



I Mandikiki!

For Guam Families with Children Birth To Eight



Volume 9, Issue 2

November 2015

The Importance of Early Childhood Education



Early childhood education. School readiness. You might be thinking, "Why do I need to think about these things when my baby is only a few months old? I'll worry about that when my child is ready for Kindergarten." If we wait that long, we may miss many opportunities for learning.

For several years, the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University has researched the importance of brain development in the early years. The early years matter because, in the first few years of life, 700 new neural connections are formed every second. Neural connections are formed through the interaction of genes and a baby's environment and experiences, especially "serve and return" interaction with adults, or what developmental researchers call contingent reciprocity. These are the connections that build brain architecture – the foundation upon which all later learning, behavior, and health depend (Center on the Developing Child, 2009).

So what does that all mean? When a baby is born, 25% of its brain is developed. Within the first three years of life, which is roughly 1000 days, 80-95% of the brain develops. When we think about the first 1000 days in relation to the number of neural connections being formed in that time period, we come up with a number that doesn't fit on the calculator screen. The Center on the Developing Child estimated that it takes approximately 1000 days to make four quadrillion neural connections. Think of those neural connections as a big ball of yarn or string that is all

tangled up. In the case of brain development, you want that tangled up ball where it is hard to figure out the beginning and end.

Early childhood education helps children develop those connections that build the foundation for later learning. In these settings, children learn how to interact with peers, adults, and other people outside of their family circle. They learn how to share, express feelings, build self-confidence, and explore the world around them. Most of this is done through play and exploration.

The Bridgespan Group and the Pritzker Children's Initiative published a report earlier this year and came up with the top ten reasons why early childhood education pays off, which can be found on the next page.

Continued on next page

Inside this issue:

The Importance of Early Childhood Education	1
Ten Reasons Why Early Childhood Education Pays Off	2
Guam Early Learning Guidelines Birth to 36 Months..	3
Top 10 Things Every Child Needs for the Best Start in Life.....	4-5
Ten Favorite Children's Books	6
Is Your Child "At Risk" for Hearing Loss/Ask for Developmental Screening for your Child	7
Free Developmental Screening	8

TEN REASONS

why Early Childhood Education Pays Off

- 1 Ninety percent of physical brain development occurs in the first three years of life, when a baby forms 700 new neural connections per second.
- 2 When a young child enters kindergarten ready for school, there is an 82 percent chance that child will master basic skills by age 11, compared with a 45 percent chance for children who are not school ready.
- 3 Later in life, at-risk children who do not get high-quality early childhood experiences are 25 percent more likely to drop out of school, 40 percent more likely to become teen parents, and 60 percent less likely to attend college.
- 4 Comprehensive early interventions that combine health, nutrition, and learning have the potential to reduce risk factors associated with chronic diseases, such as hypertension and high blood sugar, well into adulthood.
- 5 Investment in high-quality early childhood programs for at-risk children from birth to age five delivers a 7–10 percent [annual] return on investment through better education, health, social and economic outcomes, increased productivity, and the reduced need for social spending.
- 6 Lifetime earnings gains from increased enrollment in early childhood education would outweigh the costs of these programs (the estimated gain in lifetime income per participant is \$9,166 to \$30,851 after subtracting the cost of the programs).
- 7 Combined annual per capita public spending at the state and federal level on education for six- to eighteen-year-olds is nearly four times as high as spending on children from birth to five.
- 8 The United States ranks 31st in a group of 32 developed nations in the percentage of public education dollars allocated to early childhood.
- 9 Evidence-based home visitation programs reached only 115,000 children in 2014, an estimated 2.5 percent of the need.
- 10 Over the 2011–12 school year, the proportion of children in three- and four-star [child-care and education] centers with age-appropriate skills increased from 33 percent to nearly 66 percent.

Source: J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation and The Bridgespan Group.

Guam Early Learning Guidelines Birth to 36 Months

The Guam Early Learning Guidelines Birth to 36 Months (GELG: Birth to 36 Months) was first developed in 2007 to improve the quality of care and education of Guam's infants and toddlers. It was adapted from the State of Maryland, Department of Human Resources Child Care Administration's "Guidelines for Healthy Child Development and Care for Young Children (Birth to Three Years of Age)" and highlights various domains or areas of child development.

The 2015 GELG: Birth to 36 Months revision includes the latest early care and education research findings. They have been and continue to be a free resource for families, caregivers, teachers, and administrators on what infants and toddlers should know and be able to do as they prepare for preschool and later for entrance into kindergarten, regardless of socio-economic status, cultural background, or range of abilities.

The GELG: Birth to 36 Months gives caregivers a framework to help guide quality early learning experiences. It helps primary caregivers know what their infants and toddlers are learning and should be able to do. It also provides sample activities that are user-friendly and developmentally appropriate; activities that begin

at the child's level of learning with steps to continue growing and learning.

Children develop in different ways, at different rates, and may have special needs. The GELG: Birth to 36 Months is to be used to guide or assist parents and caregivers in understanding and supporting what young children, birth to 36 months, typically know and are able to do. The GELG: Birth to 36 Months is useful and appropriate for all public or private child care programs, homes, or settings that serve young children birth to 36 months. It is not meant to be a tool that evaluates or judges the abilities of young children in the various domains or areas of development, nor is it meant to be a set of standards for preschool and kindergarten.

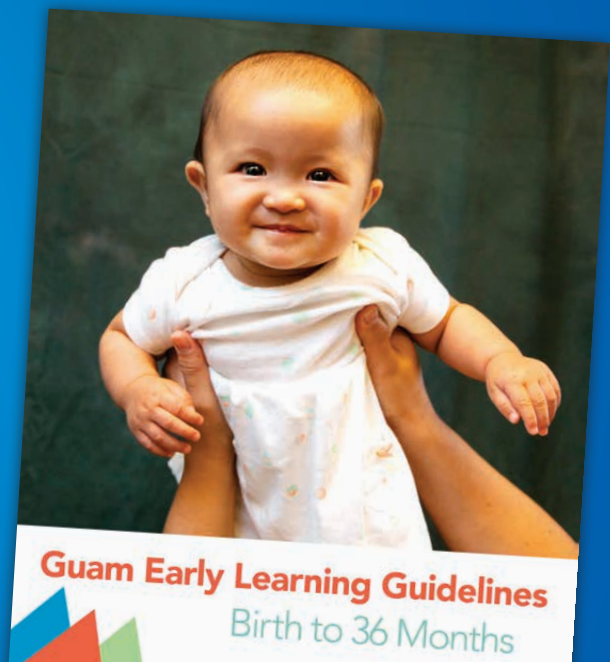
The Project Tinituhon Early Care and Education and Child Care Strategic Management Team whose members include parents, child care providers, and representatives from agencies providing funding and resources for quality child care guided the framework and activities. Support was also provided by Project Bisita I Familia, Guam's Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.

Guam Early Learning Guidelines

Birth to 36 Months

now available online!

Go to www.guamcedders.org
to download a PDF copy!



The Guam Early Learning Guidelines: Birth to 36 Months was produced through funding from Project Bisita I Familia with grant support from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Grant #X02MC26314, through a subcontract between the Department of Public Health & Social Services and the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, & Service (Guam CEDDERS), and additional support from Project Tinituhon, Guam's Early Childhood Comprehensive System.



TOP 10 THINGS EVERY CHILD NEEDS FOR THE BEST START IN LIFE

At birth, an infant's brain is only 25 percent of the size of an average adult's brain. Incredibly, by 3 years of age, a child's brain has grown to 90 percent of that of an adult. During infancy and early childhood, children are flooded with new experiences that impact their brain development. The first 3 years of a child's life offer parents an amazing opportunity (and accompanying responsibility) to shape their child's growth and form healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

FIRST 5 Santa Cruz County has provided parents and caregivers with the following Top 10 Things to help give children the best start in life.

TIP #1: ENCOURAGE INTERACTION

A child's brain grows based on early experiences at home. The more interactions a child has, the healthier his/her development will be.

What Can Parents Do?

- Respond quickly to your baby's needs
- Speak in a soft, slow voice
- Get down to your child's level; involve yourself in your child's play
- Engage your child in conversation
- Be present in your child's life

TIP #2: OFFER PHYSICAL AFFECTION

Physical affection communicates love to young children, which in turn fosters positive emotional growth.

What Can Parents Do?

- Be gentle and responsive to your baby's cues
- Massage your infant
- Hold your child when feeding him/her
- Rock your baby and look into his/her eyes
- Hold your child on your lap when playing or reading
- Hug your child often

TIP #3: PROVIDE A STABLE RELATIONSHIP

Children who have a stable relationship with at least one caregiver learn at a faster pace, feel better about themselves, and make friends more easily.

What Can Parents Do?

- Hold your child on your lap during stressful situations, such as a doctor's visit
- Be a loving, consistent presence for your child
- Create an environment that allows your child to explore, but set limits to show both guidance and care
- Be predictable, nurturing and calm when interacting with your child

TIP #4: MAINTAIN A SAFE, HEALTHY HOME

Creating a safe and healthy home environment allows you to maximize your child's growth with minimal risk.

What Can Parents Do?

- Child-proof your home
- Use age-appropriate car seats
- Be aware of the dangers of lead poisoning found in old paint chips and paint dust
- Feed your child a healthy, nutritious diet and avoid high-fat foods
- Visit your child's physician and dentist regularly
- Ensure your child is up-to-date on immunizations
- Encourage outdoor play and exercise

TIP #5: DEVELOP STRONG SELF-ESTEEM

A strong sense of self is the foundation for healthy development in young children.

What Can Parents Do?

- Recognize and celebrate that every child is unique from birth
- Discover who your child is and value his/her identity
- Encourage your child to express himself/herself
- Praise your child with concrete positive feedback
- Respect your child and teach him/her to respect himself/herself and others



TIP #6: CHOOSE QUALITY CHILDCARE

Since childcare settings can be a primary learning environment for children, the quality of the childcare setting is very important.

What Can Parents Do?

- Take an active role in selecting the best childcare for your child
- Visit the childcare center with your child to determine your child's comfort level
- Ask yourself these questions when selecting childcare:
 - Is it a safe, supportive environment?
 - Do they serve nutritious food?
 - Do the childcare providers appear to enjoy interacting with the children?
 - What are the ratios of caregivers to children? Look for the following ratios: 1 caregiver: 3 - 4 children (ages 0 - 3)
 - Do the adults speak respectfully to the children and encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings?
 - Are the adults down on the floor playing with the children?
 - Does the center welcome parental involvement?
 - Do the children appear happy?

TIP #7: ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION

Communicating with your child not only shows love, but also encourages the development of his/her speech patterns.

What Can Parents Do?

- Talk to your baby, early and often
- Sing to and with your child
- Use a broad vocabulary to expose your child to many different words
- Engage your child in conversation
- Read aloud to your child and ask questions of him/her

TIP #8: PROMOTE PLAY

Playing provides children with an outlet for imagination and creativity and fosters healthy brain development.

What Can Parents Do?

- Be your child's playmate, engage in their play
- Encourage play by using everyday household items in creative ways
- Get to know your child through play



TIP #9: MAKE MUSIC

Music offers children an outlet for expression and stimulates brain development in specific areas including language and reasoning.

What Can Parents Do?

- Involve your child in music
- Sing, clap, rock, dance, tap your feet together with your child
- Encourage your child to make his/her own music using household items
- Play music in your home and encourage your child to sing and dance

TIP #10: MAKE READING A PRIORITY

Reading with children demonstrates a love for books and learning, and is a wonderful way for parents and children to spend quality time together.

What Can Parents Do?

- Read to your child everyday
- When you read to your child, hold him/her on your lap
- Point to pictures and ask questions
- Repeat the same book to help your child make the connection between the written page and the spoken word
- Write down a story your child tells you – show them their words in writing

The first 3 years of life are the most critical in terms of encouraging healthy development. It is important for parents to start as soon as possible to build the foundation that will help their children reach their full potential. The good news is that what every child needs, every parent can give. If we care for our children and give them what they need early in life, their future will be full of possibilities.



Information extracted from Ten things every child needs DVD, produced by the Robert t. McCormick Tribune Foundation

Ten Favorite Children's Books

You're never too old, too wacky, too wild,
to pick up a book and read to a child.
-Dr. Seuss

1. Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin
2. Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
3. Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin
4. Guess How Much I Love You? by Sam McBratney
5. The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein
6. The Going to Bed Book by Sandra Boynton
7. The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper
8. Are You My Mother? by P.D. Eastman
9. Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst
10. The Complete Adventures of Curious George by Margaret and H.A. Rey



Do you ever wonder if your child is developing just like other children his or her age?

When you take your child to his or her well child checkups at a medical clinic, does your child's pediatrician ask you if your child can do certain things? The pediatrician is monitoring your child's development. Developmental screening can also help you figure out the things your child can do at certain ages. The Ages and Stages Questionnaires Third Edition (ASQ 3) helps parents and other caregivers keep track of their child's growth and development. The ASQ 3 is easy to do and takes a few minutes to complete.



Please contact 735-2466 for more information on developmental screening.



Support for this issue was provided by Project Tinituhon with 100% funding support by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Grant No. H25MCO6097 and facilitated by the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (Guam CEDDERS). The University of Guam is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Guam CEDDERS Director: Heidi San Nicolas, Ph.D.

Editor-in-Chief: Terrie Fejarang

Managing Editor: Vera Blaz

Layout: Sherolyn Guerrero

This issue of *I Mandikiki* was made possible through contributions from the following individuals: Vera Blaz and Sean Lizama.

Alternative formats (e.g., Braille, large print, or audio tapes) of *I Mandikiki* may be made available by sending a request to coleen.delacruz@guamcedders.org or 735-2477.

Is Your Child "At Risk" for Hearing Loss?



For more information log on to: www.guamehdi.org

Has your baby experienced one of the following "risk factors" for hearing loss?

- There is concern about your baby's hearing, speech, language or development for any reason
- Your family has a history of children with hearing loss
- Your baby spent more than 5 days in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) or had complications while in the NICU (*Check with your health care professional*)
- Your baby experienced a lack of oxygen after birth
- Your baby needed a machine to help him/her breathe
- Was given medications that might hurt hearing (*Ask your health care provider*)
- Needed a special procedure (blood transfusion) to treat bad jaundice (hyperbilirubinemia)
- Was exposed to infection before birth
- Has head, face or ears shaped or formed in a different way than usual
- Has a condition (neurological disorder) that is associated with hearing loss (*Check with your health care professional*)
- Had an infection around the brain and spinal cord called meningitis
- Received a bad injury to the head especially if a hospital stay was required
- Was given medication for cancer chemotherapy

To schedule a **FREE HEARING SCREENING by six months of age** for your baby contact the Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS) at Phone: 300-5776/5816 or e-mail: geis@teleguam.net



This brochure was produced by the Guam Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (Guam EHDl) Project, with 100% funding support from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Grant #H61MC24883, and facilitated by the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, & Service (Guam CEDDERS).



It is important that every parent knows about typical early childhood development to help nurture their child's growth.

36 Months

- Sorts matching objects
- Says 2 to 4 word sentences

24 Months

- Walks, runs, climbs without help
- Says 3 to 6 words

18 Months

- Walks up steps
- Begins to put words together

12 Months

- Says "Mama" or "Dada"
- Imitates gestures

Free Developmental Screening Available for children, birth - 3 years Call 735-2466



Produced by Project Tinituhon with 100% funding support by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Grant No. H25MCO6097 and facilitated by the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (Guam CEDDERS). The University of Guam is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

This advertisement is adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Act Early Campaign.