2010

The Learning Child: Keys to Enhancing Learning

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Hanna, Janet S.; Krumbach, Eileen M.; Purcell, Sarah Effken; Schroeder, Debra E.; and Warner, Mary K., "The Learning Child: Keys to Enhancing Learning" (2010). Faculty Publications from CYFS. Paper 34.

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HEF595
Participant’s Guide

The Learning Child:
Keys to Enhancing Learning

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Adapted by Tonia R. Durden, Early Childhood Extension Specialist and
the Learning Child Team members

Lesson Goals:
The goal of this program is to provide information
about ways to create a responsive, stimulating, affirming
and developmentally appropriate environment for young
children (birth–3 years).

Six Important Things to Know:

• Every child grows at his or her own pace.
• A family is a child’s first teacher and a child’s home
  is the first classroom.
• Children learn by doing, playing, and listening.
• Early relationships are important to healthy child
development.
• Children’s emotional development impacts learn-
ing.
• Children are social.

The following interactive activity sheets provide an
opportunity to identify key activities and games that are
developmentally appropriate and support the physical,
intellectual, social, and emotional development of young
children. Following the activity, you will be able to dis-
cuss new and creative ways to provide a responsive and
stimulating environment for the children in your care.

Recommended Resources:

Websites:

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Resources on the Learn-
ing Child: www.extension.unl.edu/child-youth

“Just In Time Parenting” a free, monthly parenting
newsletter: www.extension.org/parenting; Enter Code:
NE10JITP

Book:

Fun to Play Ready To Learn (EB2) is available at your
local UNL Extension office. Based on the latest
research on how young children learn and develop,
this activity book is filled with fun and engaging
activities designed to help children increase their
sensory and motor skills. Featured games and
activities will help develop children’s social skills,
 improve coordination, increase their vocabulary, and
learn problem solving skills.

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Early Childhood Games

**Physical Play**

**Head and Shoulders**

Head shoulders,  
knees and toes,  
knees and toes,  
knees and toes.  
Repeat  
Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,  
head, shoulders,  
knees and toes,  
knees and toes.  

**Social Play**

**Ring Around the Rosy**

Ring around the rosy  
A pocket full of posies,  
Ashes, ashes we all fall down!  
(Hold on to hands and go around in a circle and fall down together at the end.)  
Repeat.

**Intellectual Play**

**Five Little Monkeys**

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed.  
(Hold up one hand with five fingers and bounce up and down.)  

One fell off and hurt his head.  
(Hold up index finger, then hold head in hands.)  

Called up the doctor, and the doctor said,  
(Make a telephone button pushing motion, then hold “phone” to ear.)  

“No more monkeys jumping on the bed.”  
(Repeat using four, three, two, one.)  

**Emotional Play**

**If You’re Happy and You Know It**

If you’re happy and you know it,  
clap your hands! (clap, clap)  
If you’re happy and you know it,  
clap your hands! (clap, clap)  
If you’re happy and you know it,  
and you really want to show it,  
If you’re happy and you know it,  
Clap your hands! (clap, clap)  

Repeat but substitute:

Mad – stomp your feet  
Surprised – raise your eyebrows  
Sad – wipe your eye  
Agree – nod your head  
Tired – stretch and yawn  
Confused – turn around  
Happy – shout “Hooray!”
Creative Play Activity

Work in groups of two to three people. Use the fruit flavored cereal provided to stimulate your creative thinking. Come up with a variety of games/activities that you can play with infants and toddlers using the cereal. Challenge your group to think of activities at different skill levels. Below, list the ideas that your group comes up with.
# Age Appropriate Activities Using Fruit Flavored Cereal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth – 1 Month</th>
<th>12 – 18 Months</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>1 – 4 Months</th>
<th>18 – 24 Months</th>
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<tr>
<th>4 – 8 Months</th>
<th>24 – 36 Months</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>8 – 12 Months</th>
<th>All Ages</th>
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