



About Child Development

A child's earliest years—from birth through age 5—are a time of extraordinary growth and development. To create a safe, healthy environment for children to learn, grow and flourish, it helps to understand some of the basics of what happens developmentally in their earliest years:

Social/Emotional Development

Children begin to form relationships and get emotional signals from the adults in their world. Children use these signals to determine who they can trust to meet their needs and to learn how to express and control themselves in healthy ways.

Cognitive Development

Children develop the ability to understand, think about the world around them, and solve problems. Cognition and general knowledge includes both how children think and what children know.

Physical Development

Children gain greater control over how they move and what they can do with their bodies and progressively learn how to take care of their bodies in healthy and safe ways.

Language Development

Children learn about what words mean and how to form them, how to use words to convey meaning, and how to understand and use printed materials. As children acquire language, they gain the ability to express ideas, share them with others, and respond to the actions and ideas of other people.

To learn more about early learning and developmental benchmarks, go to www.del.wa.gov

Think a child is unsafe?
Call toll-free 1.866.ENDHARM

For parenting resources and support, call 1.800.932.HOPE



The Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL) works every day to help Washington's children get ready for school and life. We have a tremendous opportunity and obligation to prepare all of our youngest citizens for success before they walk through the classroom door. We are committed to providing both parents and the public with early learning information, services and support.

Emergent brain research and economic studies have shown that investing in early childhood education promotes the best possible outcomes for children, families and the economy. Among our responsibilities, we at DEL:

- > License nearly 175,000 child care slots
- > Oversee state-funded preschool programs serving more than 7,000 families
- > Invest millions in communities to support early childhood education such as literacy programs and afterschool programs for school-aged children

Every day, we are honored to take action that inspires the world to discover, love and nurture the greatness in all children.

Learn more about DEL
www.del.wa.gov



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WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HELP A CHILD TODAY?



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

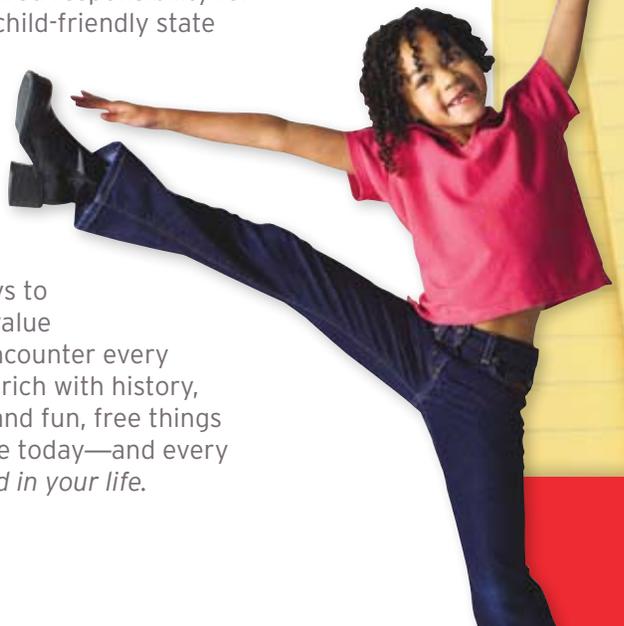
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That's not just a question for parents or child caregivers.

EACH CHILD is born with incredible potential to learn and contribute to our world in countless ways. It is estimated that more than half of Washington children begin kindergarten not ready to succeed, and researchers say children who start behind are in danger of staying behind.

All of us have a shared responsibility for creating the most child-friendly state in the nation—a safe, healthy state where our youngest citizens can learn, grow and realize their full potential.

There are easy ways to acknowledge and value the children you encounter every day. Washington is rich with history, natural resources and fun, free things to do! Take the time today—and every day—to help a child in your life.



Here are some ideas:

- ✓ Practice compassion and tolerance in your life. *Children will notice.*
- ✓ **Read to a child, even after the child has learned to read on her own.**
- ✓ Parenting is a challenge. Praise a parent when you get a chance!
- ✓ **Donate a copy of a children's book you love to a child care or youth program.**
- ✓ Remind a child that everyone makes mistakes.
- ✓ **Turn up the music and dance with a child in your life.**
- ✓ Ask a child in your life about his day and really listen to his answer.
- ✓ **Volunteer at schools...or volunteer anywhere. Anything that makes our community better is good for children.**
- ✓ **Sing in the car with your child on the way to child care or school—a great start to the day!**
- ✓ Be informed about how your community invests in libraries, public schools, parks, nutrition programs and other services that promote healthy child development.
- ✓ **Make history come alive. Talk to a child in your life about a historical event that fascinated you as a child.**
- ✓ Let your child help with simple chores, such as dusting or setting the table.
- ✓ **Give a child a notebook and encourage him to start a journal of words and/or drawings.**
- ✓ Hold your child and have her tell you a story.
- ✓ **Keep plenty of books, magazines and newspapers around the house so children see learning as a part of everyday life.**

For more fun tips and information about how you can help a child today, visit us at www.del.wa.gov.