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Why is it important to stimulate your child from an early age?

Stimulation is necessary for survival of a new-born baby. Touch for a new-born is the most important sensory stimulation that a baby needs for survival. Failure to thrive will occur if a new-born is not touched regularly.

Advance brain development will occur if a baby is stimulated beyond what naturally occurs to raise a baby.

If a baby is stimulated daily, he will reach his developmental milestones earlier,

have improved concentration/memory/motor skills and be more curious.

The first 3 years of live is the most important for a child as this is the time when there is most brain development.



Tips for stimulation

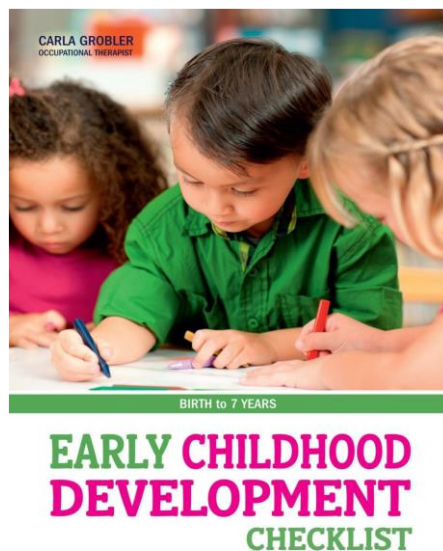
- Expose your baby to different sensory stimulation: touch, smell, taste,
- visual, auditory, proprioception (deep pressure) and vestibular (movement) experiences.
- The parent or pre-school teacher need to know the limitations and likes of the baby as to not over-stimulate/under-stimulate the baby.
- When wanting to engage your child in a stimulation activity make sure the child is alert and ready for activities. Don't try to force your child to play with you if he is not ready as this will cause over-stimulation or negative reaction towards the activity. Thus timing is very important. Don't try to stimulate your child when he is tired/hungry/emotional.
- It is important to start with an activity that you know the child likes/chooses and then move over to introducing a new activity.
- Every area your child is exposed to can be a stimulation opportunity. You as parent/teacher just need to introduce some materials/activities/toys to make this possible.
- Leave the area where the child sleeps e.g. cot free of stimulation or it may cause the child to struggle falling asleep.
- One of the most important things you as a parent/teacher can do is to talk to your child. Give her a running commentary while you are busy bathing/dressing your baby as language skills and understanding develops this way.
- Don't just leave your child in a playpen. You are the instrument through which you baby learns while still too young to explore the word herself. Hold toys, use voices, do



different movement activities/sing/talk/pull funny faces/explore the garden and the house.

- Remember kids learn best through repetition – although this may drive you as parent crazy!
- Remember to make stimulation time pleasurable and playful or your child will not want to part-take.
- Your baby/child needs only 20 minutes a day of floor-time from you as parent; this will help with stimulation, bonding, self-esteem and socialization.
- Read to your child, it's so important for language development.
- Outside play is very important for your baby/child as this will assist in the young child with sensory stimulation and in the older child will develop his gross motor skills.
- Socialization with other children is vital especially if your child is and only child.
- You don't have to go out and buy expensive toys for stimulation as there are loads of websites on google/Pinterest and Facebook.

If you are not sure at what age your child is supposed to develop a certain skill, the following book is a great tool to assist you.



You will be able to use this checklist, as a **guideline**, to determine if a child is functioning according to his/her age level and as a guideline for age-appropriate stimulation activities. This book will be useful to:

- Teachers
- Parents
- Therapists (OT's, social workers, psychologists, etc.)
- Students (studying occupational therapy / educational psychology / foundation phase teaching / pre-primary teaching, etc.)
- Pre-schools
- Primary schools (Foundation phase)
- Special needs schools

Developmental checklist 139 = pages

Age-appropriate stimulation activities 24 = pages

The book is available in soft cover A5 size.

This is not a standardized test.

The book is published by RandomHouseStruik.

You can find this book on my website www.carlagrobler.co.za
R150 excluding courier cost.