



What Can Communities, Parents and Other Caregivers Do To Promote Infant Brain Development?

Now that we know the importance of early development, what can we do to protect and promote the development of those growing brains?

On the left we list the key influences or causal processes, based on what the research tells us so far. On the right you can list the community programs and actions by parents and other caregivers, which could affect each key influence.

Key Influences	Programs — What communities can do to help parents	Actions — What parents and other caregivers can do
1. Prevent Head Injuries	<i>Car seat loan program.</i>	<i>Insist on consistent use of car seat.</i>
2. Prevent Chemical Exposures, for example exposure to prenatal alcohol and other drugs, and post-natal exposure to smoke, lead, and other toxins.	<i>Prenatal health outreach programs.</i>	<i>Paint over old lead-based paint.</i>
3. Developmental Screening, in particular for early vision and hearing.	<i>Community-wide EPSDT program (Early & Periodic Screening & Developmental Testing).</i>	<i>Parents or child care staff notice delays and seek medical advice.</i>
4. Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect.	<i>Parents anonymous group.</i>	<i>Parents learn from and help one another.</i>
5. Promote secure attachment relationships of babies with their principal caregivers (sensitively responsive, reliably available interaction).	<i>Home visiting program.</i>	<i>Carry baby in a snuggle pack.</i>
6. Promote early language stimulation that is interactive, elaborative, responsive to the child (not audio tapes, TV, etc.).	<i>"First Books" reading program.</i>	<i>Talk with baby while diapering, describing what you are doing.</i>
7. Promote an intellectually enriched environment for young children: Opportunities to explore at own pace and manipulate objects in the company of supportive, sensitively interactive caregivers.	<i>High quality child care.</i>	<i>Give baby "floor freedom" out of crib and chair.</i>

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