

early  
LEARNING  
activity  
GUIDE



**BEST BEGINNINGS**  
Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

## FIVE AREAS OF EARLY LEARNING

Experts have identified five areas of early learning that are essential to school readiness.



Physical Well-Being, Health  
& Motor DEVELOPMENT



Social & Emotional  
DEVELOPMENT



Approaches to LEARNING



Cognition & General  
KNOWLEDGE



Communication, Language  
& LITERACY

Your child's first five years are an extraordinary time, full of growth and development. During this time, your children look to their parents/caregivers as their first teachers.

To help you do your best, this booklet has information on child development and how to support your child's discovery of the world. This early education paves the way for future success in life.

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## your child at this AGE



### Physical Health, Well-Being & Motor DEVELOPMENT

Gets to a sitting position without help, pulls self up to stand, becomes a walker



### Social & Emotional DEVELOPMENT

Has favorite things and people, plays games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake



### Approaches to LEARNING

Puts things in mouth, shows curiosity about things, and tries to reach for far objects



### Cognition & General KNOWLEDGE

Watches things as they fall, puts things in mouth



### Communication, Language & LITERACY

Uses finger to point, copies sounds, responds to own name



## 12-18 MONTHS

Practicing back and forth play with adults will help your child get ready to play with other children.

- Sit on the floor opposite from each other and slowly roll a ball to your child.
- Hold out your arms and say, “Roll the ball to me.” At first, your baby may not want to give it up. You may have to make dramatic motions to get him to roll it back. Once he does it, show excitement and immediately roll it back to him.
- Repeat over and over. Pause each time to see if he will roll it back without you asking. When he does, give him a lot of praise.
- Play “parachute” with a towel or pillowcase. Show your baby how to lift it high and low together with you. It may take several tries before your baby understands.



## 12-18 MONTHS

You'll both enjoy making up new movements and noises.

- Show your baby a simple gesture or movement that you have not seen her make: opening/closing fists, rubbing hands together, rubbing tummy, patting legs, or lifting arms.
- Begin by practicing one or two movements. If your baby has trouble, help guide her movements.
- To add more fun, tell a story or sing a song to go along with the actions.
- Imitate animals
- Add facial expressions





## 18-24 MONTHS

Introduce your child to the concepts of “same” and “different” to notice the features and qualities of various objects.

- Show your child how to sort a set of objects.
- Have him help you sort: “The ball goes here, and the car goes there. Where does this ball go?”
- When he gets good at sorting two sets of objects, add a third set. For example: sorting cars, blocks, and crayons into three containers.
  
- When you put away dishes, let your child help sort utensils into the proper drawers.



## 18-24 MONTHS

Use toys and play to build up your child’s finger muscles

- Provide dress up clothes for pretend play that have buttons, zippers, and snaps.
- Keep paper and washable markers around, so your child can practice scribbling.
- Practice putting together puzzles.
- Play with play dough – rolling, pounding, squeezing, and using plastic cookie cutters.

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup flour

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup salt

$\frac{3}{4}$ -1 cup water

1 Tbsp vegetable oil

Optional: food coloring

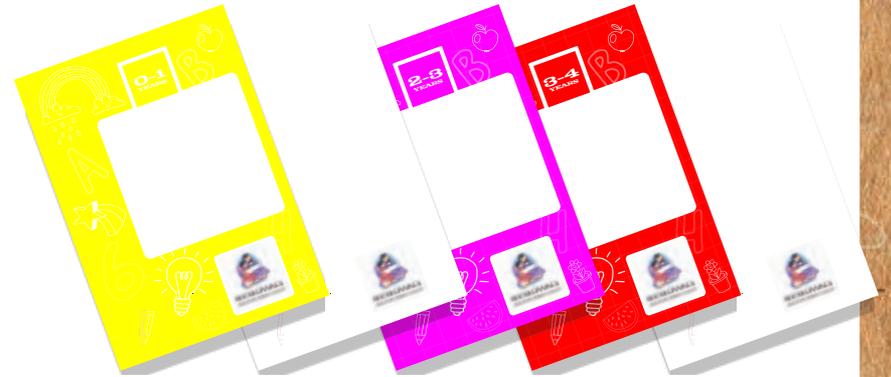
Mix all ingredients together. Knead dough until it is smooth. Add a little more flour if the dough is too sticky. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container.



## 18-24 MONTHS

Scribbling helps children learn to control marks they make on paper – perfect practice for learning to write.

- Create a space where your child can draw and scribble. This might be a low table or a wall.
- Tape paper to the tabletop or wall.
- Put the crayons in the container and keep near the paper.
- Now your child can scribble anytime she wants, without waiting for you to set everything up.
- Remember to display your child's artwork.



**Look for these fun early learning activities booklets for your child! Each issue is full of age-appropriate ideas of things you can do at home to support your child's early learning. Video instructions for many of the activities can be found on YouTube.**

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