



# First Teacher:

A Parent's Guide to  
Growing and Learning

8 - 18  
Months



OFFICE OF  
**Early Learning**

LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE

*First Teacher: A Parent's Guide to Growing and Learning* is a guide to your child's development and has activities for you to support your child's learning during daily routines and play. These activities will help your child's development and provide the building blocks for his future success in school and life.

This booklet addresses eight key areas of your child's development. The information in this booklet will serve as a guide for the knowledge and skills your child is developing at this age. This booklet follows the domains of [Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#), which are used in early learning programs throughout the state.



### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

(general health and development of physical skills involving large and small muscles)



### APPROACHES TO LEARNING

(attitudes, behaviors and learning styles)



### SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with others)



### LANGUAGE & LITERACY

(the ability to understand words, learn to talk and learn about books and reading)



### MATHEMATICAL THINKING

(the ability to think about relationships between objects, numbers, shapes, sizes, weights and other concepts)



### SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

(the ability to explore the environment using the five senses, connecting what is observed to science concepts and asking questions)



### SOCIAL STUDIES

(the ability to learn about people and the community)



### CREATIVE EXPRESSION THROUGH THE ARTS

(the ability to engage in dance, song, music, dramatic play and art to express ideas and feelings)

The information in this booklet will help you make the most of the time you spend with your child. The positive relationship you have with your child and the time you spend together will help your child's development in every way.

## Family Matters

### 8 Months to 18 Months

You did it! You have made it through the first eight months of your baby's life. Now your baby is becoming a toddler. In the next 10 months, you will see many changes in him. He will begin depending less on you because he can easily move on his own. When he wants something, he may be able to crawl or walk to it. This newfound freedom is an opportunity for him to learn and grow. Now is the best time to make sure the house is "baby proofed" and safe for him to explore.

You will notice that your baby cries less and is better able to communicate with you. He will begin pointing and grunting and will use single words to tell you his wants and needs. Describe what he is trying to tell you, "Okay, you want your blanket. Here is your blanket. It is soft and warm." He listens to everything you say and will learn new words when you respond to his requests using sentences with many describing words.

Your baby's large muscles are developing fast, and so are his talking and listening skills. Be prepared for frustration as he is experiencing new abilities, some harder to master than others.

This booklet offers activities and strategies for you to use daily. The easy-to-follow activities will help you build a strong relationship and a foundation for your child's learning and future success. All families are different. Remember to include stories, activities and languages from your own family.

### You are your child's first teacher.



# Physical Development



## *It starts with you*

Physical development refers to your child's general health and development of physical skills involving large and small muscles. Your baby's [muscles are developing](#), which will help him to move and explore his world. Soon he will begin pulling up to a standing position and take his first steps. Your baby will also be able to pick up objects with his thumb and finger. Give your baby chances to safely explore his surroundings now that he can move on his own. Place toys and books a little out of your baby's reach so he can use his muscles to move toward them.

Once your baby becomes an expert at walking, let him practice carrying things such as his toys when it's clean up time. Soon after walking, the running starts! To avoid many "boo boos," remove or put away things around your house and yard that may hurt your baby. Open spaces are great for crawling, running and jumping.

Provide different types of toys and play spaces for your child to allow him to develop muscle control. Playing with blocks, balls and toy animals help the development of his fine motor skills (small muscles) and places to walk, run, climb and jump safely help build his gross motor control (large muscles).



## *As your baby grows*

Your baby's [growth and development](#) will go through many changes. He will

- See and point to things that attract his attention.
- Crawl on his hands and knees.
- Hold small objects with his thumb and forefinger.
- Walk without help.
- Eat solid foods.
- Use a spoon to feed himself.
- Repeat words and sounds.

## *Playing and learning*

Help your baby's development by trying these activities.

- Give him finger foods when he is ready. Let your baby practice using a spoon and a sippy cup during meals.
- Give him a big toy, box or wagon to push or pull around to help practice walking and balance.
- Scatter blocks on the floor and give your baby a small basket. Play a game of pick up the blocks. Make sure all of them go in the basket and none of them go in his mouth!

## *Taking care of your baby*

With his new skills, your baby will begin climbing and reaching for objects that may not be safe. Look at your house at your baby's eye level when baby proofing. You will be able to see what is dangerous to a baby his size. At this age, babies put almost everything in their mouths. This helps them learn about objects. As you baby proof your home, keep this in mind. Keep small objects that your baby can put in his mouth out of reach.

# Approaches to Learning

## *It starts with you*

Approaches to learning is a set of behaviors or characteristics related to how young children interact with their environment, such as curiosity, persistence and creativity. Some of these behaviors occur naturally, but you can encourage the development of others by providing a supportive environment.



Your baby will begin to have an increased interest in her surroundings. Older infants are curious and actively start [exploring](#). Your baby will become more active and alert to what is going on at home, in child care and even at the grocery store. As her senses develop, she will discover more about her world. Introducing new sounds, colors, textures

and experiences will support your baby's growth and learning.

Each child is born with a unique personality and temperament. Reacting in a positive way to her [temperament](#) will encourage your child to be curious and explore the environment to learn about the world around her. You are her "safety net" as she [explores](#) and tries new activities. You support her when she tries to stand, you give encouragement as she tries to walk or attempts to stack blocks. Your words of encouragement and facial expressions help her know that she is safe as she tries new tasks.

Use words to describe what she is doing as she is trying new things or activities. "Look at how you are pushing the square block through the square hole. You are trying so hard. What hole matches the triangle block? Can you push the triangle block through the triangle-shaped hole?"

## *As your baby grows*

Your baby will show how she learns as she

- Moves or reacts to music.
- Imitates familiar activities, such as putting a pretend telephone to her ear, or playing peek-a-boo.
- Attempts to repeat new skills such as putting the correct shape into a shape sorter.
- Uncovers an object that has been shown to her and then covered.

## *Playing and learning*

Help your baby's development by trying these activities.

- Mix sand with washable, non-toxic finger paints. Let your child paint and talk about the texture.
- Place a pillow or blanket between your baby and a toy she wants and see how your baby works to get that toy.
- Introduce different toys, games and sounds, such as snapping your fingers or clapping your hands to a special beat to encourage curiosity and creativity.

## *Taking care of your baby*

Everyday activities can provide great ways to bond with your baby. Bath time is one activity to help your baby learn and build your relationship. If your baby can sit up or has a sturdy bath seat, put a straw in the tub and lightly blow bubbles around your baby's tummy and feet. Watch your baby's reaction and allow her to try catching the bubbles. Boost your child's learning with fast and fun tips from [vroom.org](http://vroom.org).

**vroom**  
Brain building moments

# Social & Emotional Development



## *It starts with you*

Social and emotional development refers to your child's feelings, behaviors and relationships. [Relationships](#) play an important role in your baby's ability to develop his sense of self. Your baby will look to you and other important caregivers for clues about himself and his surroundings. Secure relationships help your baby feel safe while he explores his surroundings. This is an important time to show your love and affection. Babies who have secure feelings of attachment to their parents will feel more comfortable and develop self-confidence. Remember to be patient with your little one as he can easily become frustrated when trying to tell you his wants and needs.

It is important to establish routines at this time in your child's life. When he knows what to expect each day, he will feel safe, secure and more confident. Have the same routines every day such as feeding your baby, changing his diaper and then going for a walk every morning. This may be repeated at lunch and dinner. Complete his day with bath time and a story before giving him his last feeding or bottle.



Singing the same songs, playing the same music or reading the same story before bedtime will help him learn that it is time for bed. This will help him relax and may help him fall asleep faster.

## *As your baby grows*

Your baby will show development in [forming relationships](#) as he

- Shows and receives affection such as hugs and kisses.
- Becomes upset when someone unfamiliar comes between him and a loved one.
- Smiles and claps when he sees his favorite toy.
- Makes different sounds such as crying, grunting or whining to get attention.
- Points to a toy that he wants.

## *Playing and learning*

Help your baby's development by trying some of the following activities.

- Plan enough time to say good-bye to your baby as you leave him to go to work. Promise him that you will be back soon.
- Make a photo album for your baby and include group and individual pictures of family members.
- Set a daily schedule for your baby's sleeping and eating but be flexible to meet his needs.

## *Taking care of your baby*

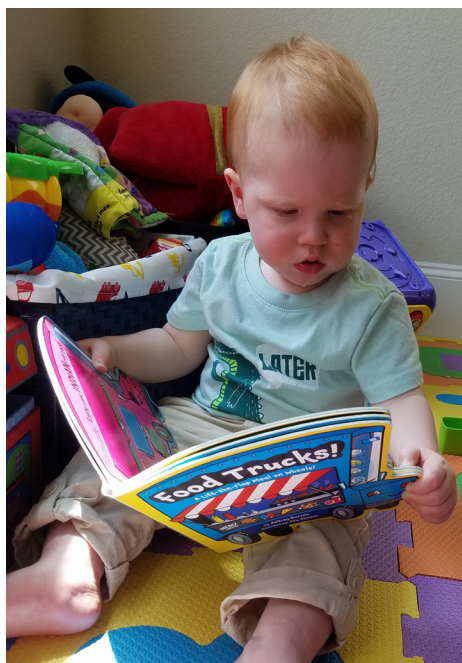
Your baby may soon start going through what is called separation anxiety. It is very common for babies this age to cry when left with a caregiver. But this is a good sign! It means he is well attached to you and can remember you when you are gone. His brain and emotions are developing. This can be a hard stage, but you can help your baby get through it. When leaving your child, tell him good-bye and that you will be back soon. Leave with an upbeat attitude. Your baby will grow out of this, and goodbyes will not always be so difficult.

# Language & Literacy



## *It starts with you*

Language and literacy refers to your child's ability to understand words and learn to listen, talk and read. Hearing your baby's first word is amazing! It's a word you will not soon forget. Your baby will begin repeating sounds and connect meanings to the sounds she hears. For example, when you give her a glass of milk, say "Here is your milk. Milk is white and it tastes good." Soon she will associate the word milk with what she likes to drink.



Your baby is beginning to use sounds and words to tell you a need or a want. These words may be hard to understand at first, but encourage her to keep talking. Your baby's [language will expand quickly](#), and you will both be less frustrated. Your baby's request for "muk" will begin to sound like what she tried to say, "milk." Soon, you will be able to understand her "words."

Reading to her daily is a great way to expose her to new words and concepts.

Have books that are safe for babies to hold, touch the pictures and explore. She may put books in her mouth, so find board books or books with cloth or plastic pages for your child. These books are designed for children this age. Encourage family members to [read and talk](#) with your baby. The [more words she hears](#), the easier it will be for her to understand and begin to speak words.

## *As your baby grows*

Your baby will show her early language skills as she

- Lifts her arms when she wants to be picked up.
- Uses gestures such as waving and shaking her head no.
- Picks out her favorite book.
- Uses sounds to name people, such as "mama" and "dada."
- Uses one word phrases, such as "mine" and "no."
- Holds a crayon and makes a mark on paper.

## *Playing and learning*

Help your baby's development by trying these activities.

- Help your baby put into words what she wants. If she is reaching for a stuffed frog, ask her, "Do you want to hold the stuffed frog? Here is your Froggy."
- Singing songs again and again with her. Songs such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" use repeated phrases that she can practice saying.
- As you ride in the car or on a bus, talk about what she is seeing, such as signs, people and dogs. Tell her where you are going and what you will do, "We are going to the grocery store to buy apples and grapes. You like to eat apples and grapes for snack and lunch."

## *Taking care of your baby*

Help your baby develop a love of books. Make sure reading is part of her daily routine. Reading before bedtime can help her "wind down" and get ready for sleep. Reading two or three short books a night is one of the best ways to help her speaking and listening skills grow. Even at this young age, exposure to children's books and stories lays the [foundation for later reading success](#). Always have a book or two in your baby's bag so you can read with her when you are waiting in the doctor's office.

# Mathematical Thinking



## *It starts with you*

Mathematical thinking refers to your child's ability to think about relationships between objects, numbers, shapes and other concepts. Children are born with an ability to recognize quantities and love to collect their favorite things. Very early in a child's growth and development, they are able to notice when something has changed or is missing, especially when it is their favorite toy. Your baby will learn about patterns by experiencing routines and exploring objects with different shapes, colors, textures and sizes.

As your baby [explores his environment](#), he will notice shapes of objects before he can identify them. He will understand more of what people say than what he can express in words. This is why it is important to talk to your baby often and describe what you see.

Your baby is also exploring how his body moves in the space around him. He is learning about his surroundings and where things are located. This is called spatial awareness. When you use words like up, down, in, out, around and under, you are helping him learn about spatial relationships.



## *As your baby grows*

You will see how much your baby is growing during these next months. He will

- Ask for more food or show his food is all gone by using hand gestures.
- Look for a specific toy when he notices one is missing.
- Match objects that have the same shape or color.
- Explore toys or objects that may differ in size or shape.
- Use his body to show directions like up, down, in or under.

## *Playing and learning*

[Help your baby's development](#) by trying some of the following activities.

- Count his toys as you put them away together.
- Give your baby an empty tissue box and a spoon. Show him how you put the spoon in the box and rattle it. Take out the spoon and let him try to put it in the box.
- Compare your hands. Hold them up together. Talk about how your hands are bigger than his and his hands are smaller.
- Point out the shape of his snacks. "You have round crackers, but your cheese is square."
- Show him how to play with a scarf and an empty tissue box. "I put the scarf under the box. You try." "The scarf is in the box. Can you take it out?"
- When brushing your baby's teeth, tell him how many teeth he has. Then, show him how many teeth you have. Compare the size and number of your teeth to his teeth.

## *Taking care of your baby*

Your child is beginning to eat solid foods. Fresh fruits and raw vegetables cut into small pieces are healthy finger foods for snacks. Show your child how to put all of the pieces that are the same color together and you can count aloud the pieces he eats.

# Scientific Inquiry

## *It starts with you*



Scientific inquiry refers to your child's ability to explore the environment using her five senses, connecting what is observed to science concepts and asking questions.

Your baby is moving! During these months, she will learn to crawl, pull herself up, cruise around and even walk. She is using this new movement to discover new things and manipulate her environment. She will fill up cups with water and sand only to dump it right back out. Trucks and carts are pushed and pulled across the room. Blocks and cups are stacked, balanced and knocked down. She is experiencing new things, learning how to problem solve and make things happen. She will see something she wants, move towards it, grab it and try to find out what makes it work. All of these things help her understand her world.

The outside world is just as exciting as it is inside. Sand, mud, clouds, leaves and puddles are all ready to be explored. The plants and animals around her are all interesting. She will look at and point to something, hoping you can tell her more. She watches the birds fly, the squirrels jump and the bugs crawl. [Pointing out all of these new things](#) and talking about what you see helps your baby learn.



## *As your baby grows*

Your baby is growing every day. You should begin to see her doing the following activities.

- Try to touch everything, puts things in her mouth, shakes and drops toys.
- Enjoy watching things happen, such as splashing in the tub or dropping food to watch the dog eat it.
- Fill up cups with sand or water and watches them as she dumps them out.
- Explore water in the bathtub and sand, dirt or mud in the yard.

## *Playing and learning*

You can help your baby grow and learn by trying some of the following activities.

- Take her for a walk to look at the different kinds of plants like trees, flowers and grass. Talk about what you see. "That tree is tall. The flowers smell sweet."
- Give your baby wheel toys and show her how to push and pull them.
- Give her lots of bath toys, like strainers, squirt toys or cups to fill and dump.

## *Taking care of your baby*

Your baby is mobile and ready to [explore her environment](#) in a whole new way. Between eight and 18 months, she begins to crawl, pull up and cruise, holding onto furniture or your fingers, and will finally begin to walk. Trying to keep up with her will be a new adventure. Check each room in your home for safety hazards such as uncovered electrical outlets, tables with sharp edges, chairs and tables that may turn over easily, and loose rugs or carpets. Use outlet covers and baby gates to keep her away from these dangers. You can enjoy her new discoveries knowing she is safe.

# Social Studies

## *It starts with you*

Social studies refers to your child's ability to learn about the people around him and in your community. Older infants and young toddlers are learning a lot about social studies. When you share stories about family members, eat special foods, celebrate family traditions and sing songs important to you, you are teaching your baby about his culture. He is learning that he is part of a family and a community.

Even though he is learning about family, he is also learning about himself. As he grows, he begins to see that he is independent of you. He can point to parts of his body like his hands, legs and mouth and will smile at himself in a mirror. Once he starts moving around, he is ready to be a little more independent and find things in his world to explore. He also wants to feed himself, put on his own socks or brush his own hair. Giving him a small variety of toys, books and snacks allows him to make choices and decisions for himself.



## *As your baby grows*

Your baby can do many things such as

- Participate in family traditions and celebrations.
- Recognize parts of his body, such as eyes, nose and mouth.
- Recognize and call out for family members.
- Respond to his schedule and know when it is time to eat, play or sleep.
- Hand you a toy when asked.

## *Playing and learning*

You can help your baby [grow and learn](#) by trying some of the following activities.

- Share pictures of family members and talk with your baby about who they are.
- Sing favorite family songs, feed him foods important to your family culture and share special celebrations.
- Encourage your baby to help feed himself or comb his hair.
- Read stories about other children who live in different kinds of houses or eat different kinds of food than your family eats.
- Establish routines appropriate for his age. The schedule you set up when he was eight months old may not work as well at 15 months.

## *Taking care of your baby*

At this age, social studies relates to your child's sense of self and how he relates to his family and community. He is also learning he is part of a family that shares traditions, customs and languages. If you speak a language other than English, speak it with your baby. His brain is specially wired to learn languages. When you speak to him in your language, you are building a strong relationship with your child and providing him with skills he will use later in life.

# Creative Expression Through the Arts



## *It starts with you*

Creative expression refers to your child's ability to engage in dance, song, music, dramatic play and art to express ideas and feelings. Your baby enjoys touching, feeling and looking for materials that come in different textures and colors. She likes things that are soft, bumpy, crinkly or squishy. She also likes to look at things that are brightly colored or sparkling. Exploring basic art materials strengthens her fine motor muscles and helps her build new skills. Give her lots of opportunities to see, feel and hear different materials around her.

As your baby gets older, she will gain more mobility and grow stronger. This gives her new options for solving problems and expressing herself creatively. She is discovering all the things her body can do. She is learning to walk, bend, stretch, sway, stomp, clap, shake and wiggle parts of her body. So [play music](#), dance and move your body with hers.



## *As your baby grows*

Your baby is [learning new things](#). She will

- Explore and choose different materials to play with, such as feathers, scarves, blocks, boxes and cups.
- Begin to discover and engage in different kinds of music and dance.
- Use gestures to tell you how she feels or communicate an idea.
- Start moving her body when she hears music or funny sounds.
- Imitate familiar finger plays and songs when she hears them.

## *Playing and learning*

You can help your baby grow and learn by trying some of the following activities.

- Freeze water colored with food dye into cubes and let her play with them outside, watching them melt.
- Sing songs with her before meals or at bedtime.
- Play a variety of different kinds of music and encourage her to move her body to the beat.
- Show her how to pull a scarf through a toilet paper roll and see if she can do it, too.

## *Taking care of your baby*

Your baby loves discovering new things, and she does it through her senses by tasting, touching, hearing, seeing and smelling. Giving her many opportunities to experience new sensations will help her learn about her world and apply what she learns to solving problems. When you are cooking, talk about the different smells she may smell in the kitchen and point them out so she will pay attention to them. As you prepare dinner, give her items that have textures, such as a bumpy lemon, a smooth apple or a ribbed piece of celery. Enjoy watching your baby experiment with the materials you give her.

# The Importance of Family

Learning starts at home with you as your child's first teacher. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers learn by observing and listening to family members as they go about their daily routines.

Families are responsible for shaping a child's development of values, learning skills and social skills. Your child is watching everything you do and listening to everything you say.

Learning occurs naturally for children through their play. Children are happiest when they play and playing is one of the best tools for learning new skills. Join in your child's play by getting down on his level and playing with him. Get down on the floor and pretend to be his favorite animal to encourage his imagination.

Use objects around your house for pretend play such as an empty paper towel roll he can use as a horn or a telescope. A plastic spoon and a pot for cooking can become a drum. Play helps improve his imagination, his physical development, his social skills and more. Playing outside is very important. Running, jumping and climbing help build your child's muscles and coordination. Your child will enjoy the time you two spend together, and so will you!



Developmental milestones are skills that children typically master by a certain age. There are milestones in all areas of development, such as in the way children learn, play, talk, move and react to others.

From nine to 24 months, your child is developing important language milestones. Ask your pediatrician or the local early learning coalition about developmental screenings that are available for your child. These screenings will identify any delays in language or other areas.

When a developmental delay is not recognized early, children must wait to get the help they need. This can make it hard for them to learn when they start school. Early screenings for these problems will allow your child to get needed early intervention so he will be ready to learn when he enters school.

**Remember, you are your child's first teacher.**



All children develop differently and at different times. If you have questions or concerns about your baby's development or behavior, it is important to take action early.

Developmental screenings can help identify areas of your child's development that might need some extra help. Talk to a doctor, your child's teacher or your local early learning coalition about your concerns and request to have your child screened. If the screening indicates any areas that need extra help, your child may qualify for early intervention services. Your child's doctor or your early learning coalition can help connect you to those services.

## You are your child's greatest advocate!

### Websites That Promote Child Development

Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Birth to Kindergarten: <http://flbt5.floridaearlylearning.com>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Parent Information:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/index.html>

Center for Early Literacy Learning Parent Information:  
<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/parentresource1.php>

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Learning:  
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/family.html>

National Association for the Education of Young Children:  
<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/for-families>

PBS Parents: <http://www.pbs.org/parents/>

Zero to Three: <https://www.zerotothree.org/parenting>



Child Care Resource and Referral



**What is CCR&R?**

CCR&R is a free service that helps families

- identify and select quality early learning programs.
- connect to local community agencies and resources.
- engage in their children's education and learning.
- locate financial resource options.

**Family Focused**

When a family contacts CCR&R, they can receive



**Child Care Listings**

Based on information from the family, CCR&R can provide a customized list of child care options.



**Financial Assistance Options**

CCR&R can provide information and help with applying for child care assistance and exploring other financial assistance options.



**Consumer Education**

CCR&R can provide information on a range of topics including how to locate quality early learning programs and the importance of family engagement.



**Community Resources**

CCR&R can connect families with local resources that may be able to assist with other needs, such as housing, food or utility assistance.



**CCR&R can also provide information about and help families apply for**



Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) - a free educational program available for all of Florida's 4-year-olds that prepares children for kindergarten.



School Readiness - a program that helps income eligible families in Florida pay for child care and helps children to be ready for school.



OFFICE OF  
**Early Learning**  
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE

CCR&R call center: 1-866-357-3239  
[www.floridaearlylearning.com](http://www.floridaearlylearning.com)

# Free Apps for Families



# Family Resources

## OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

Provides state-level support and direction for parents, teachers and early learning professionals. OEL administers three statewide programs including: the state child care assistance program, School Readiness, the free Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program for four-year-olds and the Child Care Resource and Referral program for all Florida families.

**1-866-357-3239 (Toll-free), (TTY:711)**

<http://www.floridaearlylearning.com>



## 2-1-1

A 24-hour hotline where parents connect with national, state and local information and referral services. 2-1-1 offers parents information to assist families with food, housing, employment, health care and counseling services.

**Dial 211**

[www.211.org](http://www.211.org)



## ACCESS FLORIDA

Temporary cash assistance and food stamp information is available through DCF's Access Florida Hotline.

**1-866-762-2237 (Toll-free)**

[www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access)



## BRIGHT FUTURES

A national health promotion and prevention initiative, led by the American Academy of Pediatrics and supported by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration that provides guidance for all preventive care screenings and well-child visits.

<https://brightfutures.aap.org/Pages/default.aspx>



## CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL NETWORK (CCR&R)

Helps families find local child care programs that fits their unique needs and local resources and provides information on how parents can find, locate and afford quality child care.

**1-866-357-3239 (Toll-free), (TTY:711)**

[www.floridaearlylearning.com/ccrr.aspx](http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/ccrr.aspx)



## You have what it takes to be a brain builder!

Download the Vroom app to add learning to mealtime, bathtime, bedtime, and anytime with Vroom tips.

See for yourself how Vroom tips are fast and fun!

[vroom.org](http://vroom.org)



También disponible en español

**vroom**

## CHILD CARE AWARE® of AMERICA

National network of more than 900 child care resource and referral agencies committed to helping parents find the best information on locating quality programs and resources in their local community; maintains links to resource and referral agencies in every state.

**1-800-424-2246 (Toll-free)**

<http://childcareaware.org/families/>



## CHILD HELP USA® NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

This hotline is staffed 24 hours daily with professional crisis counselors with access to thousands of resources.

**1-800-4-A-Child or 1-800-422-4453 (Toll-free)**

[www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)

<https://www.childhelp.org/states/florida>



## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES (DCF) LICENSING WEBSITE

Responsible for the administration of child care program licensing and training throughout Florida and administers programs addressing issues such as adult and child protective services, homelessness, food stamps, refugee services and adoption and foster care.

[www.myflorida.com/childcare](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare)

Find Child Care Providers

<https://cares.myflfamilies.com/PublicSearch>



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH/CHILDREN'S MEDICAL SERVICES/EARLY STEPS

Provides information and referrals on disabilities and special health care needs for families, service coordinators and other professionals who work with children with special needs.

**1-800-218-0001 (Toll-free)**

[http://www.floridahealth.gov/AlternateSites/CMS-Kids/early\\_steps\\_directory/index.html](http://www.floridahealth.gov/AlternateSites/CMS-Kids/early_steps_directory/index.html)



## FLORIDA CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

Child support services that include locating missing parents, establishing legal paternity, and establishing, enforcing and modifying support orders.

**1-800-622-KIDS or 1-800-622-5437 (Toll-free)**

[www.myflorida.com/dor/childsupport/](http://www.myflorida.com/dor/childsupport/)



## FLORIDA KIDCARE

Health insurance program for uninsured children younger than age 19. The Florida Kidcare program assesses eligibility based on age and family income.

**1-888-540-5437 (Toll-free), (TTY: 1-877-316-8748)**

<http://floridakidcare.org/>



## FLORIDA HEALTHY START

Ensures that all Florida families have access to a continuum of affordable and quality health and related services.

**727-507-6330**

[www.healthystartflorida.com](http://www.healthystartflorida.com)



## HEAD START

Head Start is a national school readiness program that provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition and parent involvement services to children from low-income families. For Head Start programs in your area, visit the listed website.

[www.floridaheadstart.org](http://www.floridaheadstart.org)



## THE OUNCE OF PREVENTION FUND

Identifies and supports prevention programs to improve outcomes for children, preserve and strengthen families and promote healthy behavior and functioning in society.

<https://www.ounce.org/>



## PARENTS WITHOUT PARTNERS

Provides help to single parents through discussions, professional speakers, study groups, publications and social activities for families.

**1-800-637-7974 (Toll-free)**

<http://www.parentswithoutpartners.org>



## VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN

Florida's free voluntary program designed to prepare 4-year-olds for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success.

**1-866-357-3239 (Toll-free), (TTY: 711)**

<http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/vpk.aspx>



Florida Department of Education  
Office of Early Learning  
Child Care Resource and Referral Network  
Toll-free Family Line: 1-866-357-3239  
<http://www.floridaearlylearning.com>



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