



sparkler

brought to you by
San Francisco Department of
Early Childhood



♥ Heart

💬 Words

💡 Mind

🧑 Body

Spark early learning!

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

**For Families with Children
3 - 5 Years Old**



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WELCOME TO sparkler

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!



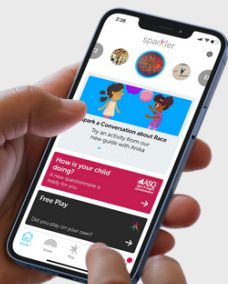
Grow

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 3 - 5 year old children 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

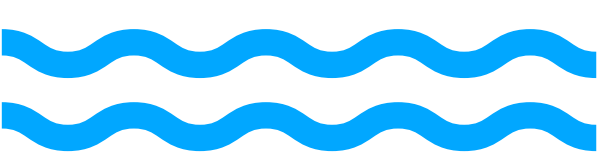
Set up your child's profile.

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

3 - 5 YEARS

Your big kid continues to grow and learn quickly throughout these years. 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.





3 years

Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave, like at a childcare drop off

Notices other children and joins them to play

Talks with you in conversation using at least two back-and-forth exchanges

Asks "who," "what," "where," or "why" questions

Talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time

Draws a circle, when you show them how

Avoids touching hot objects, like a stove, with a warning

Strings items together, like large beads or macaroni

Puts on some clothes independently, like loose pants or a jacket

Uses a fork

4 years

Pretends to be something else during play, like a teacher, superhero, or animal

Asks to go and play with other children

Comforts others who are hurt or sad

Avoids danger, like not jumping from tall heights

Likes to be a "helper"

Uses sentences with four or more words

Says words from a song or story

Talks about at least one thing that happened during the day

Answers simple questions like, "What is a coat for?"

Names a few colors of items

Tells what comes next in a familiar story

Draws a person with three or more body parts

Catches a ball most of the time

Serves themselves food or pours water with adult supervision

Unbuttons some buttons

Holds crayon or pencil between fingers and thumb (not a fist)

5 years

Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children

Sings, dances, or acts for you

Does simple chores at home, like matching socks or clearing the table after eating

Tells a story that they heard or made up with at least two events.

Answers simple questions about a book or story after you read it

Keeps a conversation going with more than three back-and-forth exchanges

Uses or recognizes simple rhymes (bat-cat, ball-tall)

Counts to 10

Names some numbers between 1 and 5 when you point to them

Uses words about time, like "yesterday," "tomorrow," "morning," or "night"

Pays attention for 5 to 10 minutes during activities.

Writes some letters in their name

Names some letters when you point to them

Buttons some buttons

Hops on one foot



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.





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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: FREEZE DANCE!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's play Freeze Dance! I'll turn on some music.
2. Let's jump, shake, dip, and move our bodies to the music.
3. Let's freeze like statues when I pause the music! Hold still until the music starts again. Ready? Dance!

WHY?

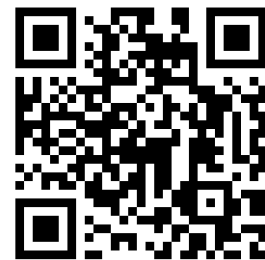
Dancing and stopping helps your child practice self-regulation and self-control.



Try "Family Charades" to promote EMPATHY



Try "Hide and Seek" and develop TRUST



Try "As Your Neighbors" to grow CURIOSITY and TRUST

PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: BALL DROP

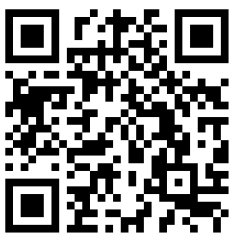
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's get a ball, hold it at our waist, and drop it on the ground. How many times did the ball bounce on the ground?
2. Let's drop the same ball from above our heads. When does the ball bounce the most? The least? Let's try bouncing from low down near our knees and compare what happens to the waist and head drops!
3. Let's try with a different ball! How many bounces can we count?



WHY?

Counting bounces is a fun way for your child to practice counting and comparing.



Try "Music Collage" to develop FOCUS



Try "Back Easel" to learn about GEOMETRY



Try "¡Hola! Bonjour! Jambo! Hello!" to develop FLEXIBLE-THINKING and MEMORY

PLAY ACTIVITIES



Play to support your child's growth and development.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: MAKE PLAYDOUGH

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's make our own playdough! First let's combine 1 Cup flour, 1/2 Cup salt, and 2 Tbsp Cream of Tartar in a bowl (Cream of tartar improves the texture, but it's OK to leave it out!)
2. Now let's add a few drops of food coloring into 1 Cup of boiling water and add it to the bowl along with 1 Tbsp oil. We can add glitter too!
3. Let's mix it very well with a spoon, and then with our hands once it's cool enough, until it's no longer sticky. Now, let's play!



WHY?

Pressing and working with playdough helps strengthen your child's fingers.



Try "Jump To It!" to exercise BIG MUSCLES



Try "I See Colors" to practice PERCEPTION



Try "Obstacle Course" to strengthen BIG MUSCLES





PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: SEEING SHAPES

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's go for a walk and examine the buildings along the way.
2. What shapes do you see in the buildings? Can you find rectangles, squares, triangles, and circles?
3. Let's talk about what makes the buildings different and similar. Which is the most unusual?



WHY?

Having extended conversations with your child helps them have strong language skills and builds their vocabulary.



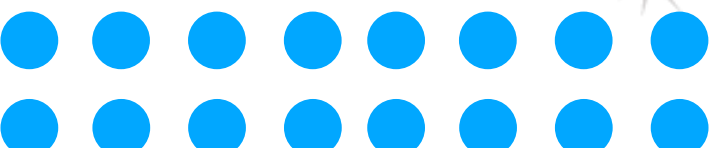
Try "Alphabet Yoga" to learn about SOUNDS and LETTERS



Try "Tiny Theater" to learn about STORIES



Try "Roll, Toss, Bounce" to practice COMPREHENSION



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

