



# Early Learning Digest

Research-based information provided through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Education and Lifetrack

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## What is Early Childhood Screening?

Many people are confused about why many states require young children to go through early childhood screening. Screening is not a test to see whether children are ready for school, it's not an intelligence test, and it's not about how parents do their job.

The goal of screening is to identify developmental problems early on so that children can get the help they need to be successful in school and in life. Doctors, nurses and early childhood teachers determine if children are developing well in their thinking, learning and talking skills and how their large and small muscles are growing.

During this screening, a nurse or early childhood teacher will look at how your child sees, hears, moves, plays, talks, learns and behaves. They will also help connect you to early childhood programs and community services that can help your child and family.

Contact your local Minnesota school district for more information about the Early Childhood Screening program. To obtain contact information, go to "Find a Program" at [www.mnparentsknow.info](http://www.mnparentsknow.info).

For more information on early childhood screening, visit [http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/ages3\\_5/topicsAZ/PKDEV\\_000399](http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/ages3_5/topicsAZ/PKDEV_000399).

## Speaking "Parentese"

When you are with your new baby, do you find yourself talking to your baby in single words or short sentences in a high-pitched, sing-song voice? This way of talking is commonly used by parents around the world and has been called "parentese." Research indicates using parentese may help your baby begin to hear differences in speech sounds through word repetition and exaggeration. Also, when you comfort your crying baby, you lay the groundwork for good communication.

Another important piece of helping your baby get ready to talk and listen



is to respond first to the coos then the babbling sounds your baby makes. Having so-called conversations with your infant creates a warm, relaxed feeling, helps your baby focus on you and tells your baby that sounds and talking are important.

As your baby grows, repeat the basic words like "mama," "dada" and "bye-bye." Don't forget the tried-and-true nursery rhymes, songs and peek-a-boo games. These word games and songs make language a fun experience and introduce your infant to rhythm, rhyme and repetition, all building blocks of good language skills.

Remember, babies never think you are silly when you talk to them—they love it!

For more information on speaking "parentese", visit [http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/Newborn/topicsAZ/PKDEV\\_000303](http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/Newborn/topicsAZ/PKDEV_000303).

More Minnesota parenting help is only a phone call or click away! Call the FREE Parent Warmline 612.813.6336 (Twin Cities) or 1.866.916.4316 (Greater Minnesota) anytime, even on weekends.



Parent Warmline is a FREE telephone service sponsored by Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota. The Warmline provides you with person-to-person support, practical advice and resources about parent-child relationships and the behavior and development of children from infants to teens.

## Fussy ("Choosy") Eaters

Does your child refuse to eat anything green or get upset when food on their plate touches other food? Do they ask for an orange or a banana today but two days ago would only eat peanut butter sandwiches?

What seems like a difficult time to you now is a step toward learning how to be independent and make decisions. Preschool children grow at a slower rate than toddlers do, and most will be big eaters again when their bodies start to need more food for energy.

Effective Ways to Handle a "Choosy" Eater:

- Trust your child's appetite rather than force a child to eat everything on the plate. Forcing a child to eat may result in overeating.
- Set reasonable time limits for the start and end of a meal and then remove the plate quietly. What's reasonable depends on each child.
- Stay positive and do not use the words "picky eater." Children believe what you say and they hear.



- Serve food plain and do not let food touch if that is important to your child.
- Offer the same food to the whole family. Plan at least one food everyone will eat.
- Substitute a similar food - if a child does not like a certain food, such as sweet potatoes, offer squash.
- Provide just two or three choices - then, let your child decide what to eat.

For more information on fussy (choosy) eaters, visit [http://parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/age3\\_5/topicsAZ/PKDEV\\_000405](http://parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/age3_5/topicsAZ/PKDEV_000405).

— EVERYDAY — 

## Parent to Parent

Everyday Parent to Parent Forum is a bulletin board for Minnesota parents to ask questions or to share what they have learned. Join the discussion forum at [www.MNParentsKnow.info](http://www.MNParentsKnow.info).

## Test Your Knowledge of Three-Year-Olds...

- T F 1) Most three-year-olds are able to hop on one foot.
- T F 2) Three-year-olds use words to talk about feelings.
- T F 3) Three-year-olds usually separate easily from parents.
- T F 4) Most three-year-olds are able to count to ten.

To see more developmental milestones for three-year-olds go to <http://parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/ChildDevelopment/3Years/index.htm?redirectNodId=Age3-5&redirectNodId=Age3-5>.

Answers: 1) T, 2) T, 3) T, 4) F

## Watch Me Grow Scrapbook

The Watch Me Grow Scrapbook is a fun way to keep track of how your child is growing and learning from birth to five years. It's a great way to share your child's development with grandparents, other family members and friends or your child care provider. Visit [www.MNParentsKnow.info](http://www.MNParentsKnow.info), under "Newborn" and [click on](#) Watch Me Grow.



Trusted parenting information, resources and activities to help your children grow, develop and learn from birth through high school at [www.MNParentsKnow.info](http://www.MNParentsKnow.info).

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