



Dear Parents,

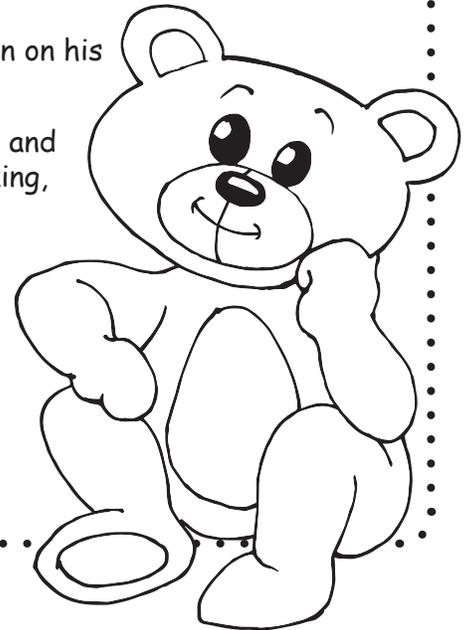
Right from birth a baby is forging neural wiring for physical movement, social interactions, emotional control, language, and cognition (sometimes referred to as intelligence or thinking skills). Parents are often concerned about intelligence. They assume all the other areas of development will, more or less, take care of themselves. This is a bit of a misunderstanding. All of these areas are interwoven and all are equally dependent on experiences.

Understanding cause-and-effect relationships is the foundation of cognitive development (intelligence) but it will be developed through experiences that are social, linguistic, emotional, and physical. Here are some cause-and-effect scenarios that involve all areas of development:

- **Socially** your baby learns that if he smiles, you will smile back and if he cries, you will come to his aid.
- **Physically** he learns that if he pushes with one of his hands when on his tummy, he will be able to roll to his back.
- **Linguistically** he learns that language is "give and take." He coos and then he stops and waits for you to speak. When you finish speaking, he coos again.

Problem-solving skills are also a part of cognitive development. These skills begin to wire during the first year. Babies learn to push with one hand to turn over or to wiggle to reach a desired toy.

A child's intelligence is shaped and influenced by cumulative experiences over time. Your interactions to nurture your child's intellectual development will have a lasting impact.



What You Can Do

- Talk about patterns with your little one. Point out changes in seasons, visible differences in day and night, routines, rhyme and repetition in songs, and rhythm in music.
- Point out cause-and-effect events and situations. Cause and effect is a constant pattern in our lives.
- Encourage your child's natural abilities (music, art, dance, language, math). There are many ways to be "smart."
- Observe your child as she plays. Watch as she attempts to solve problems. Let her get as far as she can before jumping in to help. Your child needs to solve problems on her own. It is experience that wires the brain.
- Talk to your child. The more words we have, the better we understand the world around us.



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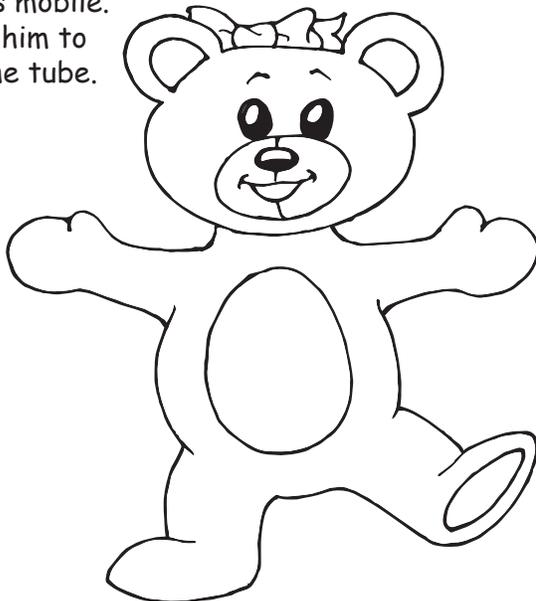
The foundation for motor development (large muscle control) is wired during the first two years of life. Babies move from having no control over their movements to having enough control, balance and coordination to walk. The brain wires this important circuitry through experience. Little ones need to be active. The more they move, the more agile, coordinated, and strong they become.

Limit the time little ones are restrained. Research indicates that children today spend more time restrained than they did in previous decades. Physical growth cannot develop when little ones are restrained.

What You Can Do

Non-Mobile Infants

- Provide open floor space. Any time your baby is not sleeping, she should be on the floor in a safe space. Floor space allows her to wiggle and move more freely.
- Exercise your infant's arms and legs during floor time. Help your baby roll from tummy to back and then back to tummy.
- Provide tummy time. Prop your baby on your tummy. Encourage him to lift his head by talking to him.
- Sit your baby in your lap and hold her hands. Encourage her to stand up.
- Suspend an empty paper towel tube from your baby's mobile. Encourage him to swing at the tube.



Mobile Infants

- Crawl with your baby. It makes it more fun!
- Cut the sides from medium-size boxes to create tunnels for your baby to crawl through. Place a blanket over a table to create another type of tunnel.
- Teach your little one simple exercises. Make it a routine to exercise together daily.
- Provide riding toys and push toys.
- Place a blanket on the grass outdoors and invite your child to roll back and forth across the blanket.
- Take your child to the park. Encourage him to swing (develops balance) and climb (develops muscles).
- Play movement games:

Musical Freeze: Play music and dance. When the music stops encourage your little one to hold a pose.

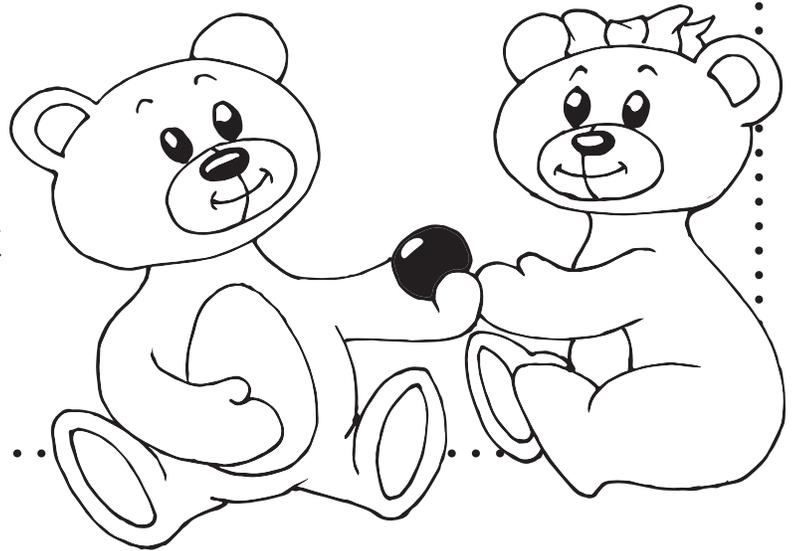
Cat and Mouse: You be the cat that chases a mouse (your child).

Animal Antics: Move like an elephant, a fish, a butterfly and other interesting animals.

Chasing Bubbles: Blow bubbles and invite your child to chase them.



- Dear Parents,
- Social intelligence, sometimes referred to as social development, is important for both survival and for living a fulfilling life. Social skills are necessary for relating to others, learning from others, and teaching others. You might think of these skills as "people skills." Our acceptance by others is largely based on our social intelligence (expressing our thoughts, showing concern for others, solving and preventing problems, cooperating). Social skills are vital to a child's success in school.
 - Social interactions and understanding begin to wire right from birth. During the first year of life, babies connect with the people who care for them (parents and outside-the-home caregivers). It is these connections that anchor a baby's developing social skills. This is called *attachment*. Providing a loving and supportive environment goes a long way in preparing a baby to interact socially. Social skills are optimally developed when intentionally taught.
 - Emotional intelligence and social intelligence are co-dependent. Emotional intelligence is the understanding of one's own emotions and the ability to manage these emotions effectively.
 - Social intelligence is the understanding of others' emotions (and feelings) and the ability to manage one's self in the context of others. Emotional intelligence builds the foundation for social intelligence. As we understand ourselves, we gain insight into understanding others.



What You Can Do

- Interact with your baby daily. Talk to him. Smile at him. Be expressive and acknowledge his expressions.
- When you play interactive games, alternate taking turns. For example, when playing Peek-a-Boo, cover your eyes a few times and then cover your baby's eyes a few times.
- Typically around 8 months, babies develop a fear of strangers. If your child expresses this type of fear, do not force him to go to a stranger.
- When other babies are around, position your baby so he can see his peers.
- When your baby begins to express his wants and desires through tantrums (between 15 and 18 months), set limits and hold to them. It is during this time that your child is learning an important rule of social living: You don't always get your way.
- Talk with older infants about the feelings of their friends. Teach them to touch others gently.