



Five Tips for Supporting Healthy Brain Development

1. **Experiences build brains.** The parts of our brain that are activated by repeated experiences grow stronger – and those that are not engaged may drop away.
2. **Holding a baby supports healthy brain development.** The actions that take place when you hold a baby is sensory nourishment – food for the brain.
3. **Interaction shapes brains.** Social interaction with a caring adult is the most important form of stimulation for a baby – it stimulates their brain and builds trust and security.
4. **Talking and listening to your child will make a difference.** Talking to a baby in a loving and interested way will develop their brain and their sense of confidence and safety.
5. **Young children learn more when we follow their lead than when we try to teach them.** Learning happens quickly when it takes place in the course of natural daily conversations, talking with children about their actions and feelings.

Adapted from African American Babies Coalition and Project 15 Key Factors.

Six Protective Factors for Families and Children

1. Parental Resilience A parent's capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.

2. Social Connections Friends, family members, neighbors, and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give concrete assistance to parents. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.

3. Concrete Support in Times of Need Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.

4. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children in a positive light and promote healthy development. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.

5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers.

6. Nurturing and Attachment When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection.

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