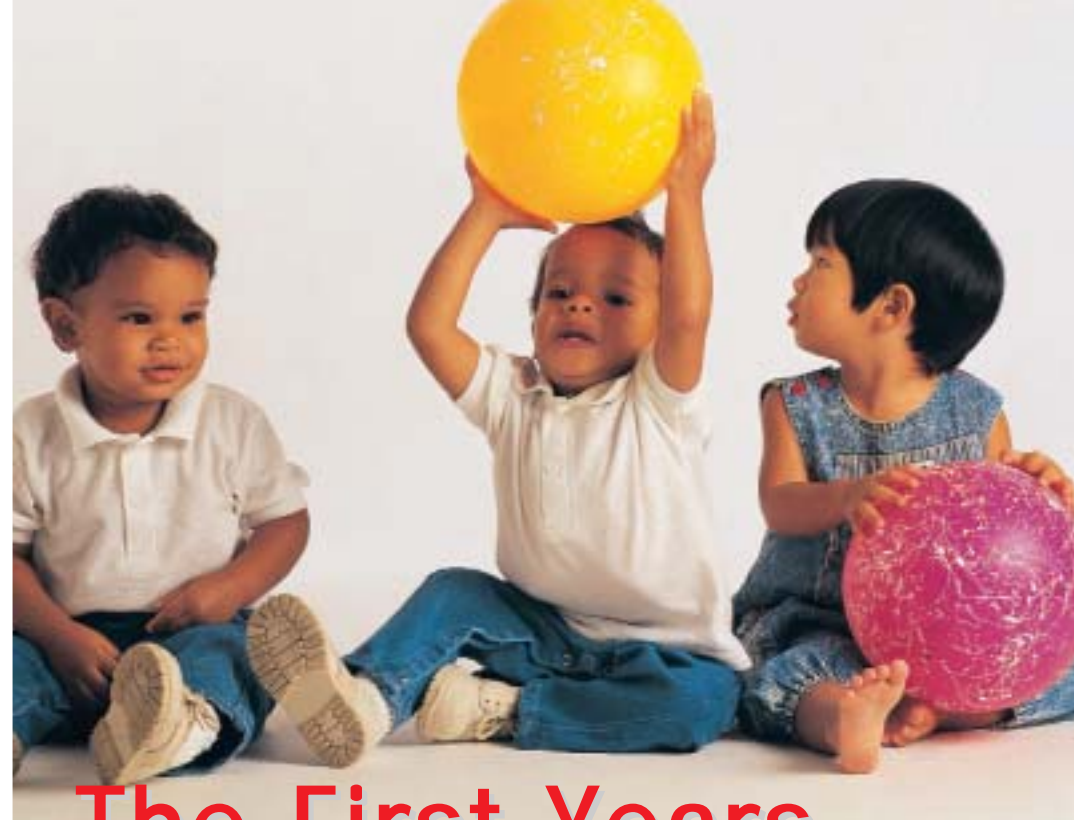




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# The First Years Last Forever

How you can  
make a difference  
in the life of  
your child

Distributed by:



Canadian Institute of Child Health  
384 Bank Street, Suite 300  
Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 1Y4  
Tel: (613) 230-8838; Fax: (613) 230-6654  
E-mail: [cich@cich.ca](mailto:cich@cich.ca) - Internet: [www.cich.ca](http://www.cich.ca)

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### Choose quality child care and be involved

If you use child care, be sure it is of high quality, and stay involved. High-quality child care can help your child's learning and social skills when he or she enters school. Talk with friends, teachers, and others whose opinion you value when deciding on the best child care. Studies have shown that children who do better in school have families who have been involved in their preschool care and education.



### Take care of yourself

In order to take care of your child, you must look after yourself. If you feel overwhelmed, ask for assistance. Whether it's a family member, friend, or child care provider, there are people who can help you.

New brain research shows that healthy parent-child relationships have an important influence on the brain development of infants and young children. Find out how to raise healthy, happy children and confident, competent learners with *The First Years Last Forever* video.

A poster and this pamphlet are available in many other languages. If you have questions or need further information about the importance of the early years, please

see the coordinator of this program. They should have a copy of *The First Years Last Forever* video, which discusses these guidelines in more detail.



# The First Years Last Forever

## How you can make a difference in the life of your child

**H**ow do I make a positive difference in the life of my child? What can I do to promote healthy brain development in my infant? How do I raise a happy, confident, successful learner? How can the first years last forever?



As a parent, you play an important role in shaping the way your baby will learn, think and behave in the future. New research shows that the relationship between you and your child in the early years is a necessary part of healthy brain development.

*The First Years Last Forever* video is a first step to help you learn how to create a healthy parent-child relationship with your infant, which, in turn, will promote healthy brain development. Here are ten guidelines which encourage and further this brain formation.



### Be warm, loving and responsive

Children need loving, sensitive care so they feel secure with their caregivers. By holding, rocking, smiling or singing to your child, you are helping to shape later learning and behaviour. Touch is especially important because holding and stroking stimulates the brain to release hormones necessary for growth.

**2****Respond to your child's cues and clues**

Because infants cannot use words to express their moods and needs, you must be aware of the sounds, movements, and facial expressions your baby makes to respond properly. Remember - you can't spoil a newborn baby by responding to his or her needs.

**3****Talk, read and sing to your child**

The parts of the brain that deal with speech and language develop as words are spoken. The more you expose your child to language, the more the brain will grow and develop. Your child's language will grow when he or she hears you talk, read or sing.

**4****Establish routines and rituals**

Daily routines are very comforting to infants and help them learn what to expect from their environment. Children who have safe and predictable experiences with others have also been found to do better in school.

**5****Encourage safe play and adventure**

As infants grow, they begin to explore the world beyond their parents or caregivers. Encourage your infant to explore, but be ready when he or she returns to you for security. Remember that play is also important as a learning experience.

**6****Make TV watching selective**

Children who learn best in school have families who limit the amount of time they spend in front of the TV and are careful about the kinds of shows they can watch. Look at programs with your child and don't let TV become your babysitter.

**7****Use discipline as a chance to teach**

As children explore their world, it is important to set limits and provide adult care. Studies show that the way you give discipline -which really means to teach - is necessary to your child's later development. Useful forms of discipline include saying no while reminding your child that he or she is loved and giving reasons for your rules.

**8****Understand that each child is special**

All children are different and need praise for their successes. Be sensitive to his or her cues and clues. This will encourage your child to feel positive about themselves.

