



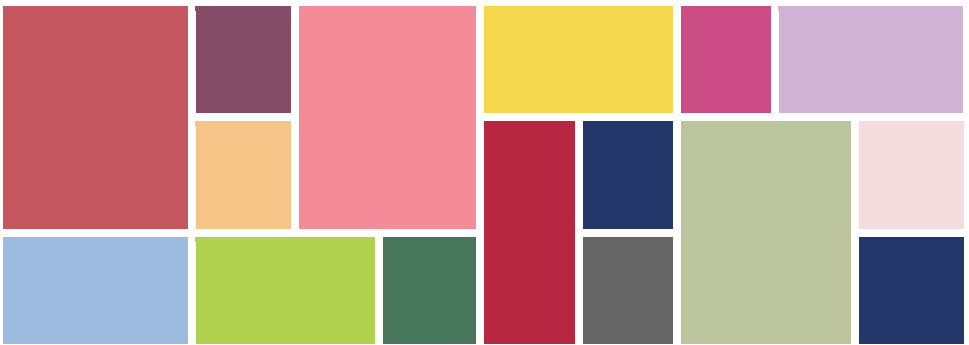
**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Maternal and Child  
Survival Program

# Therapeutic Early Stimulation Toolkit

## Activity Cards

Helping Young Children with Disabilities  
Meet Their Potential



## Acknowledgments

This training was developed using resources from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Learn the Signs. Act Early. Furthermore, this training integrated components from Save the Children's Building Brains parenting sessions and toolkit, and the Emergent Literacy and Math Toolkit.

This toolkit was developed for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) in the eastern and southern Caribbean. Renee Perez, MCSP/Save the Children, was the principal writer, with contributions by Lauren Pisani, Romilla Karnati, Cassandra Scarpino, Caroline Dusabe, and Fabiola Lara.

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## Resources

This toolkit includes several resources to support participant learning and practice. Resources include:

- A training guide
- Training PowerPoint slides
- Training worksheets and handouts
- Therapeutic early stimulation activity cards

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MCSP is a global USAID initiative to introduce and support high-impact health interventions in 25 priority countries to help prevent child and maternal deaths. MCSP supports programming in maternal, newborn, and child health, immunization, family planning and reproductive health, nutrition, health systems strengthening, water/sanitation/hygiene, malaria, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and pediatric HIV care and treatment. MCSP will tackle these issues through approaches that also focus on household and community mobilization, gender integration, and digital health, among others.

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## 0 to 6 months

### Social/Emotional



SE1. Help baby find hands and feet by placing brightly colored item (such as sock or tape) on her hands or feet.

SE2. When crying, swaddle your baby, turn him onto his stomach while being held, and swing back and forth, producing a loud, even “sh” sound. Help him reach his hand or finger to his mouth.

SE3. Introduce your baby to others using names, describing relationship, and using tactile identifying signals, such as glasses, long hair, etc.

### Language/Communication



L1. Begin and end each activity with tactile exploration of a meaningful object (such as a spoon for eating, a diaper for changing time, etc.)

L2. Sit face to face with your baby. Imitate her sounds and gestures, and introduce new sounds/gestures.

L3. Gently tap and brush your baby with objects of different shapes, sizes, and textures. Make sure to include all body parts, and spend extra time on her hands and feet. Let her hold objects. Make sure to describe all the objects.

### Cognitive



C1. Arrange safe space with sound-producing objects in your baby's immediate perimeter. Dangle objects. As your baby moves, she should come in contact with the objects.

C2. Isolate everyday sounds from the indoors and outdoors, and describe what is happening. Let your baby safely touch and explore different items.

C3. As you read a book aloud, act out the scenes to bring the story to life. Allow your baby to touch and explore the book.

### Motor/Physical



M1. Tummy time! Place your baby on her tummy over your chest, legs, or on the floor. Move toys in front of her to encourage her to reach and track the toys.

M2. Give your baby a whole-body massage while she is sitting up, on her back, on her sides, and on her tummy.

M3. Give your baby gentle joint compression on knees, hips, wrists, elbows, and shoulders by gently squeezing and pressing your hands in and out of her joints.



SEI



Help baby find hands and feet by placing brightly colored item (such as sock or tape) on her hands or feet.



SE2



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SE3



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LI



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L2



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L3



Gently tap and brush your baby with objects of different shapes, sizes, and textures. Make sure to include all body parts, and spend extra time on her hands and feet. Let her hold objects. Make sure to describe all the objects.



CI



Arrange a safe space with sound-producing objects in your baby's immediate perimeter. Dangle objects. As your baby moves, she should come in contact with the objects.



C2



Isolate everyday sounds from the indoors and outdoors, and describe what is happening. Let your baby safely touch and explore different items.



C3



As you read a book aloud, act out the scenes to bring the story to life. Allow your baby to touch and explore the book.



Tummy time! Place your baby on her tummy over your chest, legs, or on the floor. Move toys in front of her to encourage her to reach and track the toys.



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M3



Give your baby gentle joint compression on her knees, hips, wrists, elbows, and shoulders by gently squeezing and pressing your hands in and out of her joints.

## 6 to 12 months

### Social/Emotional



SE4. Participate in community activities and errands with your baby. Describe the activity step-by-step and point out different sights, sounds, and smells.

SE5. Sing songs in front of a mirror; pointing and tapping different body parts.

SE6. Move your baby to different areas around your home. Help your child safely touch items in these areas.

### Language/Communication



LL4. Whenever you give your baby more food or more time playing, use the sign for “more.” Whenever you help your baby with a difficult activity, use the sign for “help.”

L5. Sit face to face with your baby, and stick your tongue out, sing songs, and dance.

L6. Take your baby for a walk inside and outside. Talk about the things you see, feel, and hear. Repeat this activity at night.

### Cognitive



C4. Play peekaboo. At first, just partially conceal your face. Once your baby understands the game and knows you are still there, fully conceal your face.

C5. Make loud noises in front of your baby. Make the same noises behind your baby.

C6. Explore different objects. Help your baby scratch, rub, squeeze, poke, wave, bang, grasp, trace outline, and transfer objects from hand to hand.

### Motor/Physical



M4. Gently stretch your baby’s feet by slowly moving each foot up, down, side to side, and in a circle.

M5. Roll together! Lay down on a safe surface with your baby on your tummy and roll gently up, down, and side to side.

M6. Move a sound-producing item around your baby. Move it up, down, side to side, and in a circle. Do this while your baby is sitting, lying down, and on her tummy.





SE4



Participate in community activities and errands with your baby. Describe the activity step-by-step and point out different sights, sounds, and smells.



SE5



Sing songs in front of a mirror, pointing and tapping different body parts.



SE6



Move your baby to different areas around your home. Help your child safely touch items in these areas.



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Whenever you help your baby with a difficult activity, use the sign for “help.”



L5



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L6



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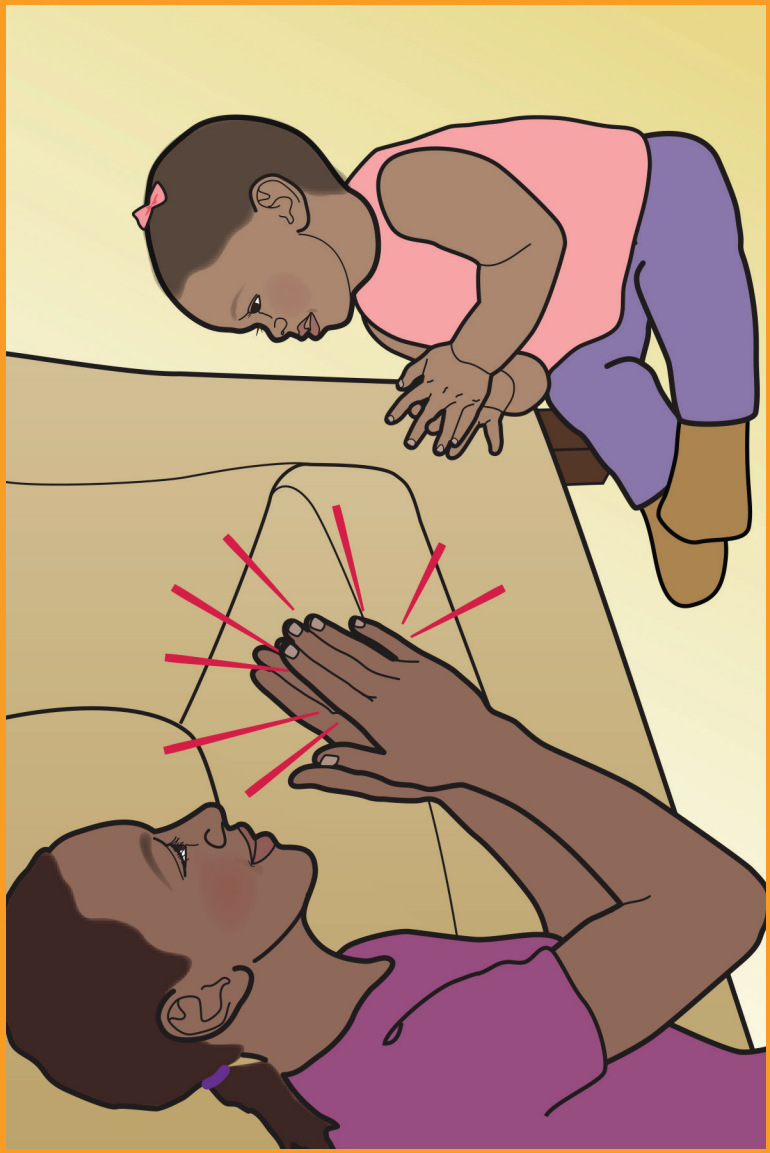
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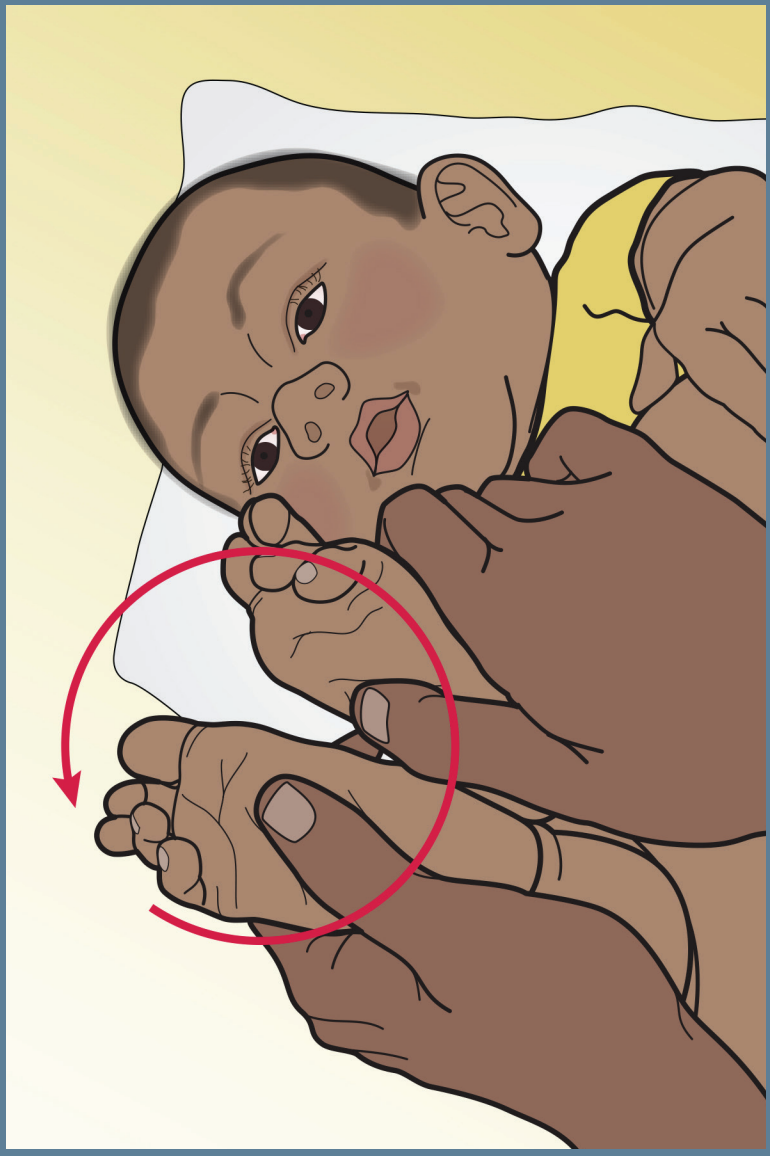
C6



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M4



Gently stretch your baby's feet by slowly moving each foot up, down, side to side, and in a circle.



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M6



Move a sound-producing item around your baby. Move it up, down, side to side, and in a circle. Do this while your baby is sitting, lying down, and on her tummy.

## 12 to 24 months

### Social/Emotional



SE7. Leave your child alone for 45–60 seconds by signing or saying “goodbye” and return by signing or saying “hello.” Make sure your child is in a safe place and that you can get to her easily. Soothe her if she is upset.

SE8. Gently tap a body part on a doll, then on yourself, then on your child. Allow your child to tap the doll as well.

SE9. Sit face to face with your child and act out different emotions (happy, surprised, silly, scared, sad, etc.). Describe each emotion. For example, “You are happy when you see grandma because she lets you eat all of her food.”

### Language/Communication



L7. Before starting an activity, describe the activity step-by-step using relevant objects (such as a shampoo, towel, and pajamas for bath time).

L8. Allow your child to choose an activity by providing relevant objects for him to select.

L9. Show your child his favorite toy and wait for him to communicate before you give him the toy. When your child is no longer interested in that toy, present a different one.

### Cognitive



C7. Help your child knock down bright objects that make noise when they fall. Repeat this several times.

C8. Slowly move objects in front of your child top to bottom, bottom to top, diagonally, side to side, and in a circle. Use large, brightly colored objects in bright light and dimmer light.

C9. Allow your child to bang on pots, pans, and plastic jugs with a spoon.

### Motor/Physical



M7. Dance together! Place your child on your lap and gently move him side to side, front, and back. Try this while standing.

M8. Hold your child and walk through your home slowly, then slightly faster; and stop occasionally. Describe where you are in your environment using words like behind, next to, in front of, to the left of, etc.

M9. Allow your child to crawl into and on top of large boxes, move around obstacles, and move over furniture.



SE7



Leave your child alone for 45–60 seconds by signing or saying “goodbye” and return by signing or saying “hello.” **Make sure your child is in a safe place and that you can get to her easily.** Soothe her if she is upset.



SE8



Gently tap a body part on a doll, then on yourself, then on your child. Allow your child to tap the doll as well.



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Allow your child to bang on pots, pans, and plastic jugs with a spoon.



M7



Dance together! Place your child on your lap and gently move him side to side, front, and back. Try this while standing.



M8



Hold your child and walk through your home slowly, then slightly faster, and stop occasionally. Describe where you are in your environment using words like behind, next to, in front of, to the left of, etc.





M9



Allow your child to crawl into and on top of large boxes, move around obstacles, and move over furniture.

## 24+ months

### Social/Emotional



SE10. Roll a ball to your child and ask her to return it. She may need your hand-over-hand support.

SE11. Show your child how to play with a new toy or item. Allow your child to play with toy, copy her actions, and show her new actions.

SE12. Help your child become more independent when brushing his teeth, feeding himself, and dressing himself. At the beginning, provide hand-over-hand support and then gradually fade this.

### Language/Communication



L10. Create a memory box by collecting highly meaningful objects to recount events at the end of the day. Let your child touch and explore the objects.

L11. During a routine activity, such as eating, suddenly stop the activity and wait for your child to give you a signal before continuing. Repeat this for different activities.

L12. Help your child fill three containers or bags with one object in each bag. Then, help your child remove each object. Repeat this a few times. Make sure to describe each item and let your child touch and explore.

### Cognitive



C10. Help your child stack and knock down items. Repeat this several times with different objects.

C11. Fill a container with objects of different sizes, textures, and colors, and encourage your child to independently take items out of the container and put them back in. **Make sure to use only items larger than your fist; anything smaller is a choking hazard.**

C12. Show your child three cups or cloths and hide her favorite toy under one of them. Encourage her to find the item.

### Motor/Physical



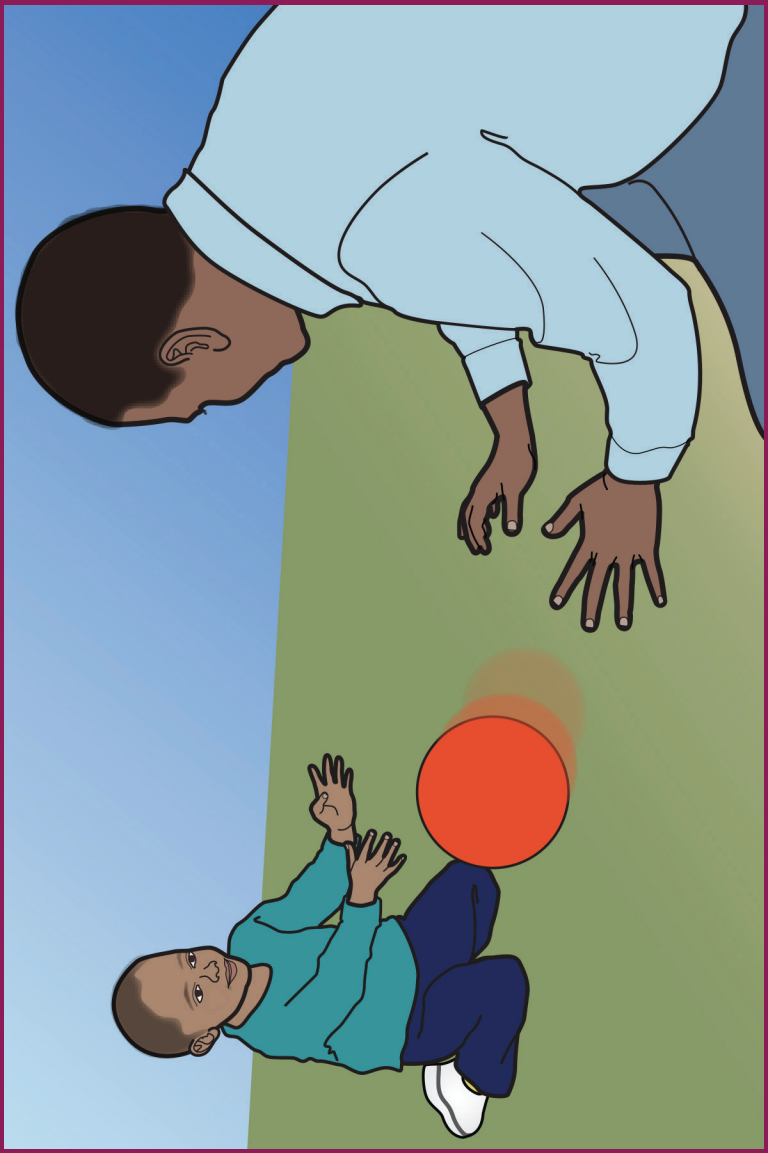
M10. Model safe, everyday routes (such as from the bedroom to the kitchen) by walking ahead of your child and encouraging your child to walk ahead occasionally.

M11. Use your child's foot to trace shapes in the sand, dirt, and water. First, trace the shapes with your child's heel down and then with his toes down.

M12. Lift your child overhead, pause, and bring her back down. Repeat this several times and count aloud.



SEIO



Roll a ball to your child and ask her to return it. She may need your hand-over-hand support.



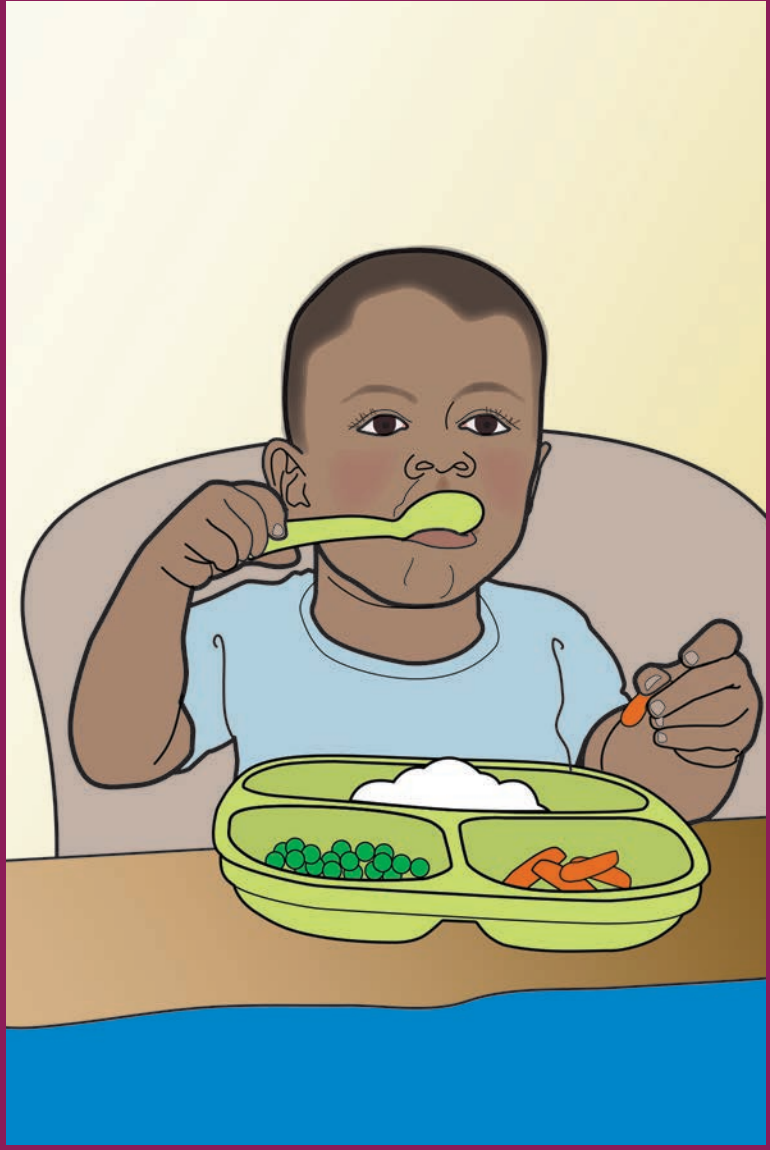
SEII



Show your child how to play with a new toy or item. Allow your child to play with toy, copy her actions, and show her new actions.



SEI2



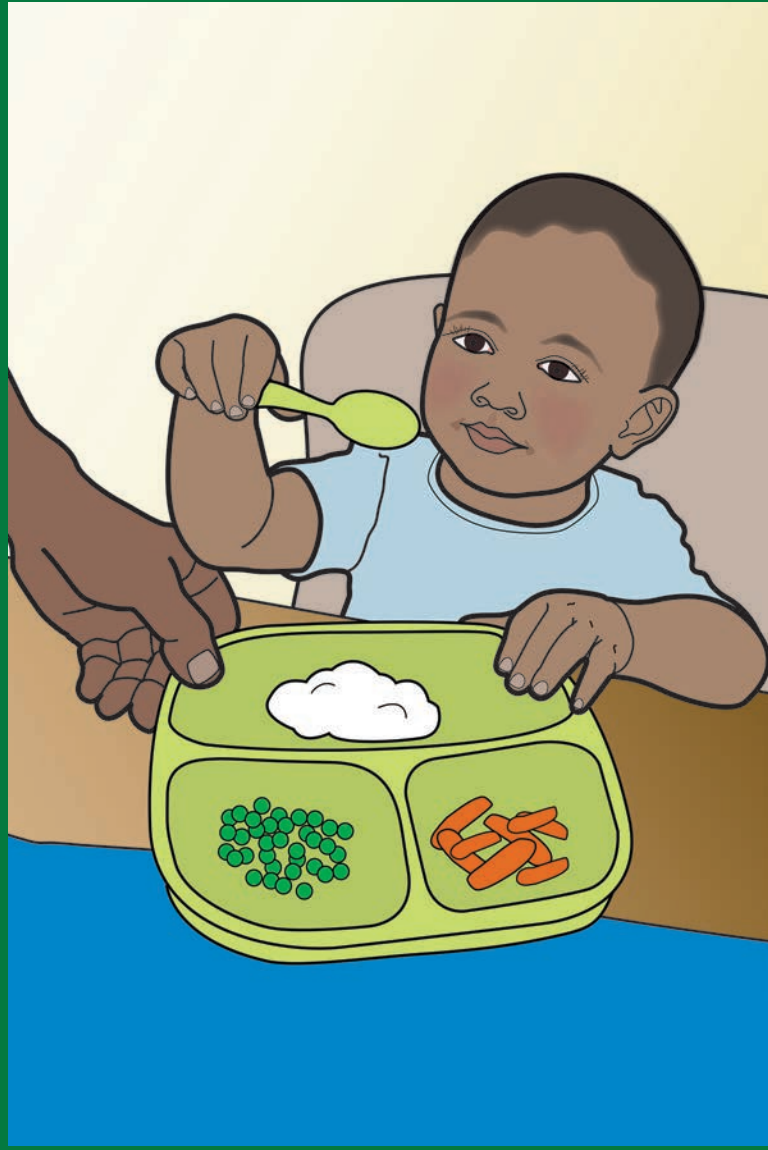
Help your child become more independent when brushing his teeth, feeding himself, and dressing himself. At the beginning, provide hand-over-hand support and then gradually fade this.



L10



Create a memory box by collecting highly meaningful objects to recount events at the end of the day. Let your child touch and explore the objects.



During a routine activity, such as eating, suddenly stop the activity and wait for your child to give you a signal before continuing. Repeat this for different activities.

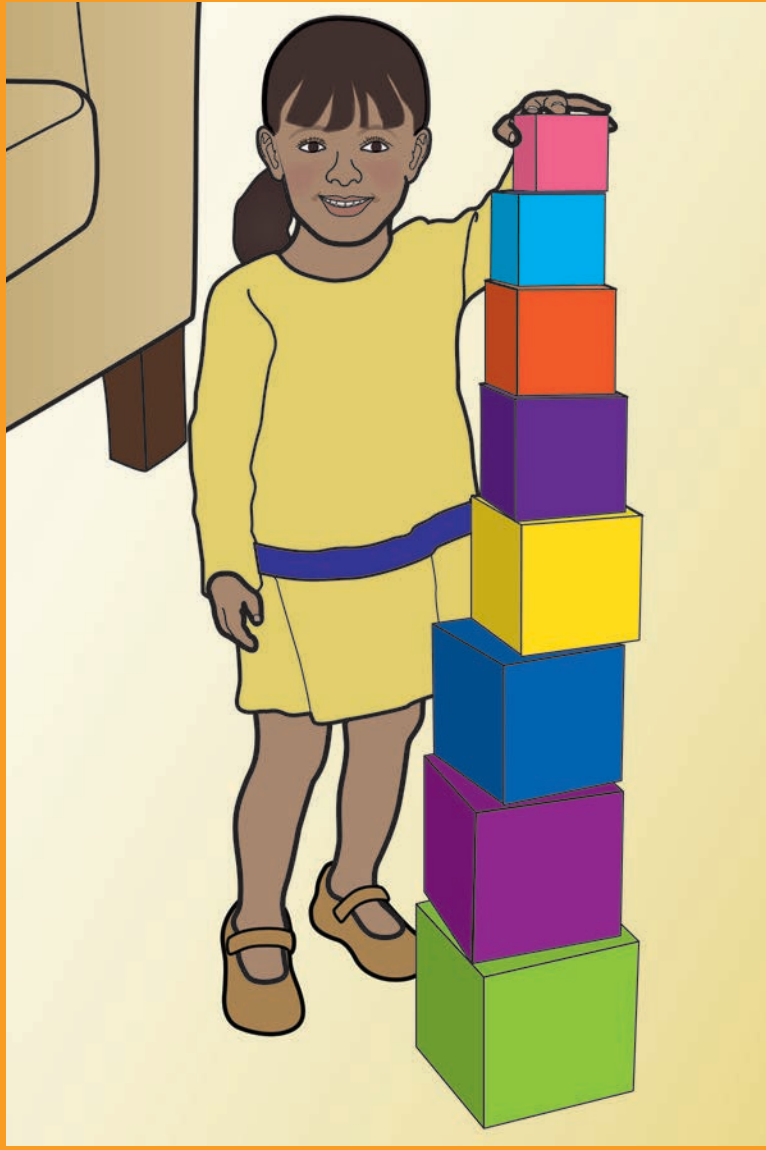


L12



Help your child fill three containers or bags with one object in each bag. Then, help your child remove each object. Repeat this a few times. Make sure to describe each item and let your child touch and explore.





Help your child stack and knock down items. Repeat this several times with different objects.



CII



Fill a container with objects of different sizes, textures, and colors, and encourage your child to independently take items out of the container and put them back in. **Make sure to use only items larger than your fist; anything smaller is a choking hazard.**



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M10



Model safe, everyday routes (such as from the bedroom to the kitchen) by walking ahead of your child and encouraging your child to walk ahead occasionally.



MII



Use your child's foot to trace shapes in the sand, dirt, and water. First, trace the shapes with your child's heel down and then with his toes down.



MI2



Lift your child overhead, pause, and bring her back down. Repeat this several times and count aloud.