’s bedroom. They are both enjoying reading and exploring books in this new place, and Jackson is pleased that he has found a way to engage Isaiah in satisfying reading experiences.

The Importance of Observation

The purpose of observing children and families is to get to know them. You observe to find out what is unique and special about them as well as to collect information about specific developmental objectives and patterns of growth. Supporting families to become careful observers of their children helps them learn more about their children and how to respond to them. Discussing these observations helps you build relationships with families, plan your visits, select appropriate *Daily Resources*, and determine how to share them with families.

Observing Families and Children

As a home visitor, you have an opportunity to observe children and families during their everyday activities. When you watch and listen to a child, you learn many things about him that you can then talk about with his family:

- his interests
- how he is developing
- the strategies he uses to get what he wants
- skills he needs to practice
- his temperament
- the ways he learns best

Children can be observed at any time or place. Seeing how they grow and change during daily routines and activities helps you assess their development. Watching a child in new and special situations broadens your understanding of the child and how family members respond to him. By asking questions and discussing what you see and hear the child do and say, you encourage the family to look for specific information about their child. As you exchange observations with the family, knowing what the child is currently doing will help you think about likely next steps and plan together.

Families as Observers

You will find that families observe their children constantly. That's what makes them the experts! Families observe the ways their children explore, the expressions on their faces, the tone of their cries, and the number of diapers they wet or times they go to the bathroom. Families notice how long their children nap, what frightens them, what seems to calm them, and when they learn a new skill. Through this informal observation, they come to know their children well.

Recording observations—whether informally by writing brief notes or formally on an observation form—is a good way to capture the changes that are occurring as a child develops.

Explain to families that there are many opportunities during the day to take note of what their child says and does. *Daily Resources* help families observe their children by giving guidance on what to notice. However, families can often simply observe what is happening, whether they are directly involved or just watching and listening.

When observing, families should take a moment to survey the scene and think about what is happening. It is important that they try to be objective as they watch their child explore or respond to something they do or say. Suggest that they look for these things:

- what the child does
- what the child says
- how the child communicates, e.g., gestures, facial expressions
- how the child responds to what others do and say
- how the child uses toys and other objects and participates in games

As they think about what they see and hear, they can ask themselves these questions:

- What is my child able to do?
- Have I noticed the same behavior before?
- Was anything different this time?
- How did I interact with my child?
- What did my child do then?
- Did my child like the experience? How do I know?

By writing observation notes and noticing changes, families can see for themselves the progress their child is making and note their influence on their child's development. They can use the information they gather to learn more about what the child likes to do and how he finds out about the world. When families share this information with you, it can give you ideas about *Daily Resources* to try.

TeachingStrategies

Observation Form for Families

What to observe:
 What your child does
 What your child says, how he or she communicates
 How your child responds to what you do or say
 How your child uses toys and other objects and engages in intentional learning experiences

Setting (place, people)
 In living room with dad and brother

Time/Date
 4/24 at 2:30 p.m.

What did you see? What did you hear? What did you do?
Think about:
 What is your child able to do?
 Have you noticed the same behavior before?
 Was anything different this time?
 How did you interact with your child?
 What did your child do then?
 Did your child enjoy the experience? How do you know?

Isaiah pulled books from the basket and dropped them on the floor. I put him on my lap to read him a story. He wiggled and got down. I picked him up again. He listened to the story for a little while. Then he watched his brother, but not the book.

Notes:

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TeachingStrategies

Observation Form for Families

What to observe:
 What your child does
 What your child says, how he or she communicates
 How your child responds to what you do or say
 How your child uses toys and other objects and engages in intentional learning experiences

Setting (place, people)
 In bedroom with dad

Time/Date
 5/15 at 7 p.m.

What did you see? What did you hear? What did you do?
Think about:
 What is your child able to do?
 Have you noticed the same behavior before?
 Was anything different this time?
 How did you interact with your child?
 What did your child do then?
 Did your child enjoy the experience? How do you know?

Isaiah sat on my lap in the beanbag chair in his room. I read a short book with him. He turned the pages one at a time and touched the pictures. He named all of the animals in the story, including the hippopotamus.

Notes:

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Helping Families Respond to Their Observations

As they use the *Daily Resources*, families learn a variety of responses to enhance learning opportunities throughout the day and provide intentional learning experiences. As a home visitor, you continually convey to family members that they are the most important people in their child's life. When they pay attention to their child and observe her closely, they understand how she is developing and how to support her efforts. Family members can interact with children in many ways that promote learning. When they respond positively to children during daily routines such as diapering and toileting, eating, cleaning up, taking a bath, getting dressed, and going for a walk, families encourage children to think and to learn. Many of the strategies from the *Daily Resources* can and should be used with their children throughout the day. Suggest that families think about how they can turn everyday experiences into learning opportunities for children.

While diapering and toileting:

- point to the child's reflection in a mirror
- touch a mobile to make it move or make a noise
- play "peek-a-boo" with a clean diaper
- sing simple songs
- say the child's name and respond to her vocalizations and words

While eating snacks and meals:

- sit with the child so he knows he has your full attention
- talk about what the child is doing or might be feeling, e.g., "You like peaches" or "You kicked your legs"
- recite rhymes and sing
- relax and enjoy being together
- point out smells, colors, and textures
- invite the child to participate before, during, and after eating

While cleaning up:

- describe the steps for cleaning up
- show the child where to put away things he can reach
- encourage him to help clean up
- make a game of cleaning up, e.g., by taking turns or having a race
- provide tools, e.g., sponges, brooms, dusters

While taking a bath:

- talk about the child's face and other body parts
- make eye contact
- use the child's name
- squeeze sponges and toys
- sing and recite rhymes
- use cups for pouring
- use washcloths
- draw shapes and letters on the side of the tub with soap
- talk about what happens next

While getting dressed:

- handle the child's body gently
- let the child hold an article of clothing
- name the pieces of clothing
- give the child acceptable choices
- talk about what you are doing
- provide lots of time to practice
- encourage the child's efforts to dress herself; step in to minimize frustration
- point out letters and symbols on clothing
- ask, "What's next?"

While taking a walk:

- point to and name the things you see
- look for house numbers and signs
- emphasize safety rules, such as waiting at street corners for traffic to stop
- smell flowers, listen to birds, look for worms
- compare sizes, shapes, and sounds
- sing together

As a home visitor, you can explain to families what children are learning as they participate in everyday routines and activities.

As children explore the environment, important learning is taking place. Every experience seeing, tasting, touching, smelling, and hearing affects a child's development and abilities. By recording your observations, you can build an understanding of the child's personality and growth.

Supporting Relationships and Learning Through Play

Play provides abundant opportunities for children to develop and learn new skills. As family members interact with their child and respond in ways that encourage further exploration and play, their relationship with their child grows. When an infant reaches for a toy, he is learning to coordinate his movements while his family is learning to select toys more purposefully. When a toddler nests objects together, he is learning about sequential sizes while his family is learning to describe his play. When a preschool child talks about a character in a story who helps her learn about empathy, her family is learning to ask open-ended questions to encourage her thinking.

Play offers children opportunities to

- make choices
- make decisions
- solve problems
- interact with one another
- interact with adults
- pursue their interests
- experience learning as fun and exciting
- experience themselves as capable, competent, successful learners
- build language and literacy skills, discover mathematical relationships, explore science and technology concepts, learn about social studies, and engage in creative expression

As young children develop trusting relationships with their families, caregivers, and teachers, they become more confident about exploring and playing. They experiment and are eager to see caring adults' reactions. Games and toys that can be used successfully by more than one person teach children about the give and take of relationships and how to recognize the needs of others.

Adult-child interactions during play are critical to a child's growing ability to communicate, think, and solve problems. As families interact and play with their children throughout the day, think about ways to encourage their efforts and how to intervene thoughtfully to support the child's learning. As families recognize the many skills their child develops during play, you can help them understand their important role in the child's development. How they respond to their child encourages further learning and development.

When Isaiah's father relates the story of how reading with Isaiah in a quiet place helped Isaiah listen and participate better, Monica has an idea. She talks with Jackson about how a couple of the strategies from *Book Discussion Cards*™ might help Jackson further engage Isaiah during their reading experiences. She asks Jackson to notice which book Isaiah seems to enjoy most this week. Before the next home visit, Jackson can try one of the reading strategies when he reads this book with Isaiah.

We know that children develop through their growing ability to initiate, sustain, and advance playful interactions with materials and people. When family members respond to their child's actions, they encourage his abilities to initiate, practice, explore, and attend.

Daily Resources offer strategies that families can use to promote development and learning through engaging, play-based learning experiences.

By explaining the strategies and the purpose of these experiences, you help families learn a variety of meaningful ways to interact with their child and extend learning. Their responses tell their child that play is highly valued, and they encourage longer engagement in these intentional experiences. Encourage families to do the following while engaging in learning experiences with their child:

Mirror what the child does or says. Families encourage their child to do more when they do what the child is doing. If she makes a noise, make the same one. Be sure to give her plenty of time to start. She will enjoy being the leader of this back-and-forth game.

- "I'm going to make a snake like yours with the molding dough."
- "Ba, ba, ba. You said, 'Ba, ba, ba.'"

Describe what the child is doing. As families observe children playing, they show that they are interested when they describe what is happening. Talking with children about what they are doing makes them more aware of their actions.

- "I noticed that you put all the blue bears in the box."
- "I see you mixing yellow and blue paint. I wonder what color you will make."
- "You are smiling. Digging in the sand makes you happy."

Engage children in conversation. This encourages children to put their actions and ideas into words. Conversations help children clarify for themselves what they are doing and reinforce what they are learning. If they have to explain an action, they have to make sure that what they are doing makes sense to them.

- "You spent a long time on this building. Tell me about it."
- "Adding water to the sand really changed the way you can use the sand. What did you want to happen when you added the water?"

Ask open-ended questions. These are questions that can have many possible answers and help to extend children's thinking. These questions also encourage conversation.

- "How many ways can you use this?"
- "What will it do?"
- "What do you see? ...feel? ...hear?"
- "How did you decide to do it that way?"

Balance the familiar with the new and interesting. Small changes or additions to familiar materials and activities enhance children's experiences and often lead to new discoveries and learning. Leaving some parts of a game or some materials the same provides security for the child as he tries something new.

When Abner arrives at Carlos's home today, he and his mother, Marisol, are playing "peek-a-boo." Marisol puts a towel on her head. When she pulls it off, Carlos laughs, so she does it again. Abner observes for a while and then says, "That looks like fun! Let's see what he does if you don't take it off. Try sitting close enough so he can reach it." Within about 5 seconds, Carlos pulls the towel from her head.

Chapter

4

Daily Resources
for Intentional
Learning Experiences

Daily Resources for Intentional Learning Experiences

The *Daily Resources* from *The Creative Curriculum*® that help you plan intentional learning experiences for the families and children in your home visiting program include *Mighty Minutes*®, *Intentional Teaching Cards*™, and *LearningGames*®. These playful, joyful, and engaging experiences help you build and strengthen your partnerships with families during home visits and socialization meetings.

Selecting Daily Resources

When you partner with a family to select an experience from the *Daily Resources* that supports their child's emerging skills and knowledge, you are working together to enhance the child's development and learning. When you choose an activity that reinforces a skill the child has already demonstrated, you are helping him build on what he knows. Because family members will be their child's primary teachers and the ones sharing the experience with him at home, it is essential that you include them in the process of selecting the experience. If you choose an activity that is well beyond the child's current skills or abilities, you risk creating a frustrating and unhappy experience for both the family and the child.

Review current information. To ensure that you are choosing a developmentally appropriate experience, review the most up-to-date information about the child. Consider all of the information the family has shared with you as well as the child's knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Prepare for your home visit by reviewing your observation notes about the child along with any additional information you may have gathered from her family during previous visits and conversations. You may wish to summarize this information on the appropriate "Planning and Play Form" (e.g., if you decide to select a *Mighty Minutes*® experience, use the "*Mighty Minutes*® Planning and Play Form").

Identify knowledge, skills, and behaviors. After reviewing the most current information about the child, ask yourself, "What do I know about this child's development and learning?"

Determine the types of *Daily Resources* you wish to use.

Consider your goals for the upcoming visit. Is there more than one child in the home? Are you hoping to focus on a specific objective with the child? Do you want to help the family engage their child more fully in a shared reading experience? Has the family shared any specific concerns with you that a *Mighty Minutes*® activity would be perfect for?

Select an experience or activity. After deciding which of the *Daily Resources* you will be pulling from (*Mighty Minutes*[®], *Intentional Teaching Cards*[™], and/or *Learning Games*[®]), find experiences that are appropriate for the child's age or developmental stage. Look through the experiences that focus on the developmental area you want to address.

Be sure to have your program's performance standards in mind as you select *Daily Resources*.

Select some intentional learning experiences to review and examine each of the possibilities you selected. As you review each activity, think about whether it fits what the child can do and her interests. After reviewing the potential experiences, choose one or two to share with the family. You can record your choices and the related developmental areas on the "Planning and Play Form" for that resource.

Introducing Daily Resources to Families

Now that you have selected one or more experiences for the family to do with their child, you are ready to think about how you will introduce them to the family. The first step is to review them carefully, making notes about how you will share each one with the family. Is there anything about the experience that the family might find particularly interesting or enjoyable? Will the family need extra support because they might find something about the experience challenging? You may want to record your notes on the "Planning and Play Form" for that resource.

If this is the first time sharing *Daily Resources* with the family, you will need to explain the layout of each resource and how to use it. Talk about the activity as something fun that the family can do with their child, not as an assigned task to complete.

Explain the main idea of the intentional learning experience.

Briefly describe what you saw the child do or say along with any information you learned from the family that influenced your choice. Point out the information from the specific resource and relate it to what you know about the child.

Briefly review the intentional learning experience. Describe the different aspects of the intentional learning experience. Draw the family's attention to the areas of development and learning that the experience addresses and explain again why you chose it. Briefly review the steps and explain any strategies the family can use to promote their child's learning.

Gather materials. Be prepared to suggest alternative materials if the family is not likely to have the needed materials on hand.

Invite the family to try the experience. Offer the family an opportunity to try the experience. If a family member is not sure how to take part in the experience, explain the steps of the experience, describing what you see.

Talk about what happened. Provide encouragement and draw the family's attention to the child's responses.

Plan to repeat the experience. Make an informal plan with the family about when they might try the experience again during the week.

Following Up

Talk with the family after they have had some time to try the experience with their child.

Ask questions. Remember that the family members are the experts on their child. They have lots of important information to share with you. You may want to ask some of the following questions to learn about their experience with their child in this activity.

- Did the experience encourage your child to practice a new skill?
- Did your child appear to enjoy the experience? What specifically did she do?
- What was your favorite part of the experience?
- Was anything challenging? If so, what?
- Did you change anything about the experience? If so, what?
- Did any other family members take part in the experience?
- Did you try the other ideas offered?
- What concerns did you have about your child's development after the experience?
- What changes did you notice in your child after engaging in the experience several times?

You may choose to record your questions for families and any notes you want to keep about their responses on the "Planning and Play Form" for the specific resource.

Offer reassurance. It may be helpful to remind families that children develop at different rates. Even if their child does not demonstrate a new skill while engaging in the experience, he is still learning.

Acknowledge the family’s commitment. It takes time out of the family’s already busy day to engage in these experiences with their child. It is important to acknowledge their efforts to play with their child. The experiences from the different *Daily Resources* are designed to be beneficial for children even if families have limited time. Through repeated playing and joyful, warm interactions with their family members, children learn the skills they need to develop and thrive.

Encourage families to continue engaging in the experience with their children. Children will get the greatest benefit from repeated engagement with their families. Encourage families to repeat familiar experiences even as they add new activities to their repertoire, making adjustments as needed to reflect their child’s development. The experiences and activities from the *Daily Resources* are varied, so many of them can be used just about anytime and anywhere. Encourage families to incorporate these experiences into their regular routines and activities.

As you follow up with families, discuss other experiences or activities that might be a good fit for the child. Together, you and the family can look through these experiences and select a couple to try next. Use this information to plan your next visit.

On the following pages, you will see how Monica, Brenda, and Abner work with families to use *Mighty Minutes*®, *Intentional Teaching Cards*™, and *LearningGames*® during their home visits. You will also find examples of completed “Planning and Play Forms,” one for each of the *Daily Resources* detailed in this chapter. A blank “Planning and Play Form” for you to use is in the “Resources” section of this *Guide*.

Mighty Minutes®

Mighty Minutes® are a valuable resource for you to use to support families' meaningful play experiences with their children during "in-between" moments of the day, such as the transition times between the family's daily routines and activities. *Mighty Minutes®* experiences include songs, chants, rhymes, movements, and games that promote children's development and learning in many areas. You can introduce *Mighty Minutes®* to family members and support their ongoing use of these experiences with their children.

Socialization Meetings

Select a few *Mighty Minutes®* experiences to use with families and children during arrivals to and departures from the socialization meetings. Plan to repeat these familiar *Mighty Minutes®* experiences with families and children during the next socialization meeting.

Jackson (Isaiah's father)—2/20

When Isaiah and Otis return home from preschool, all Isaiah wants to do is run around the living room and play with Otis while Jackson prepares dinner. Isaiah can be a little rough and gets upset if Otis does not want to play with him. Isaiah also gets very excited and jumps up and down when the family is getting ready to leave for school or a trip to the grocery store. He often accidentally knocks down Otis in his excitement.

Isaiah—2/20

Isaiah loves to play with his brother, Otis—especially chasing games. But he can be rough sometimes, which makes Otis cry.

Isaiah—3/07

When Jackson tells Isaiah and Otis, dinner is ready, Isaiah starts running to the kitchen table but quickly stops and slows down, telling Otis, "Walk safe."

Selecting *Mighty Minutes*[®]

Identify knowledge and skills.

Monica’s observation notes about Isaiah show that he enjoys being physically active in his play with his brother and is starting to notice when he needs to slow down or stop what he is doing.

Select a *Mighty Minutes*[®] experience.

As Monica reviews her notes about Isaiah, she notices how physically active he is, especially during transitions between his daily routines at home. Using *Mighty Minutes*[®] during these transitions would engage Isaiah in movement experiences that promote his language and math skills. Monica decides to bring three preschool *Mighty Minutes*[®] cards to share with Isaiah’s father: *Mighty Minutes* 102, “Ten Wiggly Toes”; *Mighty Minutes* 170, “Blast Off”; and “*Mighty Minutes* 194, “Wind-Up Robots.” On the next home visit, Jackson can pick one or two to try with Isaiah and Otis.

Introducing *Mighty Minutes*[®]

Explain the main idea of the *Mighty Minutes*[®] experience.

Monica shows Jackson the three *Mighty Minutes*[®] cards, explaining that each card has a short activity for Isaiah, Otis, and Jackson to do together. Jackson knows that Isaiah is very interested in space and astronauts, so he chooses *Mighty Minutes* 170, “Blast Off.” Monica explains that in this *Mighty Minutes*[®] activity, the boys will practice their balancing skills.

Briefly review the *Mighty Minutes*[®] experience.

Monica describes how in “Blast Off,” Jackson and Isaiah will count down from three and then say, “Blast off!” At blast-off time, Isaiah, Jackson, and Otis (with Jackson’s help) will jump up and down. This will help strengthen Isaiah’s balancing skills.

Invite the family to try the *Mighty Minutes*[®] experience.

“When you count down with Isaiah, you are encouraging him to practice counting skills.”

Talk about what happened.

“Yes, Isaiah is so excited to blast off into space with you! Look at how many times he jumps up and down when you both say, “Blast off!”

Plan to repeat the *Mighty Minutes*[®] experience.

Jackson’s decides to try “Blast Off” with Isaiah and Otis when they first get home in the evenings. After a couple of times doing the activity as a family, Jackson will encourage Isaiah to continue counting down and jumping up and down as Jackson gets dinner ready.

Following Up

Offer reassurance and acknowledge the family’s commitment.

“Isaiah is counting down from 10 on his own now, and is able to count down from 20 with you.”

Encourage families to continue engaging in the experience.

“When Isaiah’s uncle comes to visit this weekend, he can play ‘Blast Off’ with you guys.”

 Teaching Strategies

Mighty Minutes® Planning and Play Form

Child's Name **Isaiah** Date **2/21**

Current Information

Isaiah loves to move around and play with his brother, Otis, and his father, Jackson. He gets very excited when he first arrives home from school as Jackson prepares dinner.

Areas of Development

Physical
Mathematics

Mighty Minutes® experience(s)

102, “Ten Wiggly Steps”
170, “Blast Off”
194, “Wind-Up Robots”

Notes for Sharing Mighty Minutes® experience(s)

Jackson prefers to do activities that can be modified for Otis so he can participate with the family. For “Blast Off,” Jackson can hold Otis’s hands as he jumps to support him as he practices balancing skills. Isaiah jumps up and down independently.

Follow-Up

Isaiah is counting down from 10 on his own and can jump up and down in quick succession. When Isaiah’s Uncle Gerald visited, Gerald helped Isaiah try different movements at blast-off time. Isaiah loved marching in place and tiptoeing around the living room.

Continued Observation

Jackson has found that playing “Blast Off” with a set pattern of different movements (jump up and down, march in place, stomp, and then tiptoe) helps Isaiah get ready to have dinner. He enjoys tiptoeing to the kitchen table with Otis.

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Intentional Teaching Cards™

Intentional Teaching Cards™ are another resource that you can use to encourage playful and joyful learning experiences between adult family members and their children. *Intentional Teaching Card™* experiences help families intentionally support children's development and learning in the social-emotional, physical, language, literacy, and mathematics areas.

Socialization Meetings

Intentional Teaching Cards™ experiences can also be used during socialization meetings. Before the socialization meeting, select a couple experiences that best meet the current needs of the children and families in your home visiting program.

Jeremy—9/20

When Jeremy sees his grandma or grandpa interacting with his cousin, Phyllis, he expresses an interest in what they are doing but begins to cry when he sees and hears Phyllis crying.

Fritz and Clara (Jeremy's grandparents)—9/20

Clara noticed that Jeremy gets very upset when he sees Fritz taking care of Phyllis.

Jeremy—9/27

Playing on the floor with his grandpa Fritz, Jeremy looks at Fritz for reassurance after he knocks over a block tower. Once Fritz claps or says something encouraging, Jeremy smiles and starts to build again.

Selecting *Intentional Teaching Cards*[™]

Identify knowledge and skills.

When Jeremy is on the couch next to Fritz and Clara while they are holding Phyllis, he watches Phyllis for a couple of minutes and then reaches out to touch her. If she begins to cry or becomes fussy, he gets upset and asks for “na-na” or “pa-pa.”

Select an *Intentional Teaching Card*[™] experience.

During a review of her notes about Jeremy from the last visit, Brenda realizes that it has been almost 4 weeks since Phyllis began living in Jeremy’s home. Jeremy continues to be extremely interested in Phyllis, especially when she is being fed her bottle or having her diaper changed. If he is near her, he will reach to touch her, pat her face, or poke at her feet. He sometimes gets frustrated when he sees his grandpa Fritz holding Phyllis or rocking her. Brenda reviews the social–emotional *Intentional Teaching Cards*[™] for infants, toddlers, and twos and decides to bring *Intentional Teaching Card* SE 16, “Baby Faces,” to the next home visit.

Introducing *Intentional Teaching Cards*[™]

Explain the main idea of the *Intentional Teaching Card*[™] experience.

Brenda explains to Fritz and Clara that *Intentional Teaching Card* SE 16, “Baby Faces,” will help Jeremy identify different emotions and their causes.

Gather materials.

Brenda knows that Fritz and Clara have a board book with pictures of babies that a neighbor gave them when they brought Phyllis home. Brenda shows Fritz and Clara how they can explore the book with Jeremy, showing him each picture, explaining what the baby is feeling in the picture, and talking about why the baby might be feeling that way.

Invite the family to try the *Intentional Teaching Card*[™] experience.

“Look at how Jeremy smiles when he sees a picture of a happy baby. He looks a little worried when he sees the picture of the crying baby.”

Talk about what happened.

“When you got to the end of the book with Jeremy, he wanted to look at it again with you.”

Plan to repeat the *Intentional Teaching Card*[™] experience.

Both Fritz and Clara decide that Clara will look at the board book with Jeremy while Fritz gives Phyllis her bottles during the day. Clara and Fritz will also reassure Jeremy by explaining how Phyllis is feeling when she cries.

Using *The Creative Curriculum*[®] *LearningGames*[®]

LearningGames[®] help you support families to engage in purposeful, meaningful play experiences with their children. The games provide step-by-step instructions for play experiences that promote brain development and build children's knowledge, skills, and behaviors. They also provide specific ideas and instructions to help families support and enhance children's play experiences. You can introduce *LearningGames*[®] to family members and support them to use *LearningGames*[®] activities effectively with their children.

Socialization Meetings

LearningGames[®] can also be used with a small group of children and their families during socialization meetings. Before the meeting, select a few *LearningGames*[®] activities that best meet the current needs of the children and families in your home visiting program.

Carlos—11/29

When Marisol (mom) leaned over Carlos during a diaper change, he reached for her hair with both hands and said, "Mama."

Marisol (Carlos's mom)—
11/29

Marisol noticed that Carlos turns and looks at the dog when the dog is on the floor next to him. Carlos sometimes tries to reach for the dog.

Carlos—12/5

Sitting up on his blanket, Carlos reached his arm across his body to touch a toy near his feet. He kept his balance and squealed when his finger touched the toy.

Selecting *The Creative Curriculum*[®] *LearningGames*[®] for Children

Identify knowledge and skills.

Abner's observation notes about Carlos indicate that his movements are becoming more purposeful. He is stretching his arms to try to reach things and is able to reach for items while sitting without falling. Carlos is using his voice to communicate pleasure.

Select an intentional learning experience.

When Abner reviews his notes about Carlos from the last 3 weeks, he notices that Carlos is moving more purposefully and is using his voice to express pleasure in various ways. Abner reviews the *LearningGames*[®] activities for Carlos's age-group to find some that focus on physical development and language development. As he looks through the activities, Abner notices that he has already given Carlos's family "Reach for It!" (game 11). This might be why Carlos is doing so much reaching now!

Abner notices "Touch Your Toes" (game 43). Since Carlos is already reaching for objects, this activity will enable him to practice this new skill as he learns the names of his body parts. Abner also notices "Animal Sounds" (game 37). It has a language development focus that could use Carlos's interest in the family dog to encourage him to make animal sounds. After reviewing both activities, Abner decides to bring both with him to the next home visit so Marisol can select which activity she would like to try with Carlos. Abner places both activities in Carlos's folder.

Introducing *The Creative Curriculum*[®] *LearningGames*[®] to Families

Explain the main idea of the activity.

Abner explains that in "Touch Your Toes" (game 43), the main idea is to encourage Carlos to touch the different parts of his body while Marisol names each part. As Carlos reaches and touches his face, his hair, his tummy, and his ears, he will learn the name that goes with each body part and learn about himself.

Briefly review the activity.

Abner describes the strategy of encouraging Carlos to touch the different parts of his body. "Touch your own nose and encourage Carlos to touch his nose as you say, "I'm touching my nose. Can you touch your nose?"

Invite the family to try the activity.

"I see that Carlos is reaching for his ear. Marisol, Carlos sees you touching your ear. He is reaching for his ear. Describe what he is doing and the body part that he is touching. This encourages him to try to find out what another body part is named."

Talk about what happened.

“Carlos was very interested in touching his nose, his mouth, and his ears. He even said “no-ed” after you asked, ‘Can you touch your nose?’”

Plan to repeat the activity.

Marisol decides to try to play “Touch Your Toes” in the evenings and to show Carlos’s grandmother how to play the game with him. Abner encourages Marisol to try to get Carlos to touch his tummy, his knees, and his feet as well.

Following Up

Offer reassurance and acknowledge the family’s commitment.

“Carlos followed your movements to touch his nose and his ears. He even said “no-ed” in response to you. I wonder which body part he will name next.”

Encourage the family to continue engaging in the activity with their child.

“I bet Carlos would love to play this game with his aunts when you go to dinner at Carlos’s grandmother’s house.”



The Creative Curriculum® LearningGames® Planning and Play Form

Child's Name Carlos

Date 12/10

Current Information

Carlos is moving his body to reach things from a sitting position and when he is lying down. He is interested in touching Marisol's face during diapering and has been saying "mama" to her.

Areas of Development

Physical and Language

The Creative Curriculum® LearningGames® activity/activities

- 43, "Touch Your Toes"
- 37, "Animal Sounds" (save for later)

Notes for Sharing The Creative Curriculum® LearningGames® activity/activities

Carlos's mother prefers to interact with him on the sofa. Make sure to show her how to do this activity on a blanket on the floor as well. Point out that it is safest to be on the floor.

Follow-Up

Did Carlos reach for different parts of his body?

Yes, he reached for his ears, nose, and mouth. When he reached for his nose on the third day, he said "no-ed."

Did his aunts play the game with him as well?

Yes, Carlos and his aunts had fun playing "Touch Your Toes" together.

Continued Observation

Carlos will now touch Marisol's ear and then his ear, and her nose and then his nose, while he is being held or during diapering.

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Chapter

5

*Daily Resources for
Reading With Children*

Daily Resources for Reading With Children

Reading aloud with children inspires a love for reading and encourages children's language and literacy development and learning. Literacy learning begins at birth, and it is during the early childhood years that children engage in emergent reading and writing behaviors that form the foundation for conventional literacy¹.

The Creative Curriculum[®] approach to read-alouds involves creating warm, loving, and nurturing reading experiences during which the reader actively engages with the child. For infants, toddlers, and twos, read-aloud strategies include responding to the child's actions and responses, emphasizing vocabulary, commenting on the story and its illustrations, and encouraging the child to interact during the reading experience. For preschool-age children, the same strategies apply, along with the repeated, interactive read-aloud approach for more sophisticated books (those with complex storylines, with rich vocabularies, and where the listener or reader must infer characters' feelings, thoughts, and motives).

The *Daily Resources* from *The Creative Curriculum*[®] that help you partner with the families in your home visiting program to create warm and loving reading experiences with their children include *Highlights Hello*[™], *Highlights High Five Bilingüe*[™], *Book Conversation Cards*[™], the *Teaching Strategies*[®] *Children's Book Collection*, and *Book Discussion Cards*[™]. All of these resources help you support families during home visits and socialization meetings as they read with their child and make these intentional reading experiences a part of their daily routine.

As you consider what kinds of literacy experiences to share with a family, it is important to recognize that some individuals in the home may be unable to read to the child or uncomfortable doing so. Be careful not to make assumptions about family members' literacy skills and preferred languages, and be prepared to offer (and perhaps model) alternative literacy experiences, such as playing audio recordings of books or locating books in the preferred language.

Also be mindful of a family's preferences when sharing books with their child. Family members may prefer to sit with their child and just look at and talk about the pictures in the book. They may read a bedtime story or read to the child during bath time. They may read a few pages of a story and return to it later, or read it straight through and ask questions about it. Whatever their preferences, it is the time they spend engaging in these intentional reading experiences with their children that is most important.

¹ Burtis, D., Berke, K., Heroman, C., Baker, H., Tabors, P., & Sanders, S. (2017). *The creative curriculum for kindergarten, volume 2: Objectives for development & learning, birth through third grade*. Bethesda, MD: Teaching Strategies, LLC.

Selecting *Daily Resources* for Reading Experiences With Children

When you collaborate with a family to select an issue of *Highlights Hello™*, an issue of *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™*, or a book from the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection* to read with their child, you are working together to inspire in the child a love of reading. Because family members know their child's interests best and will be the ones sharing the reading experience with her at home, it is essential that they have the final say regarding the reading material they will use for the reading experience.

Determine which literacy resource you want to share with families for the reading experience. Consider the age of the child and her interests, and review your goals for the upcoming visit. Do you want to introduce the family to shared reading experiences? Do you want to help the family engage their child more fully in a reading experience? Is there more than one child in the home? Has the family shared any books that the child particularly enjoys?

Select one or more issues or books. After deciding which literacy resources you will be pulling from (*Highlights Hello™*, *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™*, or the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection*), locate a few that include stories or activities that are developmentally appropriate for the child and of interest to the family.

Introducing *Daily Resources* for Literacy Experiences to Families

Once you have selected some issues of *Highlights Hello™* or *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™* and several books from the Children's Book Collection, make sure to also pull any accompanying *Book Conversation Cards™* and *Book Discussion Cards™*. Think about how you will introduce each resource to the family. Is there a particular issue or book the family would be especially interested in? Is there a particular strategy or question from the *Book Conversation Cards™* or *Book Discussion Cards™* that would be helpful for the family to use?

Perhaps the most helpful way to share *Book Conversation Cards™* or *Book Discussion Cards™* with families is for you to first review the ones you want to bring to your visit and then identify a few strategies or questions that families can use during the reading experience. You can use sticky notes to mark these on the cards.

Share a few *Highlights Hello™*, *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™*, or children's books with the family. Describe why you chose each one and encourage the family to pick one or two to share with their child.

Briefly review a few strategies or questions from the *Book Conversation Card™* or *Book Discussion Card™*. Review the guidance on the card with the family and talk through the strategies and the steps for enhancing the reading experience.

Invite the family to try the reading experience. Offer the family an opportunity to share the book or issue with the child, providing support as needed.

Talk about what happened. Provide encouragement and draw the family's attention to the child's reactions during the reading experience.

Plan to repeat the reading experience. Make an informal plan with the family about when they might try the reading experience again with their child.

Following Up

Talk with the family after they have had some time to take part in a couple of reading experiences with their child.

Ask questions. Remember that the family members are the experts on their child. They have lots of important information to share with you. You may want to ask some of the following questions to learn about their experience with their child during this activity.

- Did your child enjoy sharing the book with you?
- Did any other family members take part in the reading experience?

Acknowledge the family's commitment. It takes time out of the family's already busy day to engage in these reading experiences with their child. It is important to acknowledge their efforts to share books with their child.

Encourage the family to continue engaging in reading experiences with their child. Children will get the greatest benefit from repeated read-alouds with their families. Invite families to share familiar and favorite books as well as new books and new issues of *Highlights Hello™* or *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™*. Encourage families to make interactive reading experiences with their children a part of their regular routines and activities.

As you follow up with families, discuss how the read-aloud strategies and guidance from *Book Conversation Cards™* and *Book Discussion Cards™* can be used to inform and inspire other reading experiences, e.g., with books that are not part of the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection*. For a future visit or socialization meeting, plan to lead a read-aloud of a book that is not part of the *Daily Resources* to help families apply interactive read-aloud strategies to other books in their home or from the program.

On the following pages, you will see how Monica and Abner work with families during home visits to use a selected *Highlights Hello™/Book Conversation Card™* pair and a children's book /*Book Discussion Card™* pair.

Highlights Hello™, Highlights High Five Bilingüe™, and Book Conversation Cards™

The *Highlights Hello™* and *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™* sets offer stories, songs, rhymes, and simple activities you can share with children to inspire a love of reading and support language development and literacy learning. These resources also offer a unique opportunity to support language development and literacy skills in both English and Spanish.

Highlights Hello™ is designed for use with young infants, mobile infants, toddlers, and twos. *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™* is intended for use with preschool-age children. *Book Conversation Cards™* (with versions for infants, toddlers, and twos and for preschool children) help the reader actively engage children in conversations and other interactions during reading experiences related to the selected issue of *Highlights Hello™* or *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™*.

Socialization Meetings

Before a socialization meeting, consider selecting an issue of *Highlights Hello™* or *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™* along with its accompanying *Book Conversation Card™*. Plan to share the reading experience with two to three children and their families during the meeting. Be sure to offer the program a few editions of *Highlights Hello™* and *Highlights High Five Bilingüe™* for families to take home and share with their children.

Selecting Highlights Hello™ and Book Conversation Cards™

Determine which literacy resource you want to share with the family.

Abner decides to share *Highlights Hello™* with Marisol and Carlos on the next home visit. He also notes to make sure that he tells Marisol that *Highlights Hello™* is specifically designed for use with young infants, mobile infants, toddlers, and twos, and that it provides guidance tailored for each age-group.

Select a few issues of *Highlights Hello™*.

Abner selects three issues of *Highlights Hello™* to share with Marisol: one with a picture on the cover of a mobile infant drumming on a pot, one with a picture of a toddler on a mobile scooter; and one with a picture of a mobile infant wrapped in a towel after a bath. He also pulls the issues' corresponding *Book Conversation Cards™* (*Book Conversation Card 04*, *Book Conversation Card 05*, and *Book Conversation Card 06*) and places sticky notes by a couple of strategies he wants to share with Marisol.

Introducing *Highlights Hello*[™] and *Book Conversation Cards*[™]

Share a few issues of *Highlights Hello*[™].

Abner tells Marisol that each issue of *Highlights Hello*[™] has songs, poems, stories, and a “Find It” activity to share with Carlos. He explains that she does not have to read the issue cover to cover, and that she can choose an individual section for a shorter activity. After careful review, Marisol picks the issue with the picture of the baby wrapped in a towel after bath time. “Carlos loves bath time,” she shares with Abner.

Briefly review a few strategies from the *Book Conversation Card*[™] that could be used during the reading experience.

Abner explains that *Book Conversation Card 06* (the card corresponding to the *Highlights Hello*[™] that Marisol chose) offers guidance for sharing the issue with Carlos. He adds that Marisol can use any of these strategies as she explores the issue with Carlos.

Invite the family to try the reading experience.

“Look at how Carlos is patting the book as you read ‘Bubbles in the Tub.’ He looks at you and watches your mouth when you emphasize the rhyming words.”

Talk about what happened.

“When you got to the end of ‘Bubbles in the Tub,’ Carlos snuggled even closer into your body.”

Plan to repeat the reading experience.

Marisol decides that she will read an individual section of the issue each evening as part of Carlos’s bedtime routine.

Following Up

Encourage the family to continue engaging in reading experiences with their child.

“I wonder if Carlos would like his cousins to share this issue of *Highlights Hello*[™] with him when they visit next weekend.”

The *Teaching Strategies*[®] *Children’s Book Collection* and *Book Discussion Cards*[™]

The *Teaching Strategies*[®] *Children’s Book Collection* includes beloved classic tales, contemporary works by well-known authors, and original nonfiction titles in English and Spanish. This collection encourages preschool children to explore, interaction with, and enjoy books and reading experiences, especially when the books are used with *Book Discussion Cards*[™]

Book Discussion Cards™ are linked to selected books in the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection*. Each card offers guidance for thoughtfully sharing the book with children, emphasizing vocabulary, making comments, and asking questions before, during, and after each read-aloud.

Selecting Books From the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection* and Their Accompanying *Book Conversation Cards™*

Determine which literacy resource you want to share with the family.

As Monica reviews her notes, she remembers that Jackson told her how much Isaiah loves reading time at his preschool. During morning drop-off, Isaiah typically leads Jackson to the library area and points out individual books. Monica decides to share a few books from the Children's Book Collection with Jackson during the next home visit.

Select a couple of books from the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection*.

Monica chooses *The Adventures of Gary & Harry: A Tale of Two Turtles*, *Whistle for Willie*, and *Where the Wild Things Are* to share with Jackson. Isaiah is very interested in turtles after seeing one at the park with his grandma. He also loves when his dad whistles. Monica remembers that Jackson had mentioned that *Where the Wild Things Are* was his favorite book when he was Isaiah's age.

Introducing the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection* and *Book Conversation Cards™*

Share a few books from the *Teaching Strategies® Children's Book Collection*.

Monica shares with Jackson the three books that she selected before the visit. When Jackson sees *Where the Wild Things Are*, he remembers how his mom read this book to him when he was Isaiah's age. He is very excited to share it with Isaiah and Otis.

Briefly review a few questions from the accompanying *Book Discussion Card™*.

Monica tells Jackson that making comments and asking questions about a story helps children get so much more out of a reading experience. She then draws Jackson's attention to *Book Discussion Card 51* (which corresponds with *Where the Wild Things Are*), showing him some of the questions he can ask while he and the boys explore the book together: "Why do you think Max wanted to return home? Why do you think they made Max king of the wild things?"

Invite the family to try the reading experience.

"When you said, 'I'll EAT YOU UP!' Jackson got very excited and shouted, 'No!'"

Talk about what happened.

“After you finished sharing the book with Isaiah, he took the book and found the page where Max is crowned king of the wild things. Isaiah then showed this picture to Otis and said, ‘Max.’”

Plan to repeat the reading experience.

Jackson decides that he will read this book with Isaiah and Otis after dinner. While Jackson is cleaning up the kitchen, the boys can first explore the book on their own as Jackson asks them questions about the story.

Following Up

Encourage the family to continue engaging in reading experiences with their child.

Monica shares with Jackson that Isaiah’s preschool has a lending library. Isaiah can pick out a book to take home, and Jackson can use the guidance related to commenting and asking questions during reading experiences with the borrowed book as well.

In advance of a socialization meeting, select a book from the *Teaching Strategies’ Children’s Book Collection* and its corresponding *Book Discussion Card™*. Plan to share a reading experience with a small group of children and their families at the socialization meeting. After the reading experience, encourage families to borrow books from the program or the local library for read-alouds at home.

Resources

What Your Child May Be Doing

Mighty Minutes® Planning
and Play Form

Intentional Teaching Cards™
Planning and Play Form

The Creative Curriculum®
LearningGames® Planning
and Play Form

Observation Form for Families

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

Infants (Birth–12 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Enjoy being held and cuddled
- Respond to familiar people by smiling, cooing, and babbling (you are their favorite toy)
- Imitate people's actions
- Explore toys by using their senses
- Pay attention to sounds and movement
- Enjoy playing “peek-a-boo”

Physical Development

- Gain control of and move their heads from side to side
- Play with their hands and feet
- Reach for, grasp, shake, mouth, and explore objects they can hold
- Move objects from one hand to the other; bang objects together
- Roll over
- Sit on a blanket, propped at first and then without external support
- Crawl to explore
- Pull themselves to standing and cruise holding on to furniture
- Roll, hold, and throw balls
- Pick up finger foods

Language Development

- Ask for care and attention by crying, laughing, and smiling, and through other vocalizations
- Vocalize to themselves, people, and toys
- Understand and respond to gestures, facial expressions, and changes in vocal tone
- Understand and respond to their names and to very simple, familiar requests
- Recognize a familiar voice before the person enters the room
- Look at favorite toy when family member labels and points to it

Cognitive Development

- Learn about objects by using all of their senses
- Visually follow and respond to moving objects and faces
- Notice objects with contrasting colors and patterns and those with gentle movement and sounds
- Watch mirrored images appear and disappear
- Imitate adult movements and language sounds
- Enjoy activity boxes

Literacy Learning

- Enjoy listening to simple stories, rhymes, and songs
- Use their senses to explore books

Mathematics Learning

- Respond (watch you intently; smile and coo) as you count items or use words such as *more*
- Place lids on each container they are playing with
- Reach for more toys or other objects
- Make a sign for “more” after finishing a snack
- Focus on the color or texture of items
- Wave arms in anticipation of receiving a bottle
- Distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar adults

Science and Technology Learning

- Grasp and mouth and shake an offered item, e.g., teething ring, rattle
- Interact with toys, e.g., bat at a hanging toy, pull a string attached to a toy to make it come closer, push buttons on a pop-up toy, squeeze a toy to make it squeak
- Discover body parts, e.g., grab their feet, play with your hair
- Notice various sounds outside (e.g., birds chirping, dog barking, cars honking) and look in the direction of each new sound

Social Studies Learning

- Get excited when they see familiar people enter the room
- Gaze at photos of family members in the home
- Watch other children with great interest

Learning in the Arts

- Rock back and forth to music
- Smile and make noises as an adult sings to them
- Relax against an adult while listening to a lullaby being sung

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

1-Year-Olds (12–24 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Find new ways to make things happen
- Follow simple requests and understand more language than they can express
- Are increasingly aware of their possessions
- Become aware of others' expressions of emotions
- Enjoy realistic toys, e.g., baby dolls, bottles, cradles, telephones
- Initiate “peek-a-boo” activities

Physical Development

- Pull themselves to standing and cruise holding on to furniture
- Walk steadily but may prefer to crawl
- Use carts, baby carriages, and other wheeled toys to support walking
- Begin to climb and slide
- Move rhythmically to music
- Clap
- Take objects out and put them back in containers; fill a container and then dump the objects out
- Roll and throw balls
- Reach successfully for moving objects, e.g., bubbles
- Begin to stack objects

Language Development

- Follow simple requests and understand more language than they can express
- Use gestures and sounds to communicate
- Wave good-bye
- Understand and respond to many words, simple directions, and questions
- Increase expressive vocabulary
- Name familiar people in their lives
- Play games with back-and-forth exchanges, e.g., “pat-a-cake,” “peek-a-boo”
- Point to familiar pictures in a book when prompted

Cognitive Development

- Make choices between clear alternatives
- Begin to solve problems
- Learn by moving and doing
- Concentrate for longer periods of time
- Open doors and flip light switches
- Enjoy sorting and nesting toys

Literacy Learning

- Point to familiar pictures in a book
- Learn to turn pages
- Hold crayons and make marks on paper
- Bring books to an adult to explore and read with them

Mathematics Learning

- Stomp around the room singing a counting song
- Put a cup on each plate or a napkin next to each chair at the lunch table
- Know whether to go around, in, or through a structure to get to an object
- Place differently shaped blocks into the matching openings in the shape-sorter box

Science and Technology Learning

- Experiment to see what sounds they can make with instruments, e.g., xylophone, toy drum, musical bells
- Get excited when they see something new outside, e.g., a squirrel scampering up a tree
- Notice moving shadows on the wall, a curtain blown by the wind, leaves falling on the ground

Social Studies Learning

- Recognize themselves in the mirror
- Act out simple life scenes, e.g., talking on a phone, feeding a baby, pushing a doll in a carriage
- Explore their surroundings by walking, climbing, and crawling through spaces and structures

Learning in the Arts

- Imitate an adult's dance movements
- Repeat a phrase from a familiar song
- Imitate an adult's gestures as she sings

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

2-Year-Olds (24–36 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Have strong feelings and may use actions instead of words to express their emotions
- Begin to learn about taking turns, but should not be expected to share toys and materials
- Interact with other children for longer periods
- Engage in simple pretend play
- Begin to use caring behaviors to help and comfort others
- Use toys (e.g., balls, blocks) with other people

Physical Development

- Develop small-muscle skills by turning pages, pouring, opening containers, and using scissors
- Stack and build with blocks
- Begin to coordinate eye-and-hand movements, e.g., threading beads on laces, manipulating snaps and zippers
- Walk smoothly, tiptoe, and begin to run
- Begin to gain large-muscle skills, e.g., throwing, catching, kicking, jumping, hopping
- Pull and push things, e.g., boxes, doll carriages, wheeled toys
- Sit on and use their feet to propel riding toys

Language Development

- Talk in simple sentences that gradually increase from two to several words
- Increase their ability to listen and to speak
- Engage in conversation and ask questions
- Begin to express feelings verbally
- Follow simple requests

Cognitive Development

- Want to do things by themselves
- Enjoy sensory toys with various sounds and textures
- Sort and match objects and pictures by size, color, or shape
- Experiment to see what will happen as a result of their actions
- Complete puzzles with a few pieces
- Make sounds with musical instruments

Literacy Learning

- Enjoy books with rhymes and predictable words they can anticipate and repeat
- Tell very simple stories
- Begin to make sense of basic time concepts, e.g., before and after
- Orient a book correctly, i.e., right side up; front to back
- Recognize familiar books by their covers

Mathematics Learning

- Line up items of different sizes, grouping the big items together and the little items together
- Hold up fingers to indicate age
- Separate and group items by color, shape, and size
- Learn the names of basic shapes, e.g., circle, square, triangle

Science and Technology Learning

- Use different toy tools at a toy workbench
- Mix paint colors to make new colors
- Notice the weather outside

Social Studies Learning

- Understand the sequence of their family's daily routines
- Show a great deal of interest in young babies and what they can and cannot do
- Begin to understand words that describe position, e.g., *next to*, *on*, *under*

Learning in the Arts

- Participate in simple dance routines
- Beat a drum, trying to keep time with the music
- Use different props to enhance pretend play, e.g., gets a toy bottle to feed the baby doll

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

3-Year-Olds (36–48 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Can help make and follow a few simple rules
- Imitate adult activities
- Talk with other children in pairs and in groups
- Learn to take turns and share
- Begin to recognize and understand the feelings of others
- Enjoy simple pretend play, alone and with others

Physical Development

- Walk, run, and turn with coordination
- Walk along a line, using arms for balance
- Climb stairs using alternate feet
- Jump with two feet
- Hop and balance on one foot
- Push and pedal tricycles
- Throw, catch, and kick large balls
- Use utensils to eat and serve themselves
- Dress themselves and use large fasteners
- Coordinate eye-and-hand movements, e.g., pour water into a funnel, create a tall block structure
- Turn pages one at a time
- Use tools to draw objects and simple shapes

Language Development

- Use language to gain information, understand concepts, express feelings, and make requests
- Participate in conversations with adults
- Use speech that is easy to understand
- Talk in three- to five-word sentences
- Follow directions involving two to three steps of a familiar task

Cognitive Development

- Use all of their senses to explore and investigate
- Enjoy gathering information about the world
- Ask *why* questions
- Sort and categorize materials
- Become interested in cause and effect (what makes things happen)

Literacy Learning

- Tell simple stories as they look at pictures and books
- Pretend to read a familiar book, using illustrations as cues
- Enjoy a wide variety of books
- Learn print concepts such as reading a book from front to back and reading a page from top to bottom
- Fill in missing rhyming words in familiar stories, songs, and rhymes when prompted

Mathematics Learning

- Demonstrate understanding of the concepts of one, two, and more
- Follow simple directions related to proximity, e.g., beside, between, next to
- Identify basic shapes, e.g., circle, square, triangle
- Compare sizes of similar objects

Science and Technology Learning

- Sort household items
- Tilt block ramps to make cars go down faster
- Collect items outdoors to play with and explore, e.g., sticks from the backyard, leaves on the ground, rocks from the playground, snow
- Talk about what they do during the day and at night
- Experiment with physical items, e.g., add water to dirt to make mud

Social Studies Learning

- Pretend to be various people during play experiences, e.g., teacher, firefighter, doctor
- Show an understanding of the rules at home, at school, and in other places
- Use blocks to build roads and bridges, houses, and other structures

Learning in the Arts

- Clap, jump, and stomp feet while listening to music
- Use scarves and streamers while moving to music
- Sing and hum parts of a familiar song

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

4-Year-Olds (48–60 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Can follow simple instructions and sustain attention
- Can learn to solve problems through negotiation and compromise
- Have strong emotions and are learning to name and express them appropriately
- Develop friendships and may have a best friend
- Are learning to play games with rules

Physical Development

- Demonstrate basic gross-motor skills, e.g., running, jumping, hopping, galloping
- Pedal, steer, and turn corners on a tricycle or other wheeled vehicle
- Demonstrate balance while moving
- Climb up and down stairs easily
- Demonstrate throwing, kicking, and catching skills
- Use tools for writing and drawing, e.g., drawing objects and shapes with markers, writing letters and words with colored pencils
- Fasten clothing
- Build detailed structures with smaller materials
- Use tools (e.g., scissors) successfully
- Complete interlocking puzzles

Language Development

- Learn most of the rules of grammar without direct instruction
- Take turns in conversation; listen and ask questions
- Regulate volume of voice when reminded
- Describe and talk about how to use familiar objects

Cognitive Development

- Talk about what they are doing and explain their ideas
- Represent what they learned through drawings, constructions, and dramatic play
- Ask many questions: What? Why? How?
- Make connections between new experiences and ideas and what they already know
- Understand concepts related to number, size, weight, color, texture, distance, position, and time
- Follow two- to three-step directions

Literacy Learning

- Retell familiar stories, mastering the correct sequencing of events
- Understand that printed words convey messages
- Memorize songs, rhymes, and books with repetitive language patterns
- Learn time concepts; talk about yesterday and tomorrow
- Learn print concepts, e.g., that English text is written and read from left to right

Mathematics Learning

- Use and respond appropriately to positional words
- Relate time to daily routines
- Measure items using nonstandard measuring tools, e.g., a block to measure the table, a piece of ribbon to measure the rug
- Line up items in a color pattern
- Count up to 20 and count up to 20 items

Science and Technology Learning

- Want to help a family member take care of a family pet
- Experiment with physical items and notice what happens, e.g., paint with water on the sidewalk and notice that the picture quickly disappears, manipulate a prism so colors appear on the wall, create shadows using a flashlight

Social Studies Learning

- Recognize the outside of their home
- Talk about family members and what they do
- Recognize their own physical characteristics

Learning in the Arts

- Move quickly and slowly as the tempo of a march changes
- Enjoy creating dance movements
- Experiment with musical instruments to make different sounds



***Mighty Minutes*® Planning and Play Form**

Child's Name

Date

Current Information

Areas of Development

Mighty Minutes® experience(s)

Notes for Sharing *Mighty Minutes*® experience(s)

Follow-Up

Continued Observation



***Intentional Teaching Cards™* Planning and Play Form**

Child's Name

Date

Current Information

Areas of Development

Intentional Teaching Card™ experience(s)

Notes for Sharing *Intentional Teaching Card™* experiences

Follow-Up

Continued Observation



***The Creative Curriculum® LearningGames®* Planning and Play Form**

Child's Name

Date

Current Information

Areas of Development

The Creative Curriculum® LearningGames® activity/activities

Notes for Sharing *The Creative Curriculum® LearningGames®* activity/activities

Follow-Up

Continued Observation

Observation Form for Families

What to observe:

- What your child does
- What your child says; how he or she communicates
- How your child responds to what you do or say
- How your child uses toys and other objects and engages in intentional learning experiences

Setting (place, people)

Time/Date

What did you see? What did you hear? What did you do?

Think about:

- What is your child able to do?
- Have you noticed the same behavior before?
- Was anything different this time?
- How did you interact with your child?
- What did your child do then?
- Did your child enjoy the experience? How do you know?

Notes:

The Creative Curriculum®

Guide for Home Visitors

It is impossible to overstate the importance of consistent, mindful, and responsive care and teaching in the lives of young children and their families. The intentional learning experiences that families engage in with their children at home play a critical role in how children feel about themselves as learners and as competent individuals. Families rely on home visitors to treat them with kindness and respect, to help their children grow and learn, and to act with their best interests at heart.

The Creative Curriculum® is a research-based, comprehensive, and developmentally appropriate curriculum that home visitors can use with families to support their children's development and learning at home. Ever mindful of the family's role as a child's first and most influential teacher, *The Creative Curriculum® Guide for Home Visitors* embraces the important role that home visitors play in the community, helping them empower families to engage their young children in purposeful, play-based activities that build important skills.

This *Guide* explores how the fundamental concepts of *The Creative Curriculum®* approach (developmentally appropriate practice and play- and inquiry-based learning to nurture the “whole” child as lifelong learner) can inform the work of home visitors. It offers specific guidance for using the Daily Resources from *The Creative Curriculum®* during home visits and socialization meetings in ways that promote meaningful learning while strengthening family–child relationships. These resources help families understand how children develop and learn, interact with their children in meaningful ways, and incorporate intentional learning experiences into their daily routines and activities at home.

The *Guide* explores in detail the following topics:

- home visiting basics
- building relationships with families
- strengthening family–child relationships
- helping families teach their children at home
- using *Daily Resources* to engage in intentional learning experiences
- using *Daily Resources* to read with children



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