



Ten Things Every Child Needs

Brain Development in Infancy and Early Childhood

Interaction =

Relationship between parent and child. Engage the child's brain through personal interaction, eye-to-eye contact, and gentle care.

Touch =

How a child first knows love. Sends signals to the brain to make connections; hugs and kisses; as critical a nutrient as vitamins.

Stable Relationship with Loving Adult =

Bond between parent and child. Kids need a loving and trusted adult in their life; a person to depend on.

Safe and Healthy Environment =

Friendly and secure atmosphere. Cover outlets; block off stairs; avoid lead poisoning; put dangerous chemicals out of reach.

Self-Esteem =

Fundamental to a child's development and sense of self. Children are little sponges; need to hear they are great; deserve attention and reassurance.

Quality Child Care =

Positive and attentive care on a regular basis. Safe, decent nutrition; people who want to love them and spend time with them.

Communication =

Words, sounds, and contact. By 6 months a baby can duplicate sounds made by an adult; the more words they hear, the more brain connections will develop.

Play =

Everything is learned through play. Play is linked with mental growth and development; it is a child's work; important to do **with** the child.

Music =

Rhythm and rhyme. Sing to them, with them, and expose them to good music.

Reading =

Imagination and creativity and snuggling. The more reading you do with them, the more they learn and the more brain connections develop.

Establish a relationship with them that lets them know you care about them, their feelings, and their well-being!

Original by Verona Lechler, NDSU Extension Service, 2001