

Missouri Early Learning Standards

Talking Points with Families

WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS, KEEP IN MIND WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT:

- The health and well-being of their children
- Supportive individuals, programs, and resources they can turn to for help
- Opportunities to build their parenting skills and support their child's healthy development
- Accessible and easy-to-understand information that helps them support healthy development

TOP MESSAGES

- From birth to five years of age it is critically important for all areas of learning and development. That includes children's health and physical development, emotional and behavioral development, as well as logic and reasoning.
- As parents and caregivers, our role in supporting children's healthy development starts by simply getting involved, using the tools we already have to build strong, supportive relationships with our children and helping them feel safe and secure to learn and explore the world around them.
- Early experiences and relationships shape how a child's brain gets built. Creating a strong foundation with secure and loving relationships and positive experiences leads to greater health, learning, and well-being later in life.
- Early brain development occurs through a process called "serve and return," similar to the back-and-forth play of games like tennis. The back-and-forth, face-to-face interaction between babies and adults including language, eye contact, and facial expressions is essential to children's healthy brain development.
- Stable, healthy relationships and positive experiences provide children with a strong foundation for future academic achievement and lifelong health and well-being.
- Young children are best able to learn and thrive when they have secure and trusting relationships with their parents and other adult caregivers.



MESSAGES ON EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Missouri's Early Learning Standards (MELS) describe a child's learning and development from birth to 5 years old and provide practical tips that anyone can use to support young children's healthy development.
- The MELS bring together strategies that align with our scientific understanding of how best to support children's healthy development in the early years.
- [EarlyConnections.mo.gov](https://earlyconnections.mo.gov) is the website where parents and caregivers can access information about child development at each age. This information can be found under the [Families tab](#). The Early Learning Standards can be found under the professionals tab under [child development](#).
- There are also a series of videos that deepens parents' understanding of child development and how they can support their child. This can be found by clicking "[Find Training Opportunities](#)". The online video series for parents and caregivers offers practical tips for promoting children's development and family well-being as well as responding to typical parenting challenges.
- Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. In fact, every interaction we have with children teaches them something about the world. The MELS, including the parenting videos on earlyconnections.mo.gov, can help parents and caregivers feel more confident in their role.
- Early care professionals can offer additional practical tips, activities, and ideas that families can easily incorporate into their everyday routines.
- All children learn, grow, and develop differently. What works for one child may not work for another, and that's OK! When parents and caregivers follow a child's lead and support him or her with caring, consistent relationships, and positive experiences, both the parent and the child will thrive.
- The MELS can be adapted to children with different abilities, cultures, and languages and are designed for both parents to use at home and for early care and education professionals to use in their program.

