



Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 21, Issue 2, Spring 2025

Supporting Language Development

The first few years of life are so important for young children and set the foundation for a lifetime of learning. Learning to speak and communicate is very powerful! Children learn how to interact and share ideas and feelings. They also learn how to solve problems, be

curious about the world around them, and learn who they are as people. This helps children make sense of all their experiences as they prepare for school and adulthood.

Babies and young children are born ready to learn how to communicate.

Research has steadily supported the importance of warm, nurturing relationships in the development of language. At home and in high quality community child care, young children absorb and learn language best through repeated "serve and return" interactions with an engaged adult. Not only do children learn how to interact, listen, and express ideas and feelings, but also how to problem solve, develop a sense of self, gain an understanding of the world around them, and make sense of learned experiences.

Parents and caregivers don't need any particular toys and materials to help support this "serve and return". These experiences can happen in everyday interactions. Check out the next page for some suggestions.

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WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Human Services/Bureau for Family Assistance/Division of Early Care and Education; West Virginia Department of Human Services/Bureau for Family Assistance/WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; West Virginia Department of Health/Bureau for Public Health/Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; and West Virginia Department of Health/Bureau for Public Health/Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Home Visitation Program and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

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Here are some everyday ideas to help your child grow and learn:

Newborns and babies:

- Talk during your daily routines like diaper changing or bath time ("Let's change your diaper. First, we need to get a clean diaper. After we change your diaper, we'll take a nap.")
- Read books together (Check out [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#))
- Notice your baby babbling or smiling at you and respond ("I see you smiling at me. You must be happy.")
- Sing and play nursery rhyme games (Peek-a-Boo, Pattycake, This Little Pig)

Young children:

- Talk together during your routines such as during grocery shopping, bath time, driving in the car, or on walks. You can talk about something you see or something you are doing. ("Look at those red peppers. What is something else that is red that we can eat?")
- Put screens down during mealtimes. Use the time to talk about daily routines or family plans.
- Read and make books together. Ask your child what is happening in a picture.
- Cook together (check out this great, short video on [making banana pudding together](#))
- Make up stories together about your child's favorite toys or people
- Sing and play simple children's games such as Ring Around the Rosey or Head Shoulders Knees and Toes
- Play together, adding to the words your child uses. "You're right, that is a car. It's red just like Papaw's car".



If you have concerns about your child's language development, talk to your child's:

- *primary care physician*
- *child care teacher*
- *home visitor or the [West Virginia Home Visitation program](#)*
- *[West Virginia Birth to Three](#) or 1-800-642-8522*
- *[Help Me Grow](#) or 1-800-642-8522*
- *[West Virginia Early Head Start](#)*



West Virginia Infant/Toddler
Mental Health Association
Supporting the social and emotional well-being of children

Say YES To Safe Sleep For Babies

YES

Baby always sleeps alone, on her back and in her crib

z z

YES

Crib is clear of toys, heavy or loose blankets, bumper pads & pillows

YES

Dress your baby in light sleep clothing and keep the room at a comfortable temperature

z z z

YES

It's safest for baby to sleep in the room where you sleep, but not in your bed.

YES

Mattress is firm & fits close to the sides

YES

Baby sleeps in a smoke-free room

Share the Facts

For video + more information visit:

SafeSoundBabies.com



We All Help

child & family well-being

“Take Root”

when we all support the
5 Protective Factors

1. Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support

2. Parental Resilience

Tools for managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges and adversity

3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional growth

4. Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to support and services that address immediate family needs and reduce family stress

5. Social & Emotional Competence of Children

Interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize & regulate their emotions, and establish & maintain healthy relationships

through simple **Everyday Actions**

Learn How Today!

Go to www.strengtheningfamilieswv.org