



Baby Talk: Resources to Support the People Who Work with Infants and Toddlers

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What Happened to Fine Motor Skills?

Ever wonder what the implications of more young children using electronic devices might be? “A new and disturbing phenomenon is rising on the educational horizon,” warns Dr. Marcy Guddemi. “*Many children are arriving at kindergarten lacking the basic fine motor skills needed to hold a pencil and write.*” Although this troubling trend is surfacing in Kindergarten, it has its roots—and remedy—in early childhood. This article is a call to action for educators and parents to return to the time-tested play materials of childhood to best prepare our children for school. Learn more at <http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2016/fine-motor-skills>

Supporting Babies and Families Through Home Visits

The *Home Visitor’s Handbook* provides focused information to support home visitors in their work with families. The handbook has been updated and contains background information on the history of home visiting and requirements related to Head Start program standards, professional development, and family engagement. Access the handbook to discover effective practices, video examples, and resources, along with wisdom from home visitors across the country. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/program-planning/home-visitors-handbook/home-visitors-handbook>

What Cutting-Edge Neuroscience Tells Us About Early Childhood Development

This resource from Dana Suskind invites us to dance, sing, and interact with young children to support their development. See what you think at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/09/26/what-cutting-edge-neuroscience-tells-us-about-early-childhood-development/>

Unstructured Playtime May Improve Children’s Executive Functioning

Research from the University of Colorado Boulder finds that children with more unstructured playtime did better than their peers on tests of executive function skills. Executive function skills enable children to plan, meet goals, and overcome setbacks. The researchers recommend that parents give young children time for spontaneous, self-directed play. <https://www.childtrends.org/videos/too-much-structured-playtime>

Play in Early Childhood: The Role of Play in Any Setting

In this recent video, learn more about how play can foster children’s resilience to hardship, and how the complex interactions involved when children play help build their brains. Take a look at <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/play-in-early-childhood-the-role-of-play-in-any-setting/>

Babies’ Babbling Shapes Language Environment for Easier Learning

Recent research from Cornell’s Behavioral Analysis of Beginning Years (B.A.B.Y.) Laboratory reveals that baby babbling elicits changes in adult speech. Adults unconsciously modify their speech to include fewer unique words, shorter sentences, and more one-word replies. This simplified speech happens only in response to the baby’s babbling, and not when the adult is simply talking to the baby. Learn more at <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2019/08/babies-not-so-helpless-new-study-shows>

Baby Talk is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features high quality, readily available, and free resources. Resources **highlighted in yellow** are available in English and Spanish. To join the listserv, send an email with no message or signature block to subscribe-babytalk@listserv.unc.edu

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