



sparkler

brought to you by
San Francisco Department of
Early Childhood



♥ Heart

💬 Words

💡 Mind

🧑 Body

Spark early learning!

Grow your baby's heart, words, mind, and body with Sparkler.

**For Families with Babies
0 - 12 months**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

02

WELCOME TO SPARKLER

03

DOWNLOAD SPARKLER TO LEARN MORE

04

EARLY LEARNING MILESTONES FOR BABIES (BIRTH - 12 MONTHS)

06

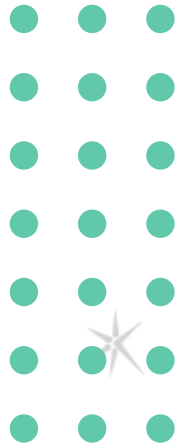
SPARKLER PARENT TIPS

07

SPARKLER ACTIVITIES

11

QUESTIONS?





Help Your Child Get a Strong Start!

Children learn through play! Sparkler is a mobile app that helps parents with young children (0-5) check on their children's early development and spark early learning through play. It's available in English, Spanish, and Chinese for iOS and Android, smartphones and tablets.

We all have questions.

From the day new parents bring their baby home from the hospital, they have questions: Should I be worried about that thing? Are they meeting milestones? What can we do today to help my child learn to climb stairs... draw circles... solve problems... read books?



Know

Use the app to complete the mobile Ages & Stages Questionnaires® to understand your child's development.



Play

Get inspired to learn together through play. Library of ~2000 off-screen activities to grow children's hearts, words, minds, and bodies!



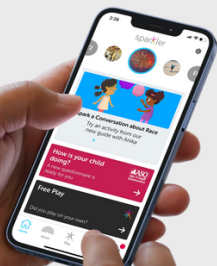
Grow

Follow your child's progress. See all that you accomplish together!



Connect

Get handy nudges, plus answers to your questions about child development and parenting.



This booklet helps families with 0-12 month old babies to understand and support their child's early learning and development with Sparkler.

Get Started With Sparkler!

1

Download the app to your smartphone or tablet.

Go to the App Store or Google Play Store and download the app. You can search for the app or find it by scanning the QR code below.



2

Open the App. Tap "Create a new account."

Tap on "Email address" or another method to create your new account.

3

Enter your program's access code.

This will connect you with your school or program.

4

Now it's time to set up the parent or caregiver's Sparkler account.

Enter your email address and create a password you'll remember. On the following screen, enter your name and contact information.

5

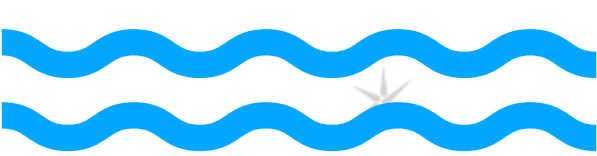
Set up your child's profile.

The most important thing to share on this screen is your child's correct birth date (and weeks prematurity if your child is under 2 years old). The birth date allows Sparkler to assign the correct play content and developmental screening.

6

You'll see the names of the organizations that are "Sponsoring Partners."

These are the organizations that are supporting you with Sparkler. They'll be able to see your screening results and play/engagement in order to offer your family support and resources.



MILESTONES BIRTH - 12 MONTHS

The first 12 months are an important time of child and brain development! During children's earliest years, their "brain architecture" is being rapidly built, providing the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health. During this time, positive, loving, responsive care supports healthy brain development; children's experiences can shape their development and have lifelong effects. Parents and caregivers have the power to help children get off to a strong start.



How can parents and caregivers help?

Parents and caregivers play a vital role in promoting children's early development! Research shows that some important parenting practices that support healthy child development include:

- Following the child's lead and responding in a predictable way
- Showing warmth and sensitivity
- Having routines and household rules
- Sharing books and talking with children (even before they can respond!)
- Keeping children healthy and safe
- Using appropriate discipline without harshness

Parents can also access tools like Sparkler, which enable them to check in on their children's early growth and development with the Ages & Stages Questionnaires, which provides a snapshot of how the child is doing. Sparkler also helps parents/caregivers monitor and promote early learning and development on an ongoing basis — making each day and moment in the early years count!



What is Learn the Signs Act Early?

"Learn the Signs. Act Early" is a program from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that helps parents and childcare providers learn about healthy early development, monitor children's development, and take action when there is a concern. Learn more in Sparkler's app.



What is the ASQ?

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a series of questions that helps parents, teachers, and pediatricians find out how children's skills (communications, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, personal social) are developing. Learn more in Sparkler's app.



0-2 months

Calms down when spoken to or picked up.

Looks at your face.

Seems happy to see trusted grown-ups.

Makes sounds other than crying.

Reacts to loud sounds.

Watches people and toys for several seconds.

Holds head up when on tummy.

Moves both arms and both legs.

Opens hands briefly.

2-4 months

Chuckles (not yet a full laugh) when you try to make them laugh.

Looks at you, moves, or makes sounds to get or keep your attention.

Makes sounds back when you talk.

Turns head towards the sound of your voice.

Looks at hands with interest.

Holds head steady without support when being held.

Brings hands to mouth.

Pushes up onto elbows/forearms when on tummy.

4-6 months

Knows familiar people.

Likes to look at self in mirror.

Laughs

Takes turns making sounds with you.

Puts things in their mouth to explore them.

Reaches to grab a toy they want.

Closes lips to show they don't want more food.

Rolls from tummy to back.

Pushes up with straight arms when on tummy.

Leans on hands to support themselves when sitting.

6-12 months

May be shy or fearful around strangers.

Smiles or laughs when you play "peek-a-boo."

Waves "bye-bye"

Calls a parent "mama" or "dada" or another special name.

Understands "no" (pauses or stops when you say it)

Puts something in a container, like a block in a cup.

Looks for things they see you hide, like a toy under a blanket.

Pulls up to stand.

Walks, holding on to furniture.

Picks things up between thumb and pointer finger, like small bits of food.

PARENT TIPS

Learn and grow with your little one.

Sparkler has a growing library of tips — just for parents. The mini lessons, created by early childhood educators, help parents to:

- Learn facts and research about early childhood development
- Find out how they can support their child's development
- Set goals to support their children's early learning

Here is an example:

5 TIPS FOR READING ALOUD TO YOUR CHILD

1. Be familiar with the story.

Knowing the characters and plot will make it easier for you to tell the story, rather than just reading the words on the page. Think about how you tell your friends about a funny thing that happened to you — how you pause for dramatic effect or add in your commentary for laughs. The same will work with your child!

2. Be a voice actor.

Try to use a different silly voice or accent for each character to help your child know who is speaking. Use your tone of voice to help him or her know what is happening — use a sad, weepy voice during sad moments, sigh with relief when problems are resolved, whisper if someone is sneaking around, and speak louder when a character is angry.

3. Make Connections.

Nothing engages your child in a story more than seeing themselves in the characters. When characters in the story have the same experiences, interests, or even toys as your child, pause and point out the similarities. For example, "That duck's favorite shoes are red, just like yours!"

4. Ask Questions.

Ask questions about the story, the pictures, the characters' feelings, or even how your child would respond in a similar situation. Give them time to respond to your question, but depending on their age, mood, and other factors, your child may or may not answer. That's OK — The point is to prompt them to think and to invite them to be an active participant in the story telling.

5. Remember the pictures!

Take time to examine the illustrations. You might find that the pictures tell their own story! Ask your child if he or she can locate interesting details, talk about the characters' facial expression and their emotions, or talk with older children about the illustrator's color choices and style.





PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your baby's growth and development.

Playing together is one of the best ways to help your child learn and practice new skills. Sparkler has a growing library of fun, interactive play activities that you can do TOGETHER, to help grow your child's HEART, MIND, BODY, and WORDS. Below, you will find just a few activities to get you started. Scan the QR codes to find more activities in your Sparkler app!



FEATURED ACTIVITY: PEEK-A-BOO ME!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. When we look in the mirror together, we see YOU and ME!
2. Let's touch and explore the mirror with our hands. Let's make silly faces and wave at our reflections!
3. I'll tuck or tape a small cloth to the top of the mirror so that our reflections are hidden. Let's play peek-a-boo!



WHY?

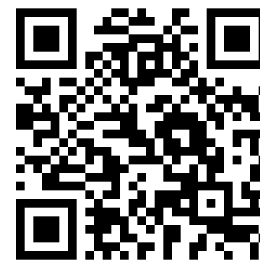
Playing with mirrors helps your child to learn to recognize him or herself — and it builds your child's sense of self/identity.



Try "Cheek to Cheek" to promote EMPATHY



Try "Read the Room" and identify FEELINGS



Try "Shake and Stop" to practice SELF-REGULATION

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PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: KISS KISS!

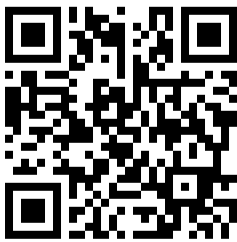
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's get cozy and snuggle together.
2. I'll say, "Kiss!" and kiss you once, "Kiss kiss!" and kiss you twice, or "Kiss kiss kiss" and kiss you three times.
3. I love you so much!



WHY?

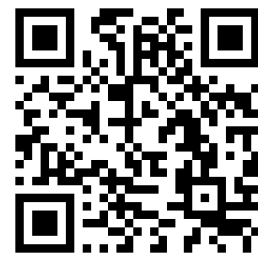
Playing "Kiss Kiss" strengthens your bond, and helps your baby start to understand early math and language skills.



Try "Shadow Theater"
to build FOCUS



Try "Sign of the Times"
to build CURIOSITY
and FOCUS



Try "Twinsies" to practice
MAKING CONNECTIONS

PLAY ACTIVITIES



Play to support your child's growth and development.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: BUBBLE BATH!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's blow bubbles in the bath!
2. If we don't have any bubble solution, we can make some by mixing 1 part shampoo and 4 parts water. A little sugar or corn syrup will make our bubbles a little stronger. We can make a bubble wand with wire, a pipe cleaner, or use string and a plastic straw.
3. I'll blow bubbles over you. How do they feel when they land and pop on your body?



WHY?

Soap bubbles are a great way to stimulate your child's senses and support his or her developing eye-hand coordination and self-regulation.



Try "Heart Yoga" to stretch your big muscles



Try "Bunny Hop" to practice PERCEPTION



Try "How Much Do I Love You?" to exercise big muscles





PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.

Words

FEATURED ACTIVITY: SPA DAY!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's pretend we're at the spa! It's time for a nice massage.
2. I'll put some lotion on my hands and pretend to be your masseuse. Are you nice and comfortable?
3. I'll label each of your body parts as I rub lotion on them. How does that feel?



WHY?

Your child learns new words every day. Labeling different things, like body parts, helps them learn words and develop language.



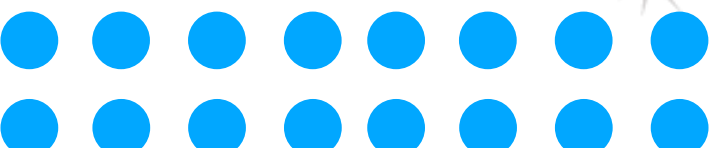
Try "Do You Hear What I Hear?" to practice COMPREHENSION



Try "Read Together" to learn about SOUNDS, LETTERS, and STORIES



Try "Vroom Vroom" to practice EXPRESSION



Access Local Resources

Family Resource Center	Neighborhood	Phone Number
APA Family Support Services	Chinatown	415-617-0061
API Family Resource Network	Citywide	415-617-0061
Asian Women's Resource Center – Gum Moon Residence Hall	Chinatown	415-788-1008
Bayview YMCA Family Resource Center	Bayview-Hunters Point	415-822-9404
Chicano/Latino & Mission Family Resource System	Excelsior, Mission	415-229-0500
Compass Family Resource Center	Tenderloin	855-234-2667
Edgewood Family Resource Center	Bayview-Hunters Point	415-375-7630
El Centro Bayview	Bayview-Hunters Point	415-431-2233
Excelsior Family Connections	Excelsior	415-333-3845
Glide Family Youth and Children's Center	Citywide, Tenderloin	415-674-6200
Good Samaritan Family Resource Center	Mission	415-401-4253
Homeless Prenatal Program	Mission, Potrero	415-546-6756
Joy Lok Family Resource Center	Chinatown	415-391-4890
OMI Family Resource Center	Lake Merced, Oceanview, Stonestown	415-406-1370
Our Family Coalition	South of Market	415-981-1960
Portola Family Connections	Portola	415-715-6746
Potrero Hill Family Resource Center	Potrero	415-795-3591
Richmond Asian Family Support Center	Richmond, Sunset	415-221-5783
Safe Start Initiative Collaborative	Chinatown, Mission, Upper Haight, Visitacion Valley, Western Addition	415-668-0494
South of Market Family Resource Center	South of Market	415-820-3508
Sunset Family Resource Center	Sunset	415-516-5966
Support for Families of Children with Disabilities	Mission, South of Market	415-282-7494
Visitacion Valley Strong Families Collaborative	Visitacion Valley	415-578-9310
Western Addition Family Resource Center	Western Addition	415-202-9770
Young Family Resource Center (Felton Institute)	Citywide, Mission	415-695-8300

To learn more about **sparkler**

Visit us at www.playsparkler.org or email support@playsparkler.org

