



## rape and abuse crisis center

advocacy. counseling. education.

### Parenting Young Children

#### **An Important Message to Parents**

Scientific research shows most development of the human brain takes place during the first three years of life.<sup>1</sup> To ensure healthy development, children need appropriate cognitive, emotional, and physical stimulation. Parents need to be aware of their child's developmental stages in order to encourage healthy development in an age appropriate manner.

#### **Cognitive Needs**

- Challenge your child to think. Teach them to count, match colors, recite the alphabet, learn nursery rhymes, and work puzzles. Most importantly, read to your children or show them picture books.
- Create a stimulating environment. Surround your child with bright colors, various textures, and interesting sounds and smells.

#### **Talk to your children**

- Children are eager to learn and understand. Talk to them often and in complete sentences. Tell them about their environment; describe situations, people, and places. Don't underestimate their ability to absorb information.

#### **Emotional Needs**

- Show how much you care. Provide an abundance of love, concern, and care for your child.
- Take good care of yourself. Monitor your own stress and mental health. Find help if you feel overwhelmed. Your state of mind will affect your child's development.
- Do your best to shelter your child. Shield children from stressful or violent environments.

#### **Physical Needs:**

- Cuddle, hug, kiss, and hold your children. Children need a lot of affection many times a day.
- Make sure your children have opportunities to run, stretch, skip, and jump.
- Feed your children healthy foods. Fruits, vegetables, milk, cheese, fish, chicken, whole-grain breads, and cereals are all nutritious foods which should be incorporated into your child's diet.

#### References:

1. Online NewsHour: [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/youth/jan-june97/brain\\_5-29.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/youth/jan-june97/brain_5-29.html)

24-hour Crisis Line (701)293-7273  
www.raccfm.com

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