



EARLY CHILDHOOD MESSAGING FRAMEWORK CLASSIFICATION

Themes Legend		
Early Interactions	Brain Architecture	Play Equals Learning
Mindsets & EF	School Readiness	Resources

This 3-minute video depicts how actions by a range of people in the family and community impact child development. A child raised in environments with lower levels of stress and opportunities for learning build sturdy brain architecture.

The impact of experience on the brain is driven by reciprocal relationships: back and forth/serve and return interactions that build brain circuitry. Readiness for learning cannot be separated from social and emotional well-being. All development builds on what comes before. When children experience stable and nurturing relationships, healthy circuitry is built. When children experience instability and neglectful or abusive relationships, the brains circuitry is disrupted.

In the first few years of life, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second. After that connections are reduced through a process called pruning, so that brain circuits become more efficient. The brain's capacity for change decreases with age so it's important to build healthy capacity early.

This brief contains 8 key messages featured in the From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts report that set the record straight about key aspects of early child development.

“The Best Start in Life” course discusses early childhood development (ECD) and explore its role in achieving the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (<https://www.edx.org/course/the-best-start-in-life-early-childhood-development>)

- Three principles to improve outcomes for children and families:
1. Support Responsive Relationships
 2. Reduce Sources of Stress
 3. Strengthen Core Skills



Poverty diminishes brain growth and gaps in development appear before children turn 2. Children in the lowest socio-economic group are behind their peers in cognitive, language and social-emotional development. Strong nurturing relationships help build healthy brains.

More than two in five infants and toddlers live in families without enough income to meet basic needs. To thrive babies, need: Good Health, Strong Families and Positive Early Learning Experiences. Change labelling babies as being “At Risk,” to “Unlimited Potential.” This will lead to policies that have a broader reach and increase opportunities for babies and families who have lacked access.

Empower the parents and caregivers in your programs with handy guides for nurturing early childhood development. Purchase an unlimited license to download, print, and distribute. Each set contains an 8.5” x 22” poster and 8.5” x 11” handout or a double-sided handout.

Brain Wonders: Nurturing Healthy Brain Development from Birth
Literacy Skills: The Roots of Reading Start at Birth
Power of Play: Building Skills While Having Fun
Temperament: What Makes Your Child Tick?

Development From Birth to 12 Months Old: Forming a Trusting Bond to Nurture Learning
Development From 12 to 24 Months Old: Strong, Positive Connections and Interactions Fuel Learning
Development From 24 to 36 Months Old: New Skills Develop Through Play, Routines, and Relationships School
Readiness: Foundations in Language, Literacy, Thinking, and Social-Emotional Skills

From Cries to Conversations: The Development of Communication Skills from Birth to 3
Driven to Discover: How Thinking Skills Develop Through Everyday Play and Exploration
From Feelings to Friendships: Nurturing Healthy Social-Emotional Development in the Early Years
Busy Bodies: How the Development of Physical Skills Supports Learning

Before Birth: Prenatal Development for Baby, Mom, and Dad
Responsive Care: Nurturing a Strong Attachment Through Everyday Moments
The Daddy Factor: How Fathers Support Young Children’s Development
Tantrums, Defiance, Aggression—Oh My! Understanding and Managing Challenging Behaviours



Research shows that children with engaged fathers are more likely to be emotionally secure, confident, and have better social connections as they grow. How can policymakers ensure that children are able to reap the immense benefits of having an engaged father in their lives?

Through relationships with caring adults through active, hands-on play by connecting new ideas to what babies already know and can do by exploring and making sense of their world with support from caregivers

Factors that contribute to high-quality infant care: soothing environment, defined areas, secure open spaces (indoor & outdoor), personal touches, simple, interesting materials, child-size furniture, small physical challenges, diverse books

Features of great infant programs: time for children to explore and play, routines that address children's needs, policies that support children's health and safety. Warning signs to look out for: relationships aren't emphasized, environments don't support infants' needs, infants have little time to explore and play, families aren't included as partners, health and safety aren't priorities

Development Matters is for all early year's practitioners, for childminders and staff in nurseries, nursery schools, and nursery and reception classes in school. It offers a top-level view of how children develop and learn. It guides, but does not replace, professional judgement.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

Ofsted Inspectors visited a sample of the most successful early years providers to observe the interplay between teaching and play and evaluate the difference chosen approaches were making to the learning and development of disadvantaged children, especially funded two-year olds.

Identifies the importance of many different professionals in working with children in the early years, including health, social care, and education. Providing as much protection as we can in the early years (from pregnancy through to the age of five) is our best opportunity to address today's mental health crisis and to secure our long-term health and wellbeing.



Chronic stress can become toxic and have lifelong effects on the development of the brain, learning and long-term health

(1) A child who is living in an environment with supportive relationships and consistent routines is more likely to develop well-functioning brain circuits. (2) When stress responses are activated frequently, intensively, and persistently during early childhood, they can become set on permanent high alert—they may activate more easily and quickly and may not turn off as readily as they should (3) elevated stress can disrupt 3 brain systems: emotional regulation, memory, and EF systems, where circuitry for focused attention, impulse control and higher-level cognitive skills develop

A great deal of brain architecture is shaped during the first three years after birth, but the window of opportunity for its development does not close on a child's third birthday

Solutions to societal problems can found in early childhood when the architecture of the brain begins to form. It develops over time & is shaped by experience. Most important is relationships. ACEs can disrupt growth. Change is increasingly difficult as we age. If policy makers want to reduce crime, make communities safe, they need to start with early child development. Targeted policies can reduce chronic stress & expand opportunities for learning. This leads to higher academic achievement, lower dropout rates, as well as reducing obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. This leads to higher levels of education, increased income & more tax revenues, lower crime rates

(1) Biological systems interact with each other and the environment. (2) . Mobilizing the body's responses to threat diverts energy away from growth and healthy development. (3) The foundations of brain architecture are built during the prenatal, infant, and toddler periods During these periods of rapid development, the brain is as adaptable and flexible as it will ever be. This means that the brain's developing circuits are also highly sensitive to the disruptive effects of elevated stress activation.

Serve and return - importance of the back-and-forth interaction is between very young children, beginning immediately after birth, and the adults who care for them. It is the way the brain builds its circuits, the way the brain develops the capacity for different skills. if a baby doesn't get that kind of responsive interaction, it triggers a stress response.

Analogy of brain architecture, the world in which kids live, the experiences they have, the environment of relationships they live in, shape the development of the blueprint for that individual



Core story of Child Development (pp.7) - early experiences, relationships, genes + environment, cognitive, emotional, and social capacities are inextricably intertwined, "Toxic stress" derails healthy child development, brain plasticity and the ability to change behaviour decrease over time

Relationships & experiences influence development of the brain. Game - building a brain (pipe cleaners)

Explains how the basic architecture of the brain is constructed through a process that begins early in life and continues into adulthood

Notice the serve and share the child's focus of attention, Return the serve by supporting and encouraging, Give it a name! Take turns...and wait. Keep the interaction going back and forth, take turns...and wait. Keep the interaction going back and forth. Practice endings and beginnings

This educational video series on the importance of the early years was created by the Project for Babies, a former initiative of the University of Minnesota Center for Early Education and Development

First 3 years of a child's life is the most sensitive period for brain development. Experiences a child has during this time will shape the architecture of her brain and build the connections that allow her to develop lifelong skills like problem-solving, communication, self-control, and relationship building, that will allow her to survive and thrive within her family, community, and culture.

Language, thinking, self-control, self-confidence



Which plays a more important role in brain development, nature (genes) or nurture (environment)? What is a "Critical Period" in Brain Development? How does nutrition affect the developing brain? Does experience change the actual structure of the brain? When is the brain fully developed? Why does the developing brain undergo these critical periods in its development? Are there critical periods in the development of every brain function?

Even before birth, babies have a built-in expectation that adults will be available and care for their needs (Shonkoff & Phillips 2000). Their very survival depends on this availability. If babies' expectations for protection and nurturance are met, their brains experience pleasure and delight. These pleasurable early interactions stimulate the brain, motivating the baby to relate to those who care for them with confidence and ease. If their expectations are less than adequately met, their confidence in getting their needs met through relationships may be challenged. When this occurs, emotional and social development suffer, and, because babies' emotional base is the foundation for all other learning, so do intellectual and language development (Greenspan 1990; IOM & NRC 2015)

Series of articles: Focusing on Families: A Two-Generation Model for Reducing Parents' Stress and Boosting Preschoolers' Self-Regulation and Attention; The Case of Brain Science and Guided Play: A Developing Story; Caring Relationships: The Heart of Early Brain Development

Evidence is mounting that guided play scaffolds young children's development and that it might prime critical neural mechanisms to make healthy adaptations (Weisberg et al. 2014). It also helps children develop an understanding of how the world works (Gopnik 2012).

Me, Myself, and I: a growing awareness of self and the role of Attachment. A Skilful Communicator. A Competent Learner.

By engaging in playful serve and return with a child, you can literally help build stronger connections in the brain. Strong neural connections are the foundation for all of a child's future learning, behaviour, and health.

Play in early childhood is an effective way of supporting three core principles that can guide what society needs to do to help children and families thrive:

1. Supporting responsive relationships
2. Strengthening core life skills
3. Reducing sources of stress

When we play, we are at our happiest, we are engaging in complex interactions and building our brains. Play connects all aspects of what children need to thrive. Play also prepares children to respond to uncertainty and the unknown.



Play is one simple, underrecognized way of supporting healthy and resilient child development. Play contributes to sturdy brain architecture, the foundations of lifelong health, and the building blocks of resilience. Resilience is the ability to do well, the ability to cope, the ability to overcome hardship, or adversity, or threat to your well-being. Resilience is something that you actively build, and you build it in the context of relationships in an environment that helps you learn how to cope with challenges, cope with stress, cope with hardships. Play is an interactive process or a kind of self-directed process. Children use play as a way to develop skills. It's the way children learn to master their environment. And they learn to try things out. They test things. They test limits. It's driven by curiosity, and it's driven by an inborn drive to master the environment.

The Center's Community of Practice on Play (CoPP) is dedicated to increasing the understanding, appreciation, and presence of play in the early childhood sector.

Main question they are answering: How can we better understand the science of play and its role in advancing children's developmental outcomes and buffering them from the effects of toxic stress?

Main topics explored:

The science of play

How to measure the impact of playful learning

Play in community settings

Framing of messaging around play

How does play affect the cognitive development of children around the world? There is a need for systematic research on play around the world. Ethnographic work is helping the field of children's cognitive development better understand the diversity of play and its role in cultures outside the West and understanding what parents and community members believe about play is crucial for designing educational interventions.

The Learning Through Play team has tested this intervention in a center-based, trauma-informed early education setting, where it also ran coaching sessions for adult caregivers on how to scaffold play and support children's skill development. The intervention has now been adapted to enhance a home visiting program to increase the impact of supporting the development of children's executive function skills.



Play is how children learn to communicate, problem solve, test ideas, and get along with others. Encouraging your child's play is one of the most important ways to nurture development and it begins on day 1.

What can parents do to make the most of your child's playtime?

- Follow your child's lead
- Go slowly
- Read your child's signals
- Look at your play space
- Play it again, Sam
- Adapt play activities to meet your child's needs

Movement activities support young children's development in all areas, including social-emotional skills like self-confidence and cooperation.

Babies start moving their bodies with purpose. They become noticeably more interested in the world around them. They begin to explore toys and people through their senses, and they learn what objects and people are and do through this sensory play.

Now his explorations become more intentional as his growing language, thinking, and physical skills allow him to do more than he could before. What does this mean? More opportunities for play, making connections, and learning!

Toddlers are:

- learning how objects are used together
- making connections between objects—the reason they like placing little people on a toy bus.
- learning about sizes as they stack rings
- noticing similarities when they line up two toy cars that look the same.

From age 2 to 3, toddler's interests and skills are blooming at an amazing rate. All the new things toddlers can do—from walking and talking to figuring out how things work and beginning to make friends—are fuel for the imagination and creativity.

Explores how play supports all areas of children's development. Also included are age-based suggestions for playtime from birth to 3.



Fun seasonal activities by month to find play activities that promote your child's development all year. It includes examples of things to play together, what to talk about and books to read together.

Without any instruction, children of all races and genders, in all cultures of the world, invent and reinvent play in every generation. Something this ubiquitous must provide evolutionary advantages to both animals and humans. Decades of research suggest just that. Free play and guided play—together known as playful learning—are pedagogical tools through which children can learn in joyful and conceptually rich ways

Bamboo is a unique natural material that can provide days—even months! —of exploration for preschool children.

Mathematical understanding in the early years is a strong predictor of later academic success across subject areas. Early childhood math can be taught playfully

Math games support children's mathematical habits of mind—and key school readiness skills, such as problem solving, puzzling, and perseverance. When we watch and listen to how children play math games, we learn a lot about the mathematics they already know and what they're ready to learn. Dot card and finger games are highlighted in this article.

Professors Kathy Hirsch- Pasek and Roberta Golinkoff identified the Six Cs: collaboration, communication, content, creative innovation, critical thinking, and confidence. These are the skills that children will need as adults to succeed in the 21st century



Frequent opportunities for playful learning outdoors, including explorations of nature is critical for healthy whole child development.

1. Children learn through their play.
2. Play is healthy.
3. Play reduces stress.
4. Play is more than meets the eye.
5. Make time for play
6. Play and learning go hand-in-hand.
7. Play outside
8. There's a lot to learn about play.
9. Trust your own playful instincts.
10. Play is a child's context for learning.

Five elements essential to meaningful play that create those rich memories we treasure:

1. Children make their own decisions.
2. Children are intrinsically motivated.
3. Children become immersed in the moment.
4. Play is spontaneous, not scripted.
5. Play is enjoyable.

Child-directed play is play that evolves when children choose what to play and make up their own rules for how to play. Decades of research show the critical importance of this particular type of play for all children's learning and wellbeing.

The kinds of play that help children them most are engaging—play that they will focus on and stay with even when problems arise. This kind of play helps children develop their approaches to learning. Curiosity about the world, initiative and problem solving, and focused attention and persistence are just a few approaches to learning that children develop through play.

Birth to 5 Matters provides comprehensive guidance, drawing on previous guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which has been updated in order to reflect recent research, to meet the needs of practitioners, to respond to current issues in society, to meet the needs of children today and to lay a strong foundation for their futures.

Play both indoors and outdoors is a fundamental commitment to children throughout the EYFS.



It may not always be clear how play sits at the centre of Early Years provision, and how it relates to the role of the skilful practitioner. This guide addresses these questions and clarifies the role of adults who support and enhance young children's learning.

Play is just as active and essential to learning for babies and toddlers as it is for older children. To foster play, practitioners must consider the following:

- Close relationships
- Movers and doers
- Thinking and imagining
- Learning about themselves and others
- Communication skills
- Attention to detail

Despite appearances, messy play can make an enormous contribution to babies' and young children's cognitive and creative development.

Play and Exploration promote brain development. In early years settings play and explorations mean children are able to choose activities where they can engage with other children or adults or sometimes play alone, and during those activities they learn by first-hand experience – by actively 'doing'.

Executive function and self-regulation can be built through meaningful social interaction and practice. These skills help us to set goals and plan ways to meet them, check our progress along the way and adjust the plan if necessary. Executive function skills are developed through a slow process that begins in infancy continues into early adulthood. In the early years, adults are heavily involved in supporting children to develop these skills and then gradually stepping back as children get older to allow them to make mistakes and increase their independence.

Executive function and self-regulation are key ingredients in determining their success in life. The early years are not just about learning numbers, letters, and colours. We have to be able to work effectively with others, with distractions and multiple demands. Executive function is like an air traffic control system managing many different streams of information at the same time.

We all need a set of core capabilities we can develop with practice, over time including awareness, flexibility, self-control, and focus. Executive function and self-regulation help us to figure out what's important, to plan what we want to do and how we want to do it. They help us deal with whatever life throws at us.



The paper explains the science behind motivation—the “wanting” system and the “liking” system—as well as how those systems develop, and how that development can be disrupted. There are two types of motivation: one directed toward expected rewards (known as approach motivation), and another directed away from threat (known as avoidance motivation). The paper offers 5 facts about motivation that are often misunderstood as well as a set of promising approaches that parents and practitioners can use to promote positive motivation and learning during development.

We must be able to focus, plan ahead, avoid distractions, and shift our behaviour according to the differing demands and rules of work and family. We need to remember important information and follow multiple-step processes or instructions. We need to be able to stop ourselves from acting impulsively and persist in tedious tasks in order to achieve long-term goals. When these skills have not developed as they should or are compromised by the everyday stresses of poverty or other sources of ongoing adversity, our communities pay a substantial price in population health, education, and economic vitality.

This toolkit is intended to help state policy leaders and advocates assess the current status of services for infants, toddlers, and their families, and to set priorities for improvement.

Online Toolkit includes questions about how children are doing, existing state policies and initiatives, and optional stakeholder survey questions. Topics covered include:

- Overview of Families with Infants and Toddlers in the State
 - Good Health
 - Strong Families
- Positive Early Learning Experiences
- Collaboration and System Building

Infographic that highlights how children become ready for school and how school readiness begins at birth.

Main points:

1. It's all about relationships
2. Every day experiences shape early learning
3. Emotions
4. The importance of play
5. What a school ready child looks like

Video about how an understanding of engineering and technology develops from birth to 5 years old.

Watch how science skills develop from birth to 5 years old.



Video highlights the foundation of early math skills in the first 5 years of life.

This is a series of articles that explain how children develop early learning skills from 24 to 36 months. There is a separate article for each of these topics:

- Language & Literacy Skills
- Thinking Skills
- Self-Control
- Self Confidence

This is a series of articles that explain how children develop early learning skills from 12 to 24 months. There is a separate article for each of these topics:

- Language & Literacy Skills
- Thinking Skills
- Self-Control
- Self Confidence

This is a series of articles that explain how children develop early learning skills from 0 to 12 months. There is a separate article for each of these topics:

- Language & Literacy Skills
- Thinking Skills
- Self-Control
- Self Confidence



Watch how children learn by doing and learn how to encourage your child to stick with difficult tasks, even if they are frustrating.

Each and every child has the right to equitable learning opportunities—in centers, family childcare homes, or schools—that fully support their optimal development and learning across all domains and content areas. This extensive document includes:

(DAP) Position Statement
Purpose
Position
Defining DAP
Core Considerations
Principles of Child Development and Learning
Guidelines for DAP
Creating a Community of Learners
Engaging in Community Relationships
Observing and Assessing Children’s Development
Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning
Planning an Engaging Curriculum
Demonstrating Professionalism
Recommendations for Implementing DAP
Recommendations for Programs
Recommendations for Higher Education
Recommendations for Policymakers
Recommendations for Research

Readiness doesn’t mean just knowing the academic basics. It means a child has a willing attitude and confidence in the process of learning: a healthy state of mind. This article explores eight parenting practices that nurture children’s untold potential and readiness to learn.

1. Have contact talks with your child each day
2. Recognize that children's reasoning skills are just beginning to develop (executive Function)
3. Conflicts are mistaken behaviours, not misbehaviours
4. When children have strong conflicts, adults work to teach rather than punish
5. Teach, don't punish. Conflicts do have consequences
6. Use guidance talks.
7. Hold family meetings to discuss and figure out problems that repeat themselves.
8. We adults (still) make mistakes

Developing language and literacy skills begins at birth through everyday loving interactions, such as sharing books, telling stories, singing songs, and talking to one another. Parents, grandparents, and teachers play a very important role in preparing young children for future school success.



This easy-to-use guide offers practical suggestions for implementing effective, researched-based teaching practices that foster a child's ability to become literate. Written for use in a child-care setting, it will help professionals grasp the necessary skills intrinsic to encouraging literacy, and includes numerous fun activities

Interdependence of art & writing, 4 stages of development, tips

Research-based tips on how to share books with babies and toddlers to maximize the joy and learning of book-reading and to nurture a lifelong love of books: a few minutes; singing or talking, let child turn pages, cover page, words, bring out characters, relate to child's experiences, questions, retelling, creating books together, integrating into routines

Babies begin to learn the skills they need for reading and writing from the everyday interactions they have with the trusted adults in their life. Learn how talking, having conversations, singing, and even colouring helps prepare your child for success!

During the first three years, young children begin to read their world. As infants' random movements and utterances are interpreted to convey emotions and ideas, they learn that gestures and words share meanings among groups of people. Thereby, young children take giant steps into the world of communication. They go on to learn that print carries meaning (books are for reading) and that caregivers can read books over and over and over again.

Asking your children questions while you read together helps them to comprehend the story and concepts in the book. Continuing the conversation after you have read helps to strengthen their understanding of the story and maximize their oral learning experience. By making reading time "conversation" time, both you and your children will enjoy the experience more

Babies learn to become good communicators when their caregivers respond to their sounds and actions. They learn to love books and reading when their caregivers read to them often. By the time they are three, they understand stories with plots, and they can tell you stories with a beginning, middle, and end. Learn how you can help your infant and toddler develop all of the skills necessary to become confident readers and writer

Benefits of reading to babies



Not memorization, rather complex language, importance of talking & listening, vocabulary development

Routines, interests, daily experiences, choice, storytelling, fun, setting

Understanding pictures & print as symbols, increasing vocabulary, print conventions,

Magazines, newspapers, writing letters, recipes, variety of books

Bonding, elaborating

The video breaks down serve and return into 5 simple steps and features adults and young children doing each step together.

Early experiences affect the development of brain architecture, which provides the foundation for all future learning, behaviour, and health.

Significant mental health problems can and do occur in young children.

Adverse experiences can change future generations through epigenetic pathways

The science of child development shows that the foundation for sound mental health is built early in life, as early experiences—which include children’s relationships with parents, caregivers, relatives, teachers, and peers—shape the architecture of the developing brain.

This article shares highlights from our journey together as researchers to explore infant and toddler STEAM, make connections between children’s interests and our intentional teaching practices, and create spaces that promote developmentally appropriate STEAM learning.



Tronick describes a phenomenon in which an infant, after three minutes of "interaction" with a non-responsive expressionless mother, "rapidly sobers and grows wary."

The Earliest takes a deep and personal look into mental health in the earliest years of life.

An infographic on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) can help professionals talk about social and emotional development.

Science tells us that the foundations of sound mental health are built early in life. Early experiences—including children's relationships with parents, caregivers, relatives, teachers, and peers—interact with genes to shape the architecture of the developing brain. Disruptions in this developmental process can impair a child's capacities for learning and relating to others, with lifelong implications. This edition of the InBrief series explains how improving children's environments of relationships and experiences early in life can prevent initial difficulties from destabilizing later development and mental health. The 5-minute video provides an overview of Establishing a Level Foundation for Life: Mental Health Begins in Early Childhood, a working paper by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. Read more: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/re...> For more information on the Center on the Developing Child, please visit: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

The most crucial period of brain development takes place during the first five years of a child's life. The report also set the stage for advocacy efforts leading to increased public investments in early childhood education. Nearly every state now invests in preschool, for example, and Congress recently made the single largest increase in funding to childcare in history.

Greater attention needs to be paid to the mental health of our youngest children in these trying times. This begins with an understanding of infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH), a concept that may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable to some

This framework is for all early year's providers in England (from 1 September 2021): maintained schools; non maintained schools; independent schools (including free schools and academies); all providers on the Early Years Register; and all providers registered with an early year's childminder agency (CMA). 4