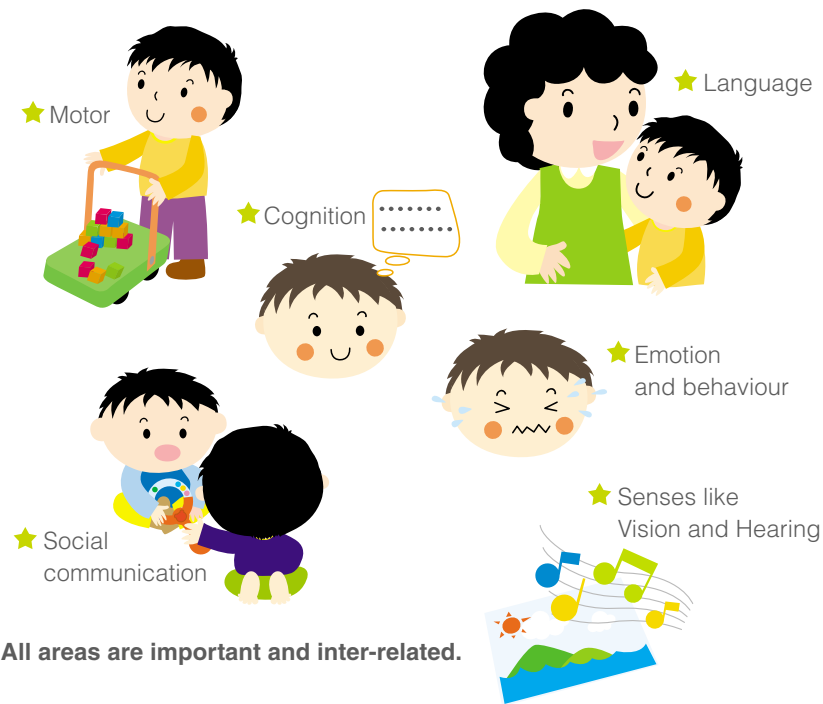


The Principles

During the first few years of a baby's life, the brain grows and develops significantly. The baby rapidly progresses from a totally dependent infant to an independent youngster capable of basic ways of thinking, responding, and solving problems. While **genetics** is important in determining your child's skills and abilities, the role of the **environment** is of equal importance in affecting your child's learning and emotion.

Development is a **continuous process**. The child goes through each step according to a certain **sequence**. However, each child is **UNIQUE**. Your baby will develop at his or her own **pace**. While certain attitudes, behaviors, and milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide spectrum of abilities and timing can be normal. It is therefore difficult to be exact about what should be expected at each stage of a particular child's development.

What are the different areas of development



What your child needs

Children need certain elements to grow and develop to their full potential especially in the early stages of life. He or she needs:

- to feel special, loved, and valued.
- to feel secure.
- to feel confident.
- guidance.
- a balanced experience of freedom and limits.
- to be exposed to a diverse environment filled with a variety of stimulation.



How you can help

By providing an appropriate environment for your child, you can make a difference to your child's development.

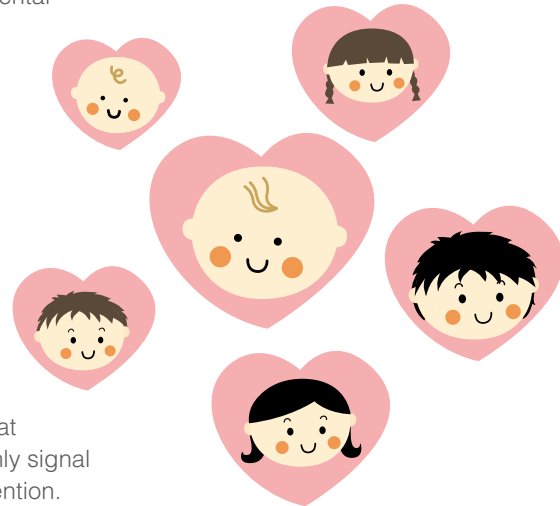
- ✓ Provide an **interesting** and **safe physical environment**, including age and **developmentally appropriate** play materials, for your child to explore and learn.

Respond warmly and contingently to your child's behavior: smiling when your child smiles, talking when your child speaks and answering your child's questions however briefly.



- ✓ **Talk** to and with your child often, using lively, descriptively rich, and accurate language, encourage him to express himself.
- ✓ **Avoid too much restriction**, punishment or control, instead give your child room to explore and even opportunity to make mistakes within safe boundaries.
- ✓ Have **reasonable expectations** for your child's abilities.

The following series of "Child Development" serve to show a general progression through the developmental stages. Every child is unique. It is perfectly natural for a child to attain some milestones earlier and others later than the general trend.



Don't be alarmed if your baby's development takes a slightly different timing or your baby fails to attain certain abilities at some stage. It may only signal a need for special attention.

If you have any concerns related to your child's own pattern of development, discuss with the nurses or doctors at any MCHC.

We have a series childcare and parenting workshops and leaflets for expectant parents, parents of infants and preschool children. Please contact our healthcare personnel for information.

Child Development 1



The Principles



Department of Health
Family Health Service