

Home Visitors Guide for Distance Learning

featuring

The Creative Curriculum® 

and



Introduction

The Creative Curriculum® Home Visitor's Guide for Distance Learning is designed for professionals who conduct home visits with young children and their families in a distance-learning setting. This *Guide* shows you how you can use *The Creative Curriculum® Daily Resources* and the ReadyRosie™ program with families during home visits when in-person interactions are limited. This guidance helps you tailor the experiences that you offer during home visits to meet the needs of each child in your group, explains how to use *The Creative Curriculum®* and ReadyRosie™ resources with families, and offers practical strategies that support you in your work to build partnerships with families.

When families feel respected and valued as their child's foremost and most important teacher, your partnership with them can help deepen their understanding of how they can meet the needs of their young children.

Partnering with families is an essential component of both *The Creative Curriculum®* and ReadyRosie™. The resources in these programs all help engage children and their families in meaningful experiences that promote children's knowledge, skills, and abilities in every area of development and learning. Developmentally appropriate practice, together with play- and inquiry-based learning, informs every resource available in *The Creative Curriculum®* and ReadyRosie™.

Overview of This Guide

The purpose of this *Guide* is to help you use *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ resources to support your work with children and their families during home visits. The Guide contains the following chapters and resources.

Home Visiting Basics

As a home visitor, you have a unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of families with young children. By working directly with family members in their homes, you help them understand their child's development and help them build the skills they need to effectively care for and teach their children. This chapter describes your role as a home visitor, offers general guidelines for conducting home visits, and suggests ways you can use different resources from *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ to provide a structure for repeated meetings.

Building Relationships With Families

High-quality early childhood programs and family support programs depend on program staff building strong partnerships with families. Families will be much more receptive to learning from you, sharing information with you, and trying new ideas and resources if you have established a relationship with them that is based on trust and mutual respect. This chapter describes the importance of getting to know families and their unique life experiences. It discusses the importance of respecting families as experts on their children. Effective communication techniques are also described, including asking the right questions, being a good listener, and resolving conflicts.

Supporting Children's Relationships With Their Families

One of your most important roles as a home visitor is to support the relationships between family members and the child. *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ feature tools that can help families spend purposeful time playing with their children and supporting their development. Repeated, nurturing experiences not only increase children's abilities and skills, they also strengthen children's relationships with family members.

Resources to Support Learning and Development

The Creative Curriculum® and ReadyRosie™ help you work with families to support their children's development and learning at home. This chapter describes how to select *Mighty Minutes*®, *Intentional Teaching Experiences*, *Modeled Moments*, and children's books to share; how to introduce each type of resource and experience to families; and how to encourage families to use these resources independently with their children.

Chapter

1

Home Visiting Basics

Home Visiting Basics

The care and education that young children receive during their first 5 years of life have a powerful influence on their brain development, the way they view the world, how they relate to others, and their ability to succeed as learners. As a home visitor, you have a unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of families with young children. By working directly with family members, you help them understand their child's development, and you help them build the necessary skills to care for and teach their children. You accomplish this by building a supportive partnership with each family.

Technology allows you the wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with family members while they are in a relaxed setting and then work collaboratively to develop a plan that meets their particular needs. Using *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ as part of that plan enriches children's experiences during this key period of development and growth; helps create a solid foundation for lifelong learning and success; and teaches family members important skills for interacting with, caring for, and teaching their children. By using *Intentional Teaching Experiences* or *Modeled Moment* videos to engage in activities with their child, using guidance from the *Research and Answers* videos to enrich the home learning experience, or enjoying two-way communication with their teacher, families and teachers stay connected with specific home learning opportunities and share feedback. The “shared language” of *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ can help home visitors facilitate content-based communications, so families and teachers are communicating about the things that most directly impact student success!

Home Visiting Programs

Home visiting programs support children and families in their natural and most comfortable environment: their homes. On any given day, a home visitor provides a variety of services, e.g., helping family members improve their parenting skills, sharing information about child development, and offering specific treatment or therapy. Home visiting programs recognize and build on the fact that young children's development is affected by the quality of their relationships with their families. The experiences children have at home contribute to their development of a sense of self, their understanding of the world around them, and their ability to communicate. Recognizing that children develop as part of a family unit, early childhood programs use home visiting for different purposes: for prevention, early intervention, therapeutic intervention, or simply as general family support, depending on the program and the needs of the families and children.

Whatever your program's goals, all home visitors partner with families to make positive differences in the lives of their young

children. You help families understand child development; develop appropriate, supportive parenting strategies; and support their child's growth and learning in important areas.

Your Role as a Home Visitor

As a home visitor, you typically have the privilege of seeing a child and his family in their most comfortable setting. Even in a virtual environment, your role is to support children's development and learning by building meaningful partnerships with their families. To do so, you must get to know the most important people in each child's life. The issues and goals you discuss and agree on will be guided by individual families' beliefs and practices.

During "home visits," you can encourage families to use play as a way for them to engage with children in ways that promote their growth and development. When you talk about play, you talk about a subject that families understand. We all remember the fun we had playing as children, and we see play as a natural part of being a child. Play is fun, but it is also important. In fact, play affects all areas of development. It is how children learn about the people and the objects around them.

The purposeful learning experiences demonstrated in the *Modeled Moments* videos, for example, help families play and engage intentionally with their children and help them understand what their children learn through such joyful interactions. These activities and experiences can help families begin to notice more about their child, including what she likes, is interested in, and can do. As they continue to respond to and interact with their child through play, family members begin to see the developmental changes that occur and appreciate what makes their child unique. As a result, they understand more about child development and their role in their own child's development and learning.

General Guidelines for Conducting Home Visits

Distance learning can be challenging for children, families, teachers, and caregivers. It is important to acknowledge that asking families to join you in a virtual home visit can initially feel awkward. Typically, in home visits the home visitor plays with the child or models learning experiences, demonstrating how to use the child's cues to scaffold the experience. Teachers and caregivers will still be able to model for families, but it will happen through discussions with family members, notes that are shared with families, or video conferencing messages.

Home visits, even via video conferencing, can make it easier to get to know children and families because families are usually more comfortable in their own homes than they are in a school, agency, or community setting. Before making a virtual home visit, contact the family to let them know that you want to schedule a meeting. This

initial contact begins the process of building a relationship with the family. In this initial contact, ask when and how the family prefers to communicate with you. Which video conferencing programs will work best for the family: Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, email, text, etc.?

When you begin the video conference, communicate with the intention of getting to know each family and build a relationship with them. Their child is your common focus.

Planning Ahead

Decide ahead of time what you want to accomplish during your first “home visit.” Is it simply to introduce yourself and meet the family, or do you have additional goals? In the beginning, it is important to clearly state your own purposes and expectations for the meetings and invite the family to state theirs. What you both expect to happen as a result of your work together will influence the purpose of each “visit.”

Before the initial meeting, review your administrative paperwork or enrollment materials so that you are familiar with the names of family members and basic information about them. For ongoing meetings, think about whether there is something from a previous visit you want to discuss. Is there a topic you did not finish discussing or some information you offered to find for the family? Your notes from the previous meeting will help you to continue the conversation.

Contacting the Family

Let the family know ahead of time why you are contacting them. Explain your roles and responsibilities. Arrange a time that is convenient for all parties and when there will be few interruptions. Indicate how long the “home visit” is likely to last. Families may be anxious or excited about your call. Reassure them and help them feel comfortable about your desire to build a strong partnership with them. Invite family members to talk about their goals for the interactions. Think about how to address as many of their requests as possible. Try to be flexible in scheduling your interactions. Sometimes changes in the family’s or child’s routine may mean that a change is necessary.

Gathering Materials

Gather any materials and information you will need before making the video call. An initial meeting may require you to share various forms for enrollment purposes. Asking the family to bring their calendar to identify dates for future meetings is helpful for every meeting. You may also need to share handouts or information on a particular topic that the family requested or that you think will

be helpful. Be sure to review the most recent observations and your notes from the last meeting to see if you talked about any experiences you might wish to revisit.

You will probably need different sets of materials for different families, so you will need a system to organize them. Many home visitors have a folder (digital or actual) for each family with sections for forms, observation notes, and handouts. Materials such as a white board, markers, index cards, magazines, children's books, family photos, colorful tape (painter's tape or Washi tape), balls, baby dolls and household collectibles like socks, cotton balls, clean empty food containers, and plastic containers are also useful to demonstrate various learning experiences.

During the Visit

During this first phase of "home visiting," encourage family members to talk about their priorities with regard to the child's skills and behavior. This will help you establish rapport and begin to build a positive relationship with the family. If their goals or priorities seem developmentally unrealistic, you can discuss these issues in an open and respectful manner as you share developmental information. Asking about what the child is doing and what the family does to help her often puts families at ease. As a home visitor, you should communicate clearly that families are always the decision makers about their child.

Your first meeting is a good time to describe your role as a home visitor. Let families know how you will support them during these meetings. Explain that, over the course of your time together, you will select activities, games, and experiences from *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ resources to discuss ways they can use each resource to promote their child's development and learning.

Resources like children's books, *Intentional Teaching Experiences*, *Mighty Minutes*®, and *Modeled Moments* videos can provide a structure for your ongoing visits. They will help you direct your attention to what the child is doing and reflect on his development. During the meeting, encourage family members to try the games and activities you lead and those modeled in the videos throughout the day and to notice what happens in different settings and at various times of day. You will know that family members' skills are increasing when they tell you about the different activities, what they observed, why and how they adapted the activities, and the results. This shows their growing confidence in their ability to interact with their child and to guide his development and learning.

Documenting the Visit and Following Up

In addition to meeting on a consistent basis, you must work with the family to identify goals, create a plan for meeting them, and describe what is accomplished. It is important to write notes about each meeting as soon as possible after the “home visit” has ended. Note what you observed about the family and child, what you did during the meeting, any family concerns, and reminders for the next meeting.

Reflect on the resources available to help support families to address their goals for their child. *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* features family-friendly versions of *Intentional Teaching Experiences* (called *Guided Learning Experiences*), family *Mighty Minutes®*, *LearningGames®*, and *Recipe Cards* that you may choose to share with families.

You may choose to refer to the ReadyRosie™ landing page for extra support to help customize the *Modeled Moment* activity or *Extend the Learning* and help parents understand why the *Modeled Moment* activity is important. Use the *Data Dashboard* to gain insight on student achievement based on families’ responses and feedback. These data will also help you to best reach your families by seeing their activity as they use the ReadyRosie™ playlists and library of videos.

These general guidelines will help you gather the information you need for your program’s purposes, and families will gain confidence in you and look forward to your next meeting. The next two chapters in this *Guide* explain how you can build relationships with families during your visits and how you can support families to build positive relationships with their children.

Chapter

2

Building Relationships
With Families

Building Relationships With Families

High-quality early childhood programs depend on every staff member building strong partnerships with families. As a professional who provides care and education to children, and works with families, your ability to partner meaningfully with families is of the utmost importance. Successful partnerships are based on trust, mutual respect, and a shared understanding that a child's development and learning is enhanced when all of the adults who care for the child work together.

In building relationships with families, remember that your role is to make yourself available to them as a valuable resource with firsthand knowledge of their child, offering information so they can do even more to support their child at home. While you may be an expert on how children typically develop and learn, families are the experts on their children. When you have strong relationships with families, they are more open to sharing information with you, understanding the new information you share with them, and using ReadyRosie™ and family-friendly resources in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* to engage their children in meaningful learning experiences at home.

To create effective partnerships with families, consider the following strategies:

- Get to know families. Learn about their personalities, interests, culture, and life experiences. Respect differences.
- Focus on the family during your meeting. Talk with them about what they want for their child. Recognize their role as teachers and experts on their children.
- Be a good listener. Empathize with families and share your related experiences.
- Ask questions and provide information.
- Observe family members as they play and interact with their child during the video call. Comment on specific actions and responses that promote development and learning.
- Use a partnership approach for resolving differences constructively.

Getting to Know Families

As you get to know the most important people in a child's life, you begin building partnerships with each family. Although it might take time, becoming familiar with families' unique characteristics, strengths, and values helps you find ways to build the necessary trust and mutual respect. Begin by recognizing the many ways families differ and the profound influence of the family culture. Each family's way of communicating, playing, and level of involvement with their child will be unique. There is no "best" way.

Appreciating Family Differences

Every family is different. Many children grow up with one parent, with grandparents, or with an aunt or uncle. Other children live with two mothers or two fathers. Some children are being raised by foster parents. To appreciate differences among the families you serve, begin by keeping an open mind about what constitutes a family. Remember, to children, their family members are the most important people in the world.

Some family members are easy to get to know. They are open to meeting new people and may be eager to communicate with you about their child. Others are uneasy and unsure of themselves. This may be their first experience with conferencing with teachers in their home, and they don't know what to expect. Some may have had a bad experience with a home visitor in the past. Their communication styles may be different from yours. For example, they may be uncomfortable with direct questions and reluctant to answer them. Because the time you have with some families is limited, it may take longer to establish trusting relationships. Some families may view you as an authority figure and wonder why you are asking their advice when you are the expert. Others may be embarrassed to have a stranger asking about their lives and wonder if you are judging them. Try to understand these differences and not to assume that the same approach will work with every family.

Families bring a wide range of life experiences that shape who they are and how they relate to others. The levels of education that family members have achieved, socioeconomic status, health problems, and length of time in this country also account for differences among families. Some are new parents, and some are very young. Some have taken on guardianship of grandchildren and are older. Others are caring for elderly or ill family members as well as their young children. Some are facing challenging circumstances such as unemployment, substance abuse, low literacy skills, unstable or unsafe housing, depression, or lack of access to a phone or transportation. Others are experiencing long separations from loved ones who are away for military service or in prison.

As you think about the families you serve and plan individual "home visits", consider how each of the following factors affects the families and children:

- family composition, including the number and gender of parents, guardians, primary caregivers, and other family members present in the home
- number of children, their birth order, and their spacing
- any chronic health problem or disability of a family member
- exposure to violence, abuse, addiction, or neglect
- home languages
- type of community in which the family lives

- kind of work family members do
- age of the family member(s) when the child was born, when the child was adopted, or when the child came into the home
- economic status
- living situation, including history
- parent's (guardian's or primary caregiver's) level of education
- parent's (guardian's or primary caregiver's) job history, including work-related travel
- special circumstances such as marital separation or divorce, absence of a family member for reasons not related to marriage, a new sibling, a new living situation, how many different people the child is around, and how many places the child moves between each day.

These life experiences will affect how families respond to information you share with them and the amount of time they can devote to creating and sharing intentional learning experiences with their children. Your sensitivity to a family's particular circumstances will affect the way they relate to you.

Additionally, during this school year, it is particularly important to consider how COVID-19 has affected the families you serve. You may wonder...

- Are they essential workers, working with the public? Are they anxious about staying healthy and keeping their family members safe from potential infection?
- Have they lost their jobs due to COVID-19 and are therefore experiencing increased stress?
- Have they (or someone in their family) been ill with COVID-19? How has this affected the family?
- Has their access to family members or friends been curtailed due to social distancing practices? Are they feeling isolated and in need of social support?
- Are they working from home and the sole caregiver for their child(ren)?

All of these scenarios (and more) can be highly stressful. While teachers and caregivers may not be in the position to address or solve these challenging situations, knowing what the family is experiencing can help us offer the type of support they need. It is important to talk to families about how they're feeling to find out how to offer appropriate support.

Be aware and mindful of each child's circumstances as you begin to work with the family. Your home visiting program may have some forms to help you learn more about individual families. Talking with families and taking notes about what you learn is an important first step. Encourage families to communicate with you about anything new taking place in their children's lives. This process will take time

as you develop a trusting relationship with the family. Remember to honor the confidentiality of the information family members share with you. If a family member shares information with you that makes you uncomfortable, seek advice from your supervisor or a specialist in your program.

To appreciate how and why families respond as they do, be aware of your own personal experiences and how they have influenced your thinking and actions. Think about the messages you received growing up and the experiences you had in your own family and community.

- How did you become aware of your personal identity, nationality, culture, and ethnicity?
- What early messages did you receive about different groups?
- How did you define a *family* when you were growing up? Has your definition changed today?
- What messages did you receive about your family's socioeconomic status?
- Were girls treated differently from boys in your family? What do you think your family's expectations were for you?
- How and when were you encouraged to express your ideas and feelings?
- Was it acceptable to be noisy and active in your home, or were children expected to be seen and not heard?
- How was discipline managed?
- Was independence encouraged?

Thinking about these considerations will help you know what questions to ask each family. Be selective about the kinds of questions you ask. You can learn a lot about families simply by observing them as they interact with one another.

As you get to know families, you will find answers to questions such as these:

- Who are the people in the child's immediate family?
- Who are the decision makers in the family? Are decisions made by one person or by several people?
- Do all family members live in the same household?
- Who is the primary caregiver of the family's young children?
- How does the family balance children's independence with doing things for them?
- What, when, and how are children fed?
- How is discipline managed?
- Do family members have different roles in raising children?
- Are boys and girls treated differently?
- Is it acceptable for children to be noisy and get dirty?
- What kinds of questions are children asked?
- How do adults respond to children's questions?

- How do people interact with one another? Do they look each other in the eye? Are they taught to pause and think carefully about a response before giving it? Do they touch each other as they communicate?
- How do families show respect for elders? For children?

Families as Experts

Families are their child's first teachers and are intimately involved in their child's growth and development. The family's interests, values, and priorities are reflected in their daily routines and in their interactions with their children. As an interested partner, you will want to know as much about the family as possible—their views, goals, and needs—in order to share the most useful information with them.

Here are some positive assumptions that can be made about families:

- They are experts on their children.
- They are the constant in their child's life.
- They want to do what is best for their children.
- They have taught their children most of what the children know.

As a home visitor, you will exchange information with the family about their concerns and discuss supports that can help address them. Emphasizing that all children grow through play will help everyone focus on the child's strengths and interests. As families learn to use the resources in *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™, they will feel more confident about their involvement in their child's development and learning.

The activities and strategies that you share with a family depend on what the family identifies as their most important goals for their child. The most successful supports respond to the priorities that the family identifies for their child. You will work together to develop and carry out a plan.

Families are interested in helping their children learn and grow, and most family members are comfortable playing with their children. Helping them to recognize the different kinds of learning opportunities that children experience through play and other engaging experiences will empower them as experts and as their child's first and most important teachers.

When you reach out to families, listen closely to determine what kind of support they need and what you can offer:

- Do they just want a few ideas for new experiences for their child?
- Do they want as many experiences as you can send?
- Do they need ideas for including their children of different ages at home?
- Do they need social–emotional support for their child who is missing her friends?
- Are they looking for resources to address specific development and learning areas?

When reaching out to families and sharing suggestions and resources, it's important to offer the level of support each family needs. Just as teachers and caregivers individualize their interactions for each child depending on their needs, the communication and support they offer families should likewise be individualized. During this time, the partnership you are developing with families will determine how you support families.

The goal is to find the rhythm for communication and the quantity of support that is appropriate for each family. Some families may feel overwhelmed by weekly messages, while others may appreciate daily touch-bases! Similarly, the quantity and frequency of sending suggested activities or resources home should be determined by families. Some families may feel guilty for not completing the experiences you've shared, while others may reach out for even more resources to draw from!

Partnering With Families

Encourage family members to talk about their priorities with regard to their child's skills and behavior. If their goals or priorities seem developmentally unrealistic, you can discuss these issues in an open and respectful manner as you share developmental information. Asking about what the child is doing and what the family does to help her often puts families at ease.

Your first contact is a good time to describe your role as a teacher in this distance-learning setting. Explain that, over the course of your interactions, you will select activities, games, and experiences from the Daily Resources and discuss ways that families can use each resource to promote their child's development and learning.

The resources in *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ can provide a structure for your ongoing connections with families. They will help you direct family members' attention to what the child is doing and help families share their reflections on his development. Encourage family members to use resources like family *Mighty Minutes*®, *Guided Learning Experiences*, or *Modeled Moments* from ReadyRosie™ throughout the day and notice what happens in different settings and at various times of day.

Effective Communication

Effective, ongoing communication forms the basis of productive partnerships. Families love to hear about their child's development, learning, and experiences. As you share information with families and listen to their concerns, you build the trust that is essential to partnerships. Through shared experience, including accessing the ReadyRosie™ data dashboard and using the two-way communication feature, you can comment on how the child is doing, share information about his development and learning, and discover which strategies work best for the family. Give examples of how

different learning experiences modeled during the “home visit” and in the ReadyRosie™ videos can support their child and invite them to share their ideas. These learning experiences provide a basis for continuing discussions as they are repeated, varied, tailored, and expanded according to the child’s response.

As you share *Modeled Moments* with families through ReadyRosie™ and continue conducting “home visits,” be willing to ask questions as well as share knowledge. Trust is built over time and is based on many positive and respectful experiences. By building strong partnerships, home visitors help families understand and support their child’s development. All children need caring adults in their lives who take an active interest in their health, safety, and learning. Because each family is unique, you will communicate with each family in different ways.

Asking Questions

As you develop relationships with families, you will find that you have much to learn from one another. Families know their children: their personalities, how they respond to new experiences, what they like to do, and what new skills they are developing. You know about typical child development and learning, as well as what you have learned about their child through your observations. Families are the experts on their children, and your conversations with them will help you get to know their child better. Here are a few topics to discuss with families:

- health and growth history; how the child used to be and how she is now
- the child’s relationships with other family members
- ways the child likes to be held or comforted
- food the child likes
- how the child reacts to changes in routines
- the child’s fears, likes, and dislikes
- the family’s lifestyle and experiences
- how the child communicates her feelings, ideas, and needs

Some of the most important factors in identifying opportunities for using *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ resources such as family *Mighty Minutes*®, *Guided Learning Experiences*, and *Modeled Moments* videos are a child’s interests, preferences, and capabilities. Consider asking families some of these open-ended questions to help identify a child’s interests and strengths:

- What would you most like me to know about your child?
- What makes your child smile and laugh?
- What are your child’s favorite things to do?
- What gets and keeps his attention?
- What gets him to try new things?

- Does your child have a favorite toy? What is it?
- What have you noticed that your child is especially good at doing on his own?
- Do you have any concerns about your child? What are they?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your child?

As you learn about a family and share information about their child, you build a positive, trusting relationship that helps the family see you as a tremendous asset and a partner in their child's progress.

Being a Good Listener

Effective communication requires that you not only ask the right questions, but also that you listen actively and listen well. In true partnerships, each individual is seen to be equally capable of expressing his or her ideas about caring for the child. During a home visit meeting, you should spend as much time listening and learning as you do sharing your thoughts and knowledge. Active listening lets the family know that you take their concerns and ideas seriously. Use the following strategies to listen actively as families share their expertise with you.

Listen to what the family is saying about their child, including information about her accomplishments as well as any concerns about her development. Pay attention to their feelings as well as their words in order to see things from the family's perspective, to recognize their needs, and to understand what is most important to them with regard to their child.

Focus on the family member as she speaks. Look at the camera on your device or computer to maintain "eye contact" and listen carefully to what she is saying. Do not get distracted, interrupt, or jump to conclusions. Match her style of communication and keep an open mind about different perspectives.

Often, there are delays during video conferencing. Allow a moment or two to pass before speaking to avoid accidentally cutting the family member off during a conversation.

Ask questions about what the family member is saying to let her know that you are listening. Open-ended questions—to which more than one correct answer is possible—encourage families to talk more and share their ideas. Use prompts such as, "Tell me more about..." and "How did you feel?" and "What happened next?"

Restate what you hear in your own words to make sure you understand what is being said. This also helps you to build a shared language with families. If there is uncertainty about what a family member is talking about, clarify your understanding while restating it in positive terms: "Tell me whether I understand what you are saying. I think I heard you say... ." Restating helps you remember the conversation so that you can make notes at a later time.

Describe feelings to show empathy and to help the family member process any strong emotions. This strategy may also help families think about their feelings in the future when they are responding to a challenging situation with their child.

Working Through Differences

Despite all the positive steps you take to build a partnership with each family, you will likely encounter challenging situations. Even in the best of relationships, you will find that misunderstandings, disagreements, and conflicts emerge. Some families are struggling with difficult situations, and ongoing stress makes it difficult for them to be available to their children. Challenging situations must be handled carefully and positively in order to maintain a partnership.

Use a partnership approach. If you work with families who share your values and beliefs and have similar life experiences and personal characteristics, you are more likely to interpret what they say and do in the same way they do. If you work with families who are very different from you—and if you do not know much about their beliefs and practices—miscommunication and misunderstandings can easily take place. Understanding and respecting practices that are different from your own help you build positive relationships with all families.

You and families will not always agree. There will probably be times when you and a family member have different points of view. Families who do not understand your point of view or who feel that their values and goals for their child are not respected will not be comfortable in the partnership.

This is the important question: “How can we work out our differences in a positive way?” Through a combination of acceptance, compromise, and sensitivity to the family’s culture and beliefs, you can resolve most conflicts. The following steps may be helpful in resolving differences constructively.

Try first to understand the family’s position. Ask open-ended questions and listen to learn the family’s concerns. “Tell me a little about your concerns for your child. What would you like him to learn?” These questions can help you discover the real issues behind the family’s requests. More than likely, they want their child to behave well and practice self-discipline.

Validate the family’s concerns and wishes. Restate what you hear family members say to be sure you understand and to let them know you hear them: “What I’m hearing you say is that you want to be sure your child learns how to control himself and how to behave.

This is an important goal for us as well. We will spend a lot of time building children's skills in this area." The family member can then confirm or clarify your understanding.

Together, generate solutions. Once the problem is clarified and there is some agreement about goals, you will want to resolve the problem in a way that satisfies both you and the family. One way to start finding a solution is to ask for their ideas. You may have an idea of how to solve the problem, but your goal is to involve the family in the problem-solving process. By being willing to share control of the process, you send messages that the family's opinion and ideas count and that you are partners in caring for their child.

Positive working relationships require time and effort, but everyone benefits. Families feel more confident about their parenting skills and are more likely to freely share the information you need to help their children develop and learn. You can see conflicts as opportunities to understand a family's point of view and to find ways to partner with the family. The more you know about children and families, the better able you will be to determine the best approach to resolving conflicts.

Parenting a child is one of the important jobs in the world, yet there is very little training for this critical role. Adults who had caring, nurturing experiences when they were children usually have a solid foundation for becoming supportive parents. Those who had less constructive experiences still want the best for their children and are doing what they think is needed. Learn as much as you can about the strengths and needs of each family so that you have realistic expectations and can individualize your approach to the partnership. Your way of working with one family will not necessarily be the same as with another.

Chapter

3

**Supporting Children's
Relationships
With Their Families**

Supporting Children's Relationships With Their Families

One of your most important roles as a home visitor is to support the relationship between individual families and their children. This involves helping families understand child development and their child's temperament, getting to know families well, supporting families to be careful observers of their children, and sharing strategies that enable families to be responsive to their children during play. The resources from *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ help families engage in purposeful play with their children and meet important objectives for development and learning. Your direct support of children and their families improves children's skills and abilities while strengthening their relationships with their families.

Helping Families Understand Child Development

As a home visitor, you are tasked understanding child development and explaining it to families within the context of their children. While we know that individual children develop in different ways and at different rates, development typically follows a predictable sequence of milestones. Many factors influence how a child develops, including his interests, temperament, and the quantity and types of his experiences in and out of the home.

We can look at child development as being divided into nine broad areas: social–emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts. In reality, development is not so neatly divided; instead, these are interrelated and often overlap. Development in one area affects and is influenced by development in all other areas.

The following section provides a brief overview of the nine areas of development and notes how resources support young children's development and learning in each area.

Social–Emotional Development

Social–emotional development is learning to relate to adults and other children in positive and caring ways. It involves the way children feel about themselves, their understanding of feelings, their ability to regulate emotions and express them appropriately, and their capacity for building relationships with others.

When adults are responsive, when they share the pleasures of children's accomplishments and discoveries, and when they create an environment in which children can participate actively in daily routines and experiences, they show children that they are important, interesting, and competent. When children are loved and accepted, they feel secure. When children feel safe and secure, they become active explorers and learners. Through positive interactions, children learn about themselves and how to relate to others.

The experiences described in the *Daily Resources* encourage children to:

- build trust and feelings of security
- learn that they can make things happen
- build positive relationships with others
- build self-esteem and confidence
- make choices
- learn about their own and others’ families
- define their likes and dislikes
- recognize feelings in themselves and others
- play cooperatively with other children

Social–Emotional Development		
<p>Infants (0–12 months) Enjoy being held and cuddled Respond to familiar people by smiling, cooing, and babbling (you are their favorite toy) Imitate people’s actions Explore toys by using their senses Pay attention to sounds and movement Enjoy playing “peek-a-boo”</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months) Find new ways to make things happen Follow simple requests and understand more language than they can express Are increasingly aware of their possessions Become aware of others’ expressions of emotions Enjoy realistic toys, e.g., baby dolls, bottles, cradles, telephones Initiate “peek-a-boo” activities</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months) Have strong feelings and may use actions instead of words to express their emotions Begin to learn about taking turns, but should not be expected to share toys and materials Interact with other children for longer periods Engage in simple pretend play Begin to use caring behaviors to help and comfort others Use toys (e.g., balls, blocks) with other people</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months) Can help make and follow a few simple rules Imitate adult activities Talk with other children in pairs and in groups Learn to take turns and share Begin to recognize and understand the feelings of others Enjoy simple pretend play, alone and with others</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months) Can follow simple instructions and sustain attention Can learn to solve problems through negotiation and compromise Have strong emotions and are learning to name and express them appropriately Develop friendships and may have a best friend Are learning to play games with rules</p>	

Physical Development

Physical development includes gaining control over large and small muscles. Large-muscle skills enable a child to roll over, sit, crawl, stand, walk, climb, run, ride a trike, and throw a ball. Small-muscle skills such as holding, pinching, and flexing fingers eventually enable children to do such things as draw, write, eat with utensils, and cut with scissors. As their physical abilities grow, children learn to use them to make new discoveries.

Although children typically develop physical skills in a predictable sequence, they develop these skills at different rates. Control of their bodies develops from head to toe and from the center of their bodies out through their arms and legs to their fingers and toes. By observing children and sharing information with families, you can keep one another up to date about each child’s growing abilities.

The experiences described in the resources found in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ encourage children to:

- increase large- and small-muscle control
- move in different ways
- follow directions about how to move
- scribble, draw, make lines, and trace around objects
- use tools to build, create, draw, and write

Physical Development		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Gain control of and move their heads from side to side</p> <p>Play with their hands and feet</p> <p>Reach for, grasp, shake, mouth, and explore objects they can hold</p> <p>Move objects from one hand to the other; bang objects together</p> <p>Roll over</p> <p>Sit on a blanket, propped at first and then without external support</p> <p>Crawl to explore</p> <p>Pull themselves to standing and cruise holding on to furniture</p> <p>Roll, hold, and throw balls</p> <p>Pick up finger foods</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Pull themselves to standing and cruise holding on to furniture</p> <p>Walk steadily but may prefer to crawl</p> <p>Use carts, baby carriages, and other wheeled toys to support walking</p> <p>Begin to climb and slide</p> <p>Move rhythmically to music</p> <p>Clap</p> <p>Take objects out and put them back in containers; fill a container and then dump the objects out</p> <p>Roll and throw balls</p> <p>Reach successfully for moving objects, e.g., bubbles</p> <p>Begin to stack objects</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Develop small-muscle skills by turning pages, pouring, opening containers, and using scissors</p> <p>Stack and build with blocks</p> <p>Begin to coordinate eye-and-hand movements, e.g., threading beads on laces, manipulating snaps and zippers</p> <p>Walk smoothly, tiptoe, and begin to run</p> <p>Begin to gain large-muscle skills, e.g., throwing, catching, kicking, jumping, hopping</p> <p>Pull and push things, e.g., boxes, doll carriages, wheeled toys</p> <p>Sit on and use their feet to propel riding toys</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Walk, run, and turn with coordination</p> <p>Walk along a line, using arms for balance</p> <p>Climb stairs using alternate feet</p> <p>Jump with two feet</p> <p>Hop and balance on one foot</p> <p>Push and pedal tricycles</p> <p>Throw, catch, and kick large balls</p> <p>Use utensils to eat and serve themselves</p> <p>Dress themselves and use large fasteners</p> <p>Coordinate eye-and-hand movements, e.g., pour water into a funnel, create a tall block structure</p> <p>Turn pages one at a time</p> <p>Use tools to draw objects and simple shapes</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Demonstrate basic gross-motor skills, e.g., running, jumping, hopping, galloping</p> <p>Pedal, steer, and turn corners on a tricycle or other wheeled vehicle</p> <p>Demonstrate balance while moving</p> <p>Climb up and down stairs easily</p> <p>Demonstrate throwing, kicking, and catching skills</p> <p>Use tools for writing and drawing, e.g., drawing objects and shapes with markers, writing letters and words with colored pencils</p> <p>Fasten clothing</p> <p>Build detailed structures with smaller materials</p> <p>Use tools (e.g., scissors) successfully</p> <p>Complete interlocking puzzles</p>	

Language Development

Language development includes the sharing of ideas and feelings with others, as well as listening and speaking. Children develop language in many ways: through gestures, facial expressions, spoken words, and touch. They develop language in order to think, plan, solve problems, and figure out what others think and feel. Language becomes the principal tool for establishing and maintaining relationships with adults and other children. Developing language takes practice. By sharing your pleasure in children’s attempts to communicate—rather than correcting their mistakes—

and by talking with them even before they understand what you are saying or can respond verbally, you help children build on their desire to communicate.

The experiences described in the resources found in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ encourage children to:

- engage in back-and-forth conversations
- build expressive and receptive vocabularies
- play word games
- build language skills and language comprehension
- experiment with using different voices and vocal inflections

Language Development		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Ask for care and attention by crying, laughing, and smiling, and through other vocalizations</p> <p>Vocalize to themselves, people, and toys</p> <p>Understand and respond to gestures, facial expressions, and changes in vocal tone</p> <p>Understand and respond to their names and to very simple, familiar requests</p> <p>Recognize a familiar voice before the person enters the room</p> <p>Look at favorite toy when family member labels and points to it</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Follow simple requests and understand more language than they can express</p> <p>Use gestures and sounds to communicate</p> <p>Wave good-bye</p> <p>Understand and respond to many words, simple directions, and questions</p> <p>Increase expressive vocabulary</p> <p>Name familiar people in their lives</p> <p>Play games with back-and-forth exchanges, e.g., “pat-a-cake,” “peek-a-boo”</p> <p>Point to familiar pictures in a book when prompted</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Talk in simple sentences that gradually increase from two to several words</p> <p>Increase their ability to listen and to speak</p> <p>Engage in conversation and ask questions</p> <p>Begin to express feelings verbally</p> <p>Follow simple requests</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Use language to gain information, understand concepts, express feelings, and make requests</p> <p>Participate in conversations with adults</p> <p>Use speech that is easy to understand</p> <p>Talk in three- to five-word sentences</p> <p>Follow directions involving two to three steps of a familiar task</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Learn most of the rules of grammar without direct instruction</p> <p>Take turns in conversation; listen and ask questions</p> <p>Regulate volume of voice when reminded</p> <p>Describe and talk about how to use familiar objects</p>	

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development involves how children think, how they see their world, and how they use what they learn. Children learn as they move and explore their environments. They learn as they grasp a rattle, pound molding dough, ride a bike, and smell grilled cheese sandwiches. They learn as they play and live each day with their families. As they eat, get dressed, or move a chair across the room, children collect information about how things work. As they get older, they become curious about what they observe and experience. They ask questions, make predictions about what might happen, and test their ideas. They recall past experiences and apply what they know to new situations in order to understand them. As families notice and build on their child’s interests, they promote their child’s ability to learn.

The experiences described in the resources found in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ encourage children to:

- search for their own images in mirrors
- sort and match pictures and objects
- compare different items
- make predictions
- categorize objects
- gain strategies for organizing knowledge
- make decisions
- follow directions
- learn to imagine different situations

Cognitive Development		
<p>Infants (0–12 months) Learn about objects by using all of their senses Visually follow and respond to moving objects and faces Notice objects with contrasting colors and patterns and those with gentle movement and sounds Watch mirrored images appear and disappear Imitate adult movements and language sounds Enjoy activity boxes</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months) Make choices between clear alternatives Begin to solve problems Learn by moving and doing Concentrate for longer periods of time Open doors and flip light switches Enjoy sorting and nesting toys</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months) Want to do things by themselves Enjoy sensory toys with various sounds and textures Sort and match objects and pictures by size, color, or shape Experiment to see what will happen as a result of their actions Complete puzzles with a few pieces Make sounds with musical instruments</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months) Use all of their senses to explore and investigate Enjoy gathering information about the world Ask <i>why</i> questions Sort and categorize materials Become interested in cause and effect (what makes things happen)</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months) Talk about what they are doing and explain their ideas Represent what they learned through drawings, constructions, and dramatic play Ask many questions: What? Why? How? Make connections between new experiences and ideas and what they already know Understand concepts related to number, size, weight, color, texture, distance, position, and time Follow two- to three-step directions</p>	

Literacy

Literacy development during the early childhood years includes emergent reading and writing behaviors that form the foundation for later reading and writing. Children develop these emergent literacy behaviors through seeing and recognizing print in their homes and in their communities, having books read aloud with them, exploring picture books and storybooks, and writing (from making scribbles or marks to making controlled scribbles and letters). Exploring books and retelling stories as a cozy daily ritual encourages children (even the youngest of infants) to enjoy reading experiences and promotes their literacy learning.

The experiences described in the resources found in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ encourage children to:

- listen, watch, and participate during reading experiences
- retell stories
- create stories
- use crayons, markers, pencils, paper, and other writing tools

Literacy Learning		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Enjoy listening to simple stories, rhymes, and songs</p> <p>Use their senses to explore books</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Point to familiar pictures in a book</p> <p>Learn to turn pages</p> <p>Hold crayons and make marks on paper</p> <p>Bring books to an adult to explore and read with them</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Enjoy books with rhymes and predictable words they can anticipate and repeat</p> <p>Tell very simple stories</p> <p>Begin to make sense of basic time concepts, e.g., before and after</p> <p>Orient a book correctly, i.e., right side up; front to back</p> <p>Recognize familiar books by their covers</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Tell simple stories as they look at pictures and books</p> <p>Pretend to read a familiar book, using illustrations as cues</p> <p>Enjoy a wide variety of books</p> <p>Learn print concepts such as reading a book from front to back and reading a page from top to bottom</p> <p>Fill in missing rhyming words in familiar stories, songs, and rhymes when prompted</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Retell familiar stories, mastering the correct sequencing of events</p> <p>Understand that printed words convey messages</p> <p>Memorize songs, rhymes, and books with repetitive language patterns</p> <p>Learn time concepts; talk about yesterday and tomorrow</p> <p>Learn print concepts, e.g., that English text is written and read from left to right</p>	

Mathematics

Mathematics learning involves noticing similarities and differences, organizing information, and understanding quantity, numbers, patterns, space, and shapes. When adults encourage children’s explorations and manipulations of objects in their environment, they are supporting children’s discovery of mathematical relationships. Children learn and understand the concepts and language of math through this firsthand exploration of their world. Adults play a significant role in helping children learn mathematics vocabulary, concepts, and process skills through everyday experiences.

The experiences described in the resources found in *The Creative Curriculum*® Cloud and ReadyRosie™ encourage children to:

- explore number concepts, e.g., counting, quantity, comparisons, number order, numerals
- notice relative sizes and amounts
- recognize repeated patterns in everyday items and experiences
- recognize shapes and positions in space

Mathematics Learning		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Respond (watch you intently; smile and coo) as you count items or use words such as <i>more</i></p> <p>Place lids on each container they are playing with</p> <p>Reach for more toys or other objects</p> <p>Make a sign for “more” after finishing a snack</p> <p>Focus on the color or texture of items</p> <p>Wave arms in anticipation of receiving a bottle</p> <p>Distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar adults</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Stomp around the room singing a counting song</p> <p>Put a cup on each plate or a napkin next to each chair at the lunch table</p> <p>Know whether to go around, in, or through a structure to get to an object</p> <p>Place differently shaped blocks into the matching openings in the shape-sorter box</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Line up items of different sizes, grouping the big items together and the little items together</p> <p>Hold up fingers to indicate age</p> <p>Separate and group items by color, shape, and size</p> <p>Learn the names of basic shapes, e.g., circle, square, triangle</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of the concepts of one, two, and more</p> <p>Follow simple directions related to proximity, e.g., beside, between, next to</p> <p>Identify basic shapes, e.g., circle, square, triangle</p> <p>Compare sizes of similar objects</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Use and respond appropriately to positional words</p> <p>Relate time to daily routines</p> <p>Measure items using nonstandard measuring tools, e.g., a block to measure the table, a piece of ribbon to measure the rug</p> <p>Line up items in a color pattern</p> <p>Count up to 20 and count up to 20 items</p>	

Science and Technology

Science and technology development involves learning about living things, the physical properties of materials and objects, and Earth’s environment. When adults encourage children’s hand-on explorations of the world around them, they help children engage in scientific thinking. Children love to explore and investigate. With adult support and guidance, children will expand their explorations and investigations as they connect new understandings to related experiences.

The experiences described in the resources found in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ encourage children to:

- observe and explore their immediate environment
- manipulate objects to understand their properties
- react to changes
- show awareness of living things

Science and Technology Learning		
<p>Infants (0–12 months) Grasp and mouth and shake an offered item, e.g., teething ring, rattle Interact with toys, e.g., bat at a hanging toy, pull a string attached to a toy to make it come closer, push buttons on a pop-up toy, squeeze a toy to make it squeak Discover body parts, e.g., grab their feet, play with your hair Notice various sounds outside (e.g., birds chirping, dog barking, cars honking) and look in the direction of each new sound</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months) Experiment to see what sounds they can make with instruments, e.g., xylophone, toy drum, musical bells Get excited when they see something new outside, e.g., a squirrel scampering up a tree Notice moving shadows on the wall, a curtain blown by the wind, leaves falling on the ground</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months) Use different toy tools at a toy workbench Mix paint colors to make new colors Notice the weather outside</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months) Sort household items Tilt block ramps to make cars go down faster Collect items outdoors to play with and explore, e.g., sticks from the backyard, leaves on the ground, rocks from the playground, snow Talk about what they do during the day and at night Experiment with physical items, e.g., add water to dirt to make mud</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months) Want to help a family member take care of a family pet Experiment with physical items and notice what happens, e.g., paint with water on the sidewalk and notice that the picture quickly disappears, manipulate a prism so colors appear on the wall, create shadows using a flashlight</p>	

Social Studies

Social studies for young children involves learning about people and about the world around them. Young children gain an understanding of people through their interest in and awareness of themselves and their family members. Preschool children’s interest then moves from their families to other people in their community and neighborhood. Children’s experiences with their families and in their neighborhoods and communities contribute to their understanding of social studies concepts and lays the foundation for later social studies learning, in which children gain self-awareness, learn about people and how they live, explore change related to familiar people or places, and gain simple geographic knowledge.

The experiences described in the resources found in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ encourage children to:

- identify their unique characteristics as individuals
- become aware of similarities and differences among people and families
- explore how people around them live
- observe and measure change in people and places
- notice characteristics of the physical environment

Social Studies Learning		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Get excited when they see familiar people enter the room</p> <p>Gaze at photos of family members in the home</p> <p>Watch other children with great interest</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Recognize themselves in the mirror</p> <p>Act out simple life scenes, e.g., talking on a phone, feeding a baby, pushing a doll in a carriage</p> <p>Explore their surroundings by walking, climbing, and crawling through spaces and structures</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Understand the sequence of their family’s daily routines</p> <p>Show a great deal of interest in young babies and what they can and cannot do</p> <p>Begin to understand words that describe position, e.g., <i>next to, on, under</i></p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Pretend to be various people during play experiences, e.g., teacher, firefighter, doctor</p> <p>Show an understanding of the rules at home, at school, and in other places</p> <p>Use blocks to build roads and bridges, houses, and other structures</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Recognize the outside of their home</p> <p>Talk about family members and what they do</p> <p>Recognize their own physical characteristics</p>	

The Arts

Learning in the arts involves using various materials to create, design, express, and explore ideas, concepts, and feelings. When adults share children's joy in mixing paint, molding dough, building with blocks, dancing to music, and singing, children learn another language to express themselves and learn that their ideas, feelings, and self-expression are important.

The experiences described in the resources found in *The Creative Curriculum*® *Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ encourage children to:

- explore painting, drawing, sculpting, and other visual arts
- show awareness of and appreciation for the creative expression of others
- dance and move to music
- take an active role in pretend play

Learning in the Arts		
<p>Infants (0–12 months)</p> <p>Rock back and forth to music</p> <p>Smile and make noises as an adult sings to them</p> <p>Relax against an adult while listening to a lullaby being sung</p>	<p>1-Year-Olds (12–24 months)</p> <p>Imitate an adult's dance movements</p> <p>Repeat a phrase from a familiar song</p> <p>Imitate an adult's gestures as she sings</p>	<p>2-Year-Olds (24–36 months)</p> <p>Participate in simple dance routines</p> <p>Beat a drum, trying to keep time with the music</p> <p>Use different props to enhance pretend play, e.g., gets a toy bottle to feed the baby doll</p>
<p>3-Year-Olds (36–48 months)</p> <p>Clap, jump, and stomp feet while listening to music</p> <p>Use scarves and streamers while moving to music</p> <p>Sing and hum parts of a familiar song</p>	<p>4-Year-Olds (48–60 months)</p> <p>Move quickly and slowly as the tempo of a march changes</p> <p>Enjoy creating dance movements</p> <p>Experiment with musical instruments to make different sounds</p>	

As a child develops and grows, you will notice that what she does as an infant affects what she does as a toddler, and then as a preschool child. Children develop in different ways and at different rates. Some children begin to speak before they can walk; others are able to speak in complete sentences before they can run. The resources in *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ help families understand how children typically develop and what to expect as their children grow. Understanding their child's unique pattern of development will help them select appropriate experiences from *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ and then set achievable, yet challenging, goals for their children.

Temperament

It is important to help families recognize that every child is unique in how he or she interacts with the world and with people. Children are born with unique behavioral styles called temperaments. There are significant differences in the ways children respond and play. For example, some children approach new situations cautiously, without a fuss and adapt to new experiences slowly. Some children respond cheerfully to new situations, while others withdraw or cry. Understanding a child's temperament means learning about her strengths, interests, challenges she enjoys, challenges that frustrate her, and ways she is comforted. With this knowledge, caring adults can respond in ways that address a child's needs. Thinking about temperament can help families understand how their child is likely to behave in certain situations and how she will respond to the different learning experiences described in *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™.

There are several aspects of temperament to consider:

Activity level—How active is the child? Does she squirm while having her diaper changed? Does she prefer to explore the world by watching and listening or crawling and climbing? How long can she sit still?

Biological rhythms—How predictable are the child's sleeping and eating habits? Does he wake up, get hungry, and get sleepy at the same times each day?

Tendency to approach or withdraw—Does the child respond positively to something new or does she pull away from it? When something new happens, does she fuss, do nothing, or seem to like it? For example, does she reach for a new toy or push it away? Does she smile at a new person or move away? Does she readily join in group activities?

Adaptability—How does the child react to change? Does he have a hard time with changes in routines or with new people? How long does it take for him to get used to new foods, new people, and other new circumstances? How does he react to a new or stressful situation?

Intensity of reactions—How does the child respond to the emotions she feels? Does she react loudly and dramatically to even the most minor disappointment, or does she become quiet when she is upset? How long does it take her to calm herself down?

Sensory threshold—At what point does the child become bothered by noise or light, changes in temperature, different tastes, or the feel of clothing?

Distractibility—Is the child readily distracted from a task by things going on around her? When eating, does she look in the direction of every new sound she hears or movement she sees?

Mood—Does the child have a positive or negative outlook? Is he generally in a light-hearted mood, or does he take things very seriously?

Persistence—How long does the child stay with a task when it is challenging? How does she handle frustration or initial failure on a task? How does she react to interruptions or requests to clean up when she is playing?

Children are born with different temperaments, and you need to respond to each child accordingly. Suitable supports can make a difference. An active child can calm down, and an easily distracted child can lengthen his attention span. Helping families to take note of their child's temperament in a variety of settings will help them to make appropriate decisions.

Understanding how a child is likely to react to the people and events in his life can help families respond to their child more effectively. A child who has the tendency to withdraw and who does not adapt easily to change may need time to adjust to taking part in a *Modeled Moment*, *Mighty Minutes*®, or *LearningGames*® activity with family members if he is not used to playing with them. A family with a child who is extremely persistent and who is not easily distracted may need to engage in the activity for longer periods of time or repeat the activity several times in a row.

The Importance of Observation

The purpose of observing children and families is to get to know them. You observe to find out what is unique and special about them as well as to collect information about specific developmental objectives and patterns of growth. Supporting families to become careful observers of their children helps them learn more about

their children and how to respond to them. Discussing these observations helps you build relationships with families, plan your visits, select appropriate resources, and determine how to share them with families.

Observing Families and Children

As a home visitor, you have an opportunity to observe children and families during their everyday activities. When you watch and listen to a child, you learn many things about him that you can then talk about with his family:

- his interests
- how he is developing
- the strategies he uses to get what he wants
- skills he needs to practice
- his temperament
- the ways he learns best

Children can be observed at any time or place. Seeing how they grow and change during daily routines and activities helps you assess their development. Watching a child in new and special situations broadens your understanding of the child and how family members respond to him. By asking questions and discussing what you see and hear the child do and say, you encourage the family to look for specific information about their child. As you exchange observations with the family, knowing what the child is currently doing will help you think about likely next steps and plan together.

Families as Observers

Families observe their children constantly. That's what makes them the experts! Family members watch children from the moment they are born, both when the children are asleep and when they're awake. Through this informal observation, they come to know their children better than anyone!

Recording observations—including brief, informal notes—is a good way to capture the changes that are occurring as a child develops. Explain to families that there are many opportunities during the day to take note of what their child says and does. Resources in *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ help families capture observations of their children by offering guidance on what to notice as their child plays. Families can also gain valuable information about their child's knowledge, skills, and abilities simply by observing what is happening, whether they are directly involved or just watching and listening.

When observing, families should take a moment to survey the scene and think about what is happening. It is important that they try to be objective as they watch their child explore or respond to something they do or say.

Suggest that they look for these things:

- what the child does
- what the child says
- how the child communicates, e.g., gestures, facial expressions
- how the child responds to what others do and say
- how the child uses toys and other objects and participates in games

As they think about what they see and hear, they can ask themselves these questions:

- What is my child able to do?
- Have I noticed the same behavior before?
- Was anything different this time?
- How did I interact with my child?
- What did my child do then?
- Did my child like the experience? How do I know?

By writing observation notes and noticing changes, families can see for themselves the progress their child is making and note their influence on their child's development. They can use the information they gather to learn more about what the child likes to do and how he finds out about the world. When families share this information with you, it can give you ideas about resources to offer the child and families to support the child's learning.

Helping Families Respond to Their Observations

As they use the resources in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and *ReadyRosie™*, families learn a variety of ways to respond to what they notice to enhance learning opportunities throughout the day and provide intentional learning experiences for their children. As a teacher or caregiver supporting families, you continually convey to family members that they are the most important people in their child's education. When they pay attention to their child and observe her closely, they understand how she is developing and how to support her efforts.

Emphasize that family members are already interacting with their children in many ways that promote learning. Point out that when they respond positively to children during daily routines such as diapering and toileting, eating, cleaning up, taking a bath, getting dressed, and going for a walk, families are encouraging children to think and to learn. Many of the strategies from the resources in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and *ReadyRosie™* can and should be used with their children throughout the day. Suggest that families think about ways that they can turn everyday experiences into learning opportunities for their children.

While diapering and toileting:

- point to the child's reflection in a mirror
- touch a mobile to make it move or make a noise
- play "peek-a-boo" with a clean diaper
- sing simple songs
- say the child's name and respond to her vocalizations and words

While eating snacks and meals:

- sit with the child so he knows he has your full attention
- talk about what the child is doing or might be feeling, e.g., "You like peaches" or "You kicked your legs"
- recite rhymes and sing
- relax and enjoy being together
- point out smells, colors, and textures
- invite the child to participate before, during, and after eating

While cleaning up:

- describe the steps for cleaning up
- show the child where to put away things he can reach
- encourage him to help clean up
- make a game of cleaning up, e.g., by taking turns or having a race
- provide tools, e.g., sponges, brooms, dusters

While taking a bath:

- talk about the child's face and other body parts
- make eye contact
- use the child's name
- squeeze sponges and toys
- sing and recite rhymes
- use cups for pouring
- use washcloths
- draw shapes and letters on the side of the tub with soap
- talk about what happens next

While getting dressed:

- handle the child's body gently
- let the child hold an article of clothing
- name the pieces of clothing
- give the child acceptable choices
- talk about what you are doing
- provide lots of time to practice
- encourage the child's efforts to dress herself; step in to minimize frustration
- point out letters and symbols on clothing
- ask, "What's next?"

While taking a walk:

- point to and name the things you see
- look for house numbers and signs
- emphasize safety rules, such as waiting at street corners for traffic to stop
- smell flowers, listen to birds, look for worms
- compare sizes, shapes, and sounds
- sing together

Supporting Relationships and Learning Through Play

Play provides abundant opportunities for children to develop and learn new skills. As family members interact with their child and respond in ways that encourage further exploration and play, their relationship with their child grows. When an infant reaches for a toy, he is learning to coordinate his movements while his family is learning to select toys more purposefully. When a toddler nests objects together, he is learning about sequential sizes while his family is learning to describe his play. When a preschool child talks about a character in a story who helps her learn about empathy, her family is learning to ask open-ended questions to encourage her thinking.

Play offers children opportunities to

- make choices
- make decisions
- solve problems
- interact with one another
- interact with adults
- pursue their interests
- experience learning as fun and exciting
- experience themselves as capable, competent, successful learners
- build language and literacy skills, discover mathematical relationships, explore science and technology concepts, learn about social studies, and engage in creative expression

As young children develop trusting relationships with their families, caregivers, and teachers, they become more confident about exploring and playing. They experiment and are eager to see caring adults' reactions. Games and toys that can be used successfully by more than one person teach children about the give and take of relationships and how to recognize the needs of others.

Adult-child interactions during play are critical to a child's growing ability to communicate, think, and solve problems. As families interact and play with their children throughout the day, think about ways to encourage their efforts and how to intervene thoughtfully

to support the child's learning. As families recognize the many skills their child develops during play, you can help them understand their important role in the child's development. How they respond to their child encourages further learning and development.

We know that children develop through their growing ability to initiate, sustain, and advance playful interactions with materials and people. When family members respond to their child's actions, they encourage his abilities to initiate, practice, explore, and attend.

Resources offer strategies that families can use to promote development and learning through engaging, play-based learning experiences.

By explaining the strategies and the purpose of these experiences, you help families learn a variety of meaningful ways to interact with their child and extend learning. Their responses tell their child that play is highly valued, and they encourage longer engagement in these intentional experiences. Encourage families to do the following while engaging in learning experiences with their child:

Mirror what the child does or says. Families encourage their child to do more when they do what the child is doing. If she makes a noise, make the same one. Be sure to give her plenty of time to start. She will enjoy being the leader of this back-and-forth game.

- "I'm going to make a snake like yours with the molding dough."
- "Ba, ba, ba. You said, 'Ba, ba, ba.'"

Describe what the child is doing. As families observe children playing, they show that they are interested when they describe what is happening. Talking with children about what they are doing makes them more aware of their actions.

- "I noticed that you put all the blue bears in the box."
- "I see you mixing yellow and blue paint. I wonder what color you will make."
- "You are smiling. Digging in the sand makes you happy."

Engage children in conversation. This encourages children to put their actions and ideas into words. Conversations help children clarify for themselves what they are doing and reinforce what they are learning. If they have to explain an action, they have to make sure that what they are doing makes sense to them.

- "You spent a long time on this building. Tell me about it."
- "Adding water to the sand really changed the way you can use the sand. What did you want to happen when you added the water?"

Ask open-ended questions. These are questions that can have many possible answers and help to extend children's thinking. These questions also encourage conversation.

- "How many ways can you use this?"
- "What will it do?"
- "What do you see? ...feel? ...hear?"
- "How did you decide to do it that way?"

Balance the familiar with the new and interesting. Small changes or additions to similar materials and activities enhance children's experiences and often lead to new discoveries and learning. Leaving some parts of a game or some materials the same provides security for the child as he tries something new.

Chapter

4

Resources to
Support Learning and
Development

Selecting Daily Resources

When you partner with a family to identify the skills they want to work on with their child, you will select an experience from the resources in *The Creative Curriculum*® *Cloud* or ReadyRosie™ that supports their child's emerging skills and knowledge, you are working as a team to enhance the child's development and learning. When you choose an activity that reinforces a skill the child has already demonstrated, you are helping him build on what he knows. Because family members will be their child's primary teachers and the ones sharing the experience with him at home, it is essential that you include them in the process of selecting the experience. If you choose an activity that is well beyond the child's current skills or abilities, you risk creating a frustrating and unhappy experience for both the family and the child.

Identify knowledge, skills, and abilities. Ask yourself, "What do I know about this child's development and learning?" Determine the types of experiences from *The Creative Curriculum*® *Cloud* and ReadyRosie™ you wish to share. Consider the family's goals. Is there more than one child in the home? Are they hoping to focus on a specific objective with the child? Do you want to help the family engage their child more fully in a shared reading experience? Has the family shared any specific concerns with you that a *Mighty Minutes*®, *Modeled Moment*, or *Guided Learning Experience* activity would be perfect for?

Select some intentional learning experiences to review and examine each of the possibilities you selected. As you review each activity, think about whether it fits what the child can do and her interests. After reviewing the potential experiences, choose one or two to share with the family.

Introducing Resources to Families

Now that you have selected the experiences to share with the family, you are ready to think about how you will share them with the family. Will you send the family resources through *The Creative Curriculum*® *Cloud*, links to ReadyRosie™ playlists via email, or videos you record of yourself leading the experience? The first step is to review the resources you choose carefully, making notes about suggestions to share with the family. Is there anything about the experience that the family might find particularly interesting or enjoyable? Will the family need extra support because they might find something about the experience challenging? You may want to record your thoughts in your notes.

If this is the first time you are sharing resources from *The Creative Curriculum*® *Cloud* or ReadyRosie™ videos with the family, talk about the activity as something fun that the family can do with their child, not as an assigned task to complete.

Explain the main idea of the learning experience. Briefly describe what you saw the child do or say along with any information you learned from the family that influenced your choice. Point out the information from the specific resource and relate it to what you know about the child.

Describe the different aspects of the experience. Draw the family's attention to the areas of development and learning that the experience addresses and explain again why you chose it. Briefly review the steps and explain any strategies the family can use to promote their child's learning. Point out the family's attention to the areas of development and learning that the experience addresses and explain again why you chose it. Briefly review the steps and explain any strategies the family can use to promote their child's learning.

Gather materials needed to demonstrate the activity. Be prepared to suggest alternative materials if the family does not have the needed materials on hand.

Invite the family to try the experience and encourage them to repeat it in different settings. Offer the family an opportunity to try the experience. If a family member is not sure how to take part in the experience, explain the steps of the experience, describing what you see.

Talk about what happened. Provide encouragement and draw the family's attention to the child's actions and responses.

Plan to repeat the experience. Make an informal plan with the family about when they might try the experience again during the week. Encourage them to share with you their observations about how the experience went.

Supporting Families With a Range of Resources

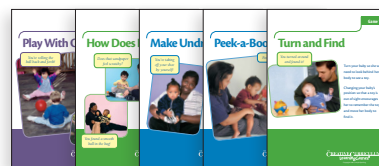
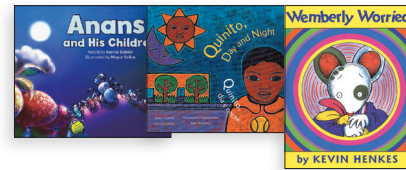
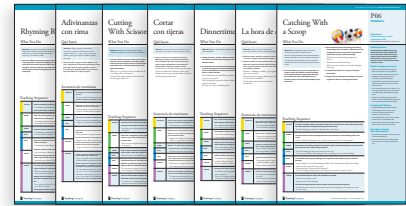
Consider the types of resources families might need in a virtual home visiting program and adapt the family-facing resources from *The Creative Curriculum*® Cloud and ReadyRosie™ to help you plan and implement meaningful and intentional experiences for all the children you serve.

These resources offer families experiences that require materials that are common in homes, can be implemented one-on-one, and require little set up or preparation.

- ***The Creative Curriculum*® Foundation Volumes** explain the theory and research behind the curriculum, offer guidance for partnering with families, and include strategies for providing nurturing, language-rich routines and meaningful experiences every day.
 - You can share information from the foundation volumes, including letters to families, to help family members learn more about their child's development and learning.



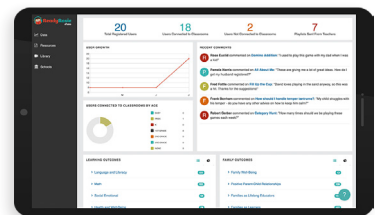
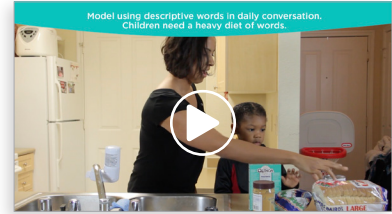
- **Guided Learning Experiences** describe playful and engaging experiences along with guidance to help families implement the activities with their child at home.
 - Share the experience that addresses each child’s individual level of learning and development.
- **Mighty Minutes®** are short, engaging songs, rhymes, and games that help you intentionally nurture language, literacy, math, science, social studies, and physical skills during transitions, routines and experiences.
 - Share *Mighty Minutes®* that encourage movement and physical development and that support children’s learning throughout daily routines.
- The **Children’s Book Collection** includes beloved classic tales, contemporary works by well-known authors, and original nonfiction books available in English and Spanish, designed to encourage preschool children’s exploration, interaction, and enjoyment.
- **Book Discussion Cards™** help you make the most out of read-aloud time by describing learning opportunities that are linked to selected books in the *Children’s Book Collection*. Intended as a quick reference, these cards offer suggestions for introducing each book, emphasizing vocabulary, making comments, and asking probing questions.
 - Demonstrate how to read stories aloud with families. Ask families to watch how you pause to ask questions, invite the child to share her thoughts and observations, reinforce new vocabulary words, and address social–emotional scenarios in the story.
 - Record a read-aloud of a favorite story to share with families, pausing occasionally to include questions and comments from the *Book Discussion Cards™*.
- **The Creative Curriculum® LearningGames®**, a series of award-winning, research-validated early learning activities, helps families engage in meaningful at-home learning that strengthens their relationships with their children.
 - Share *LearningGames®* activities that address each family’s interests and goals for their child’s learning and development.



The newest member of the Teaching Strategies family of solutions is ReadyRosie™.

- **ReadyRosie™** is an early education tool that helps families, school, and communities across the nation deepen and scale their family engagement efforts. These tools leverage the power of video modeling, family workshops, professional development opportunities, and mobile technology to build powerful partnerships between families and educators, resulting in “Ready families, ready educators.”

- Visit the FAQ section of the ReadyRosie™ website to review “Introducing Your Families to ReadyRosie,” which will offer a variety of resources you can share with families like flyers, videos, and invitations.
- **Modeled Moment video library:** A collection of videos of real children and families engaging in playful learning experiences, called Modeled Moments, at home, in the car, outdoors, and in the community demonstrate how families can share simple learning experiences with their child in any setting. Videos are available in both English and Spanish.
 - Share playlists or individual *Modeled Moments* that address the family’s interests, goals, and needs.
 - Encourage families to share their feedback on the videos through the ReadyRosie™ program.
- **Give Me Tens:** These 10-minute workshops cover a variety of topics, including social–emotional development, routines, mathematics, literacy, transition to PreK and Kindergarten, and summer learning. Each session includes all the materials and tools you will need—the PowerPoint slides, facilitator’s guides, invitation flyers, handouts, surveys, and more!
 - Invite families to a virtual family workshop webinar. Use the materials included in ReadyRosie™ to lead families through quick, 10-minute workshops on topics like “Health & Well-Being,” “The Importance of Creating Routines,” and “Summer Learning.”
- **Reporting Data:** ReadyRosie™ allows teachers and administrators to access data about how families are engaging with ReadyRosie™. Reports show which videos have been viewed, how many families are using ReadyRosie™, and which learning and family outcome opportunities have been addressed.
 - Review how families are interacting with ReadyRosie™ to inform how you work with families. For example, if you notice families are seeking out more videos related to social–emotional development, this can help you identify *Daily Resources* that will also help support social–emotional development.



The experiences and materials that you offer, the partnerships you build with families, and the close, loving relationships that you maintain with children and families all serve to inspire children’s curiosity and their motivation to learn while nurturing their development.

We hope these resources help you feel confident and respected as you work with families to support their children to develop socially, emotionally, and intellectually, particularly during these unprecedented times when families may need flexible resource options that fit their lives and needs.

Following Up With Families

Reach out to the family after they have had some time to try the experiences with their child. You may want to ask some of the following questions to learn about their experience with their child.

- Did the experience encourage your child to practice a new skill?
- Did your child appear to enjoy the experience? What specifically did she do?
- What was your favorite part of the experience?
- Was anything challenging? If so, what?
- Did you change anything about the experience? If so, what?
- Did any other family members take part in the experience?
- Did you try the other ideas offered?
- What concerns did you have about your child's development after the experience?
- What changes did you notice in your child after engaging in the experience several times?

You may choose to record your questions for families and write down any notes you want to keep about their responses. Offer reassurance. It may be helpful to remind families that children develop at different rates. Even if their child does not demonstrate a new skill while engaging in the experience, he is still learning.

As you follow up with families, discuss other experiences or activities that might be a good fit for the child. Together, you and the family can look through these experiences and select a few to try next. Use this information to plan your next resource to share.

Conclusion

Resources included in *The Creative Curriculum® Cloud* and *ReadyRosie™* can help families spend purposeful time playing with their children and supporting their children's development. In your work, keep in mind that you are also nurturing the families' growth and development over time.

Offer reassurance. It may be important to remind families that children develop at different rates. Even if their child doesn't demonstrate a new skill while engaging in learning experiences, she is still learning. For example, Carla didn't roll over after playing a game from a *Guided Learning Experience* several times, but she was still learning to move in new ways and practicing using the muscles she will need when she eventually rolls over.

Acknowledge their commitment. It takes time out of the family's already busy day to lead these learning experiences. It is important to acknowledge their effort to play with their child. The experiences are designed to be beneficial for children even if families have limited time. Through repeated playing and warm interactions with their family members, children learn the skills they will need to develop and thrive.

Encourage families to continue playing. Children receive the greatest benefit from repeated learning experiences. Families should repeat activities even as they add new ones to their repertoire. Encourage families to incorporate learning experiences into their regular routines and activities, such as feeding, diapering, rocking, playing on the floor, going for a walk, playing with siblings, playing outdoors, preparing lunch, and getting ready for bed.

We hope this guide has been helpful and that you feel confident about supporting children and families during home visits in this new distance-learning environment. All of us at Teaching Strategies thank you for using *The Creative Curriculum*[®] and ReadyRosie[™] in your work!

For more information about how we can support your program, please visit us online at www.TeachingStrategies.com

Resources

What Your Child May Be Doing

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

Infants (Birth–12 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Enjoy being held and cuddled
- Respond to familiar people by smiling, cooing, and babbling (you are their favorite toy)
- Imitate people's actions
- Explore toys by using their senses
- Pay attention to sounds and movement
- Enjoy playing “peek-a-boo”

Physical Development

- Gain control of and move their heads from side to side
- Play with their hands and feet
- Reach for, grasp, shake, mouth, and explore objects they can hold
- Move objects from one hand to the other; bang objects together
- Roll over
- Sit on a blanket, propped at first and then without external support
- Crawl to explore
- Pull themselves to standing and cruise holding on to furniture
- Roll, hold, and throw balls
- Pick up finger foods

Language Development

- Ask for care and attention by crying, laughing, and smiling, and through other vocalizations
- Vocalize to themselves, people, and toys
- Understand and respond to gestures, facial expressions, and changes in vocal tone
- Understand and respond to their names and to very simple, familiar requests
- Recognize a familiar voice before the person enters the room
- Look at favorite toy when family member labels and points to it

Cognitive Development

- Learn about objects by using all of their senses
- Visually follow and respond to moving objects and faces
- Notice objects with contrasting colors and patterns and those with gentle movement and sounds
- Watch mirrored images appear and disappear
- Imitate adult movements and language sounds
- Enjoy activity boxes

Literacy Learning

- Enjoy listening to simple stories, rhymes, and songs
- Use their senses to explore books

Mathematics Learning

- Respond (watch you intently; smile and coo) as you count items or use words such as *more*
- Place lids on each container they are playing with
- Reach for more toys or other objects
- Make a sign for “more” after finishing a snack
- Focus on the color or texture of items
- Wave arms in anticipation of receiving a bottle
- Distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar adults

Science and Technology Learning

- Grasp and mouth and shake an offered item, e.g., teething ring, rattle
- Interact with toys, e.g., bat at a hanging toy, pull a string attached to a toy to make it come closer, push buttons on a pop-up toy, squeeze a toy to make it squeak
- Discover body parts, e.g., grab their feet, play with your hair
- Notice various sounds outside (e.g., birds chirping, dog barking, cars honking) and look in the direction of each new sound

Social Studies Learning

- Get excited when they see familiar people enter the room
- Gaze at photos of family members in the home
- Watch other children with great interest

Learning in the Arts

- Rock back and forth to music
- Smile and make noises as an adult sings to them
- Relax against an adult while listening to a lullaby being sung

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

1-Year-Olds (12–24 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Find new ways to make things happen
- Follow simple requests and understand more language than they can express
- Are increasingly aware of their possessions
- Become aware of others' expressions of emotions
- Enjoy realistic toys, e.g., baby dolls, bottles, cradles, telephones
- Initiate “peek-a-boo” activities

Physical Development

- Pull themselves to standing and cruise holding on to furniture
- Walk steadily but may prefer to crawl
- Use carts, baby carriages, and other wheeled toys to support walking
- Begin to climb and slide
- Move rhythmically to music
- Clap
- Take objects out and put them back in containers; fill a container and then dump the objects out
- Roll and throw balls
- Reach successfully for moving objects, e.g., bubbles
- Begin to stack objects

Language Development

- Follow simple requests and understand more language than they can express
- Use gestures and sounds to communicate
- Wave good-bye
- Understand and respond to many words, simple directions, and questions
- Increase expressive vocabulary
- Name familiar people in their lives
- Play games with back-and-forth exchanges, e.g., “pat-a-cake,” “peek-a-boo”
- Point to familiar pictures in a book when prompted

Cognitive Development

- Make choices between clear alternatives
- Begin to solve problems
- Learn by moving and doing
- Concentrate for longer periods of time
- Open doors and flip light switches
- Enjoy sorting and nesting toys

Literacy Learning

- Point to familiar pictures in a book
- Learn to turn pages
- Hold crayons and make marks on paper
- Bring books to an adult to explore and read with them

Mathematics Learning

- Stomp around the room singing a counting song
- Put a cup on each plate or a napkin next to each chair at the lunch table
- Know whether to go around, in, or through a structure to get to an object
- Place differently shaped blocks into the matching openings in the shape-sorter box

Science and Technology Learning

- Experiment to see what sounds they can make with instruments, e.g., xylophone, toy drum, musical bells
- Get excited when they see something new outside, e.g., a squirrel scampering up a tree
- Notice moving shadows on the wall, a curtain blown by the wind, leaves falling on the ground

Social Studies Learning

- Recognize themselves in the mirror
- Act out simple life scenes, e.g., talking on a phone, feeding a baby, pushing a doll in a carriage
- Explore their surroundings by walking, climbing, and crawling through spaces and structures

Learning in the Arts

- Imitate an adult's dance movements
- Repeat a phrase from a familiar song
- Imitate an adult's gestures as she sings

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

2-Year-Olds (24–36 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Have strong feelings and may use actions instead of words to express their emotions
- Begin to learn about taking turns, but should not be expected to share toys and materials
- Interact with other children for longer periods
- Engage in simple pretend play
- Begin to use caring behaviors to help and comfort others
- Use toys (e.g., balls, blocks) with other people

Physical Development

- Develop small-muscle skills by turning pages, pouring, opening containers, and using scissors
- Stack and build with blocks
- Begin to coordinate eye-and-hand movements, e.g., threading beads on laces, manipulating snaps and zippers
- Walk smoothly, tiptoe, and begin to run
- Begin to gain large-muscle skills, e.g., throwing, catching, kicking, jumping, hopping
- Pull and push things, e.g., boxes, doll carriages, wheeled toys
- Sit on and use their feet to propel riding toys

Language Development

- Talk in simple sentences that gradually increase from two to several words
- Increase their ability to listen and to speak
- Engage in conversation and ask questions
- Begin to express feelings verbally
- Follow simple requests

Cognitive Development

- Want to do things by themselves
- Enjoy sensory toys with various sounds and textures
- Sort and match objects and pictures by size, color, or shape
- Experiment to see what will happen as a result of their actions
- Complete puzzles with a few pieces
- Make sounds with musical instruments

Literacy Learning

- Enjoy books with rhymes and predictable words they can anticipate and repeat
- Tell very simple stories
- Begin to make sense of basic time concepts, e.g., before and after
- Orient a book correctly, i.e., right side up; front to back
- Recognize familiar books by their covers

Mathematics Learning

- Line up items of different sizes, grouping the big items together and the little items together
- Hold up fingers to indicate age
- Separate and group items by color, shape, and size
- Learn the names of basic shapes, e.g., circle, square, triangle

Science and Technology Learning

- Use different toy tools at a toy workbench
- Mix paint colors to make new colors
- Notice the weather outside

Social Studies Learning

- Understand the sequence of their family's daily routines
- Show a great deal of interest in young babies and what they can and cannot do
- Begin to understand words that describe position, e.g., *next to*, *on*, *under*

Learning in the Arts

- Participate in simple dance routines
- Beat a drum, trying to keep time with the music
- Use different props to enhance pretend play, e.g., gets a toy bottle to feed the baby doll

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

3-Year-Olds (36–48 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Can help make and follow a few simple rules
- Imitate adult activities
- Talk with other children in pairs and in groups
- Learn to take turns and share
- Begin to recognize and understand the feelings of others
- Enjoy simple pretend play, alone and with others

Physical Development

- Walk, run, and turn with coordination
- Walk along a line, using arms for balance
- Climb stairs using alternate feet
- Jump with two feet
- Hop and balance on one foot
- Push and pedal tricycles
- Throw, catch, and kick large balls
- Use utensils to eat and serve themselves
- Dress themselves and use large fasteners
- Coordinate eye-and-hand movements, e.g., pour water into a funnel, create a tall block structure
- Turn pages one at a time
- Use tools to draw objects and simple shapes

Language Development

- Use language to gain information, understand concepts, express feelings, and make requests
- Participate in conversations with adults
- Use speech that is easy to understand
- Talk in three- to five-word sentences
- Follow directions involving two to three steps of a familiar task

Cognitive Development

- Use all of their senses to explore and investigate
- Enjoy gathering information about the world
- Ask *why* questions
- Sort and categorize materials
- Become interested in cause and effect (what makes things happen)

Literacy Learning

- Tell simple stories as they look at pictures and books
- Pretend to read a familiar book, using illustrations as cues
- Enjoy a wide variety of books
- Learn print concepts such as reading a book from front to back and reading a page from top to bottom
- Fill in missing rhyming words in familiar stories, songs, and rhymes when prompted

Mathematics Learning

- Demonstrate understanding of the concepts of one, two, and more
- Follow simple directions related to proximity, e.g., beside, between, next to
- Identify basic shapes, e.g., circle, square, triangle
- Compare sizes of similar objects

Science and Technology Learning

- Sort household items
- Tilt block ramps to make cars go down faster
- Collect items outdoors to play with and explore, e.g., sticks from the backyard, leaves on the ground, rocks from the playground, snow
- Talk about what they do during the day and at night
- Experiment with physical items, e.g., add water to dirt to make mud

Social Studies Learning

- Pretend to be various people during play experiences, e.g., teacher, firefighter, doctor
- Show an understanding of the rules at home, at school, and in other places
- Use blocks to build roads and bridges, houses, and other structures

Learning in the Arts

- Clap, jump, and stomp feet while listening to music
- Use scarves and streamers while moving to music
- Sing and hum parts of a familiar song

What Your Child May Be Doing: A Handout for Families

4-Year-Olds (48–60 Months)

Social–Emotional Development

- Can follow simple instructions and sustain attention
- Can learn to solve problems through negotiation and compromise
- Have strong emotions and are learning to name and express them appropriately
- Develop friendships and may have a best friend
- Are learning to play games with rules

Physical Development

- Demonstrate basic gross-motor skills, e.g., running, jumping, hopping, galloping
- Pedal, steer, and turn corners on a tricycle or other wheeled vehicle
- Demonstrate balance while moving
- Climb up and down stairs easily
- Demonstrate throwing, kicking, and catching skills
- Use tools for writing and drawing, e.g., drawing objects and shapes with markers, writing letters and words with colored pencils
- Fasten clothing
- Build detailed structures with smaller materials
- Use tools (e.g., scissors) successfully
- Complete interlocking puzzles

Language Development

- Learn most of the rules of grammar without direct instruction
- Take turns in conversation; listen and ask questions
- Regulate volume of voice when reminded
- Describe and talk about how to use familiar objects

Cognitive Development

- Talk about what they are doing and explain their ideas
- Represent what they learned through drawings, constructions, and dramatic play
- Ask many questions: What? Why? How?
- Make connections between new experiences and ideas and what they already know
- Understand concepts related to number, size, weight, color, texture, distance, position, and time
- Follow two- to three-step directions

Literacy Learning

- Retell familiar stories, mastering the correct sequencing of events
- Understand that printed words convey messages
- Memorize songs, rhymes, and books with repetitive language patterns
- Learn time concepts; talk about yesterday and tomorrow
- Learn print concepts, e.g., that English text is written and read from left to right

Mathematics Learning

- Use and respond appropriately to positional words
- Relate time to daily routines
- Measure items using nonstandard measuring tools, e.g., a block to measure the table, a piece of ribbon to measure the rug
- Line up items in a color pattern
- Count up to 20 and count up to 20 items

Science and Technology Learning

- Want to help a family member take care of a family pet
- Experiment with physical items and notice what happens, e.g., paint with water on the sidewalk and notice that the picture quickly disappears, manipulate a prism so colors appear on the wall, create shadows using a flashlight

Social Studies Learning

- Recognize the outside of their home
- Talk about family members and what they do
- Recognize their own physical characteristics

Learning in the Arts

- Move quickly and slowly as the tempo of a march changes
- Enjoy creating dance movements
- Experiment with musical instruments to make different sounds

Home Visitors Guide for Distance Learning

featuring
The Creative Curriculum®
and ReadyRosie®

It is impossible to overstate the importance of consistent, mindful, and responsive care and teaching in the lives of young children and their families. The intentional learning experiences that families engage in with their children at home play a critical role in how children feel about themselves as learners and as competent individuals. Families rely on home visitors to treat them with kindness and respect, to help their children grow and learn, and to act with their best interests at heart.

The Creative Curriculum® and ReadyRosie™ offer research-based, comprehensive, and developmentally appropriate curriculum resources that home visitors can use with families to support their children’s development and learning at home. Ever mindful of the family’s role as a child’s first and most influential teacher, *The Creative Curriculum*® *Home Visitor’s Guide for Distance Learning* embraces the important role that home visitors play in the community, helping them empower families to engage their young children in purposeful, play-based activities that build important skills—even in a virtual setting.

This *Guide* explores how the fundamental concepts of *The Creative Curriculum*® approach (developmentally appropriate practice and play- and inquiry-based learning to nurture the whole child as lifelong learner) can inform the work of home visitors. It offers specific guidance for using family-friendly resources from *The Creative Curriculum*® and ReadyRosie™ during virtual home visits in ways that promote meaningful learning while strengthening family–child relationships. These resources help families understand how children develop and learn, interact with their children in meaningful ways, and incorporate intentional learning experiences into their daily routines and activities at home.

The *Guide* explores in detail the following topics:

- home visiting basics
- building relationships with families
- strengthening family–child relationships
- helping families teach their children at home
- using resources to engage in engaging and meaningful learning experiences