



Supporting parents and caregivers with children birth to five years with early learning and development at home

Focus: A daily routine to play, learn and grow

Plan your day with routines and special times

Message to parents and caregivers of children from birth to five years

Many parents and other caregivers now have to take care of their young children all day at home due to the closure of ECD centres and playgroups as part of the measures that Government put in place to combat the **COVID-19** coronavirus. No one could foresee this. In the next couple of weeks, the Department of Social Development, Department of Basic Education, UNICEF and other partners will work together to provide you with basic information and tools to support your child's early learning and development at home. These are based on existing programmes.

LET'S START WITH THE BASICS

Though you did not plan to have your child at home, this is a **good opportunity** to support your child's learning and development. Try to include your child's learning and development into your daily routines.

This is also a good time to bond with your child while he or she is playing and learning, but **routines** help young children to feel safe in a time where everybody else worries.

Basic routine to follow every day

Mornings	Afternoons	Evenings
<p>WAKE-UP TIME Keep the wake-up routine in the mornings the same. Eat breakfast. Wash. Brush teeth. Get dressed for the day. During this time talk to your child (if old enough) about the plans for the day.</p> <p>GET ACTIVE Go outside (if possible) and do some playful physical activities. It can be anything. Walk short distance. Play with a ball. As long as the body moves.</p> <p>LEARNING TOGETHER Use this time to do a playful learning activity with your child (<i>we will share ideas during the weeks to come</i>). During this time you will guide your child to do something interesting in a playful manner. For example, take an old magazine or even an advertising brochure from a big shop. Go through it page by page and ask your child to identify certain things. For example, everything that is red, or every shape that is a circle. You need to adapt this according to his or her age.</p>  <p>This is a fun way to learn together.</p> <p>FREE PLAY Allow your child some time for free play. This means that he or she does (play) what he or she wants without your guidance. But keep an eye on your child to make sure that he or she is safe.</p> <p>STORY TIME Make time to read with your child or tell a story. Young children love stories, and it also helps them to learn new words and understand the world around them. Plan about 15 minutes for this. While reading the book or telling the story, allow your child to ask questions. You can also ask your child questions (not like a test).</p> 	<p>LUNCH TIME Eat together. Talk about healthy food. If your child is old enough, you may ask him or her to help you preparing lunch. You can also make this a playful learning activity. For example, ask <i>'what is the colour of the tomato?'</i> or <i>'what is the shape of the apple.'</i> Or ask your child to count with you how many spoons of oil you put into a pot... one-two-three!</p> <p>NAP TIME If your child is used to taking a nap after lunch - continue with this routine.</p> <p>LEARNING TOGETHER Use this time to do another playful learning activity with your child. During this time, guide your child to do something interesting in a playful manner. If you focused in the morning on shapes, try to focus in the afternoon on something else, for example the colour yellow. Or go outside to discover how different plants smell or feel like.</p> <p>FREE PLAY Allow your child some time for free play. This means that he or she does (play) what he or she wants to without your guidance. But keep an eye on your child to make sure that he or she is safe.</p>	<p>SUPPER TIME Eat together. Eat together. (see lunch time. You can do the same type of activities)</p> <p>TOGETHER TIME Everyone in the household is most likely at home during this time. Spend time with your young child, together with the rest of the family. Talk about the day. Other family members are encouraged to ask the young child what he or she did during the day.</p>  <p>BEDTIME Get ready for bed in the same way as you have always done with your young child. It is also a good time to talk together about the day. Ask your child what he or she thinks you should do together the next day. Tell your child a story that will ease him or her into sleeping.</p>
<p>Plan the early learning activities</p> <p>Plan about 10 to 15 minutes for this.</p> <p>Remember your child's age when doing an activity. He or she cannot concentrate for too long. Rather do less at a time, not more.</p> <p>Always keep it playful... this is how young children learn.</p>		<p>HEALTHY HABITS</p> <p>Teach your child how to wash his or her hands with soap and running water for 20 seconds. It is the best way to prevent the spread of germs and viruses.</p>  <p>The easiest way to know how long 20 seconds are, is to sing 'happy birthday' two times or to sing the first verse of our national anthem, Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.</p>

Remember to keep it **PLAYFUL** and **FUN**. That is how young children learn.