Your child’s development: Play and communicate with your child

Ukuaji bora wa mwanaao: cheza na Zungumza naye

SWAHILI - ENGLISH
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Mwanao anakusikia na kujenga hisia akiwa tumboni. Gusa tumbo lako kwa upendo, msemeshe na mwimbie mwanao ili aanze kutambua sauti yako na kujenga upendo. Mwenzi wako pia anaweza kushika tumbo lako na kuongea na mwanae.

PREGNANCY
Your child’s development starts from conception and is most rapid in the first few years of life. You can do a lot to support your child’s healthy development in those early years, when your child acquires the fundamental skills that are so critical for the rest of his/her life.

While in the womb your baby can hear and begin to feel. Touch your stomach gently, talk and sing to your baby so he/she begins to recognise your voice and build love. Your partner/husband can also touch your stomach and talk gently.
Mtoto wako kwa sasa anaona na kusikia, mtazame machoni ukiwa unatabasamu, ongea naye kwa kumwita jina lake, ongea na mwimbie kwa upole ili kujenga mahusiano naye. Hii inaweza kufanyika wakati unamnyonyesha, mwogesha mtoto, unambembeleza au wakati mwingine wowote unampomshika mtoto.

**BIRTH TO 4 MONTHS**
Your baby can see and hear you. Look at him/her in the eyes while smiling, calling his/her name. Talk to your baby and sing gently to bond with your child. This can be done during breastfeeding, bathing, when putting baby to bed or any time when holding the baby.
Your baby is attracted to colourful objects. Show him/her colorful things to build his/her vision. You may use colourful clothes such as ‘khanga’ to move in front of child’s eyes.
Your baby enjoys playing with his/her hands and legs. Put him/her on a mat to play freely and help develop his/her muscles. You may touch/massage your baby gently while singing.

Your baby cries to communicate his/her needs such as when he/she is hungry, wet, hot or cold. Learn to recognize your baby’s needs and respond to them in a timely manner. Don’t worry about spoiling your baby with too much attention. Your care will help build a strong bond with your baby — and the confidence he or she will need.

4 TO 6 MONTHS
Your baby can now roll over from back to stomach and back again and reach objects near him/her. Give him/her colourful and noisy objects for him/her to reach and grasp. Try a rattle with a handle, a soft ball or a wooden spoon. Your child likes to put objects in his/her mouth. Make sure he doesn’t put small or sharp objects in his mouth and things are clean to avoid choking and illnesses.
Your baby can make bubbling noises such as ‘ba ba ba’, ‘da da da’ or ‘ma ma ma’. Talk to your child and repeat the sounds with correct words such as ‘baba’ ‘mama’ to help with learning the language. Describe what you see, hear and smell around the house and outside. “Look, there is our house. Do you see the chickens?” Use your voice and face to express emotions.
Your baby clearly recognizes you and gets excited and happy when he/she sees you. Show your baby love by smiling, talking and cuddling your baby to bond and form a good relationship with him/her.

Your baby begins to learn about his/her daily routine such as sleep, toilet and bath time. Help your child to follow his/her routine such us sleeping and bath time to help him/her feel secure and loved.
Mtoto hujihisi salama anapokuwa na mzazi au mlezi. Unapondoka muage kwa upendo, kwa kumbusu, kumpungia mkono na mhakikishie kuwa utarudi ili kumjengea uwezo wa kujiamini na kutokuwa na hofu.

6 TO 12 MONTHS
Your baby feels secure when he/she is with his/her parents. When leaving your child say goodbye with a hug and kiss and assure him that you will be back soon. This will build his/her confidence and security.
Your baby begins to sit, stand and crawl, and your child’s ability to explore increases. Give him/her objects with different shapes, colours, texture and sounds! For example, an empty plastic water bottle with stones inside to make noise, a sauce pan and wooden spoon to bang. However, make sure objects and environment are clean and safe to protect him/her from any danger. Keep him/her away from hot or boiling water, fire, ropes, cords, medicines and chemicals. Keep him/her away from areas with deep water such as ponds, wells and buckets.
Mtoto wako anaweza kujifunza, mpe vitu anavyoweza kupanga au kuingiza ndani ya vingine, mfano mikebe na vikombe; mruhusu akusaidie kupanga vitu, kama vile vibanio, soksi kwa jozi au rangi, pia anaweza kuchora kutumia kalamu na karatasi ili kumjenga misingi ya kujifunza. Mtoto wako anahitaji vitu vya kuchezea, sio lazima vinunulivwe, unaweza kutengeneza mwenyewe kwa kutumia vifaa vinavyopatikana kwenu mazingira yanayokuzunguka. Unaweza tengeneza mpira kutumia vitambaa vya ngu, kamba au majani ya mgomba, unaweza tengeneza mdoli kutumia ngu au majani ya mnazi.

12 TO 24 MONTHS
Your child is learning so much. Provide him/her with items which he/she can organise such as cups for stacking, items for sorting such as pairs of socks or shoes, and drawing/colouring items such as pen and paper. Your child needs play materials, but you don’t have to buy them in a store. You can make them yourself using locally available materials! You can make a ball from cloth and rope or banana leaves, or you can make a doll from coconut leaves and clothes.


Your child is learning. Sing to him/her action songs such as ‘sit and stand up’ ‘jump jump’ to build his/her muscles or ‘head and shoulder song’ to help him/her understand about his/her body. Take time to play with your child. Praise your child on actions he/she does.

Your child can now stand, walk alone or with support. Give your child a wooden baby walker or prepare the environment so your child will not hurt when he/she falls. Praise your child by clapping and singing.
Mtoto wako ana uwezo wa kusikiliza na kushika maneno machache, msimulie hadithi fupi, ili kumpa uwezo wa kufikiria na kuhifadhi kumbukumbu ya maneno. Waweza kumsimulia mwanao hadithi fupi au kusomea kitabu cha hadithi au picha. Pia unaweza kumwambia mwanao akuambie hadithi yake au tukio lotote analokumbuka, sikiliza ukitambua kuwa anaweza asiseme hadithi yote kwa makini na mpongeze.

Your child has the ability to listen and remember new words. Tell him/her short stories to help him/her to think and keep memory. You may tell your child a traditional short story or read him/her a short story or picture book. You may also ask your child to tell you a story or about an event that happened even as at this age your child can only tell her story with few words. Listen carefully and praise him/her.
24 TO 36 MONTHS

Your child can recognize different things with different colours. Help him/her to make different items using resources available: a car using cardboard box, a doll using cloth, and help him/her to differentiate. Name things and compare them; for example, size, colour, etc.

Your child can make a sentence with two to three words. Help him/her to understand the meaning of these words and pronounce them correctly.
Mtoto wako anapenda na anaweza kufanya vitu mwenyewe muelekeze afanye kwa usahihi, mfano kula chakula na kuva na nguo ili aweze kujitegemea. Pia mtoto wako anapenda kusaidia kazi ndogondogo za nyumbani mfano, kufagia, kupanga vyakula toka sokoni na nguo zilizofuliwa mponeze na muelekeze ili kumpa moyo wa kuendelea kujifunza.

Your child can do things independently. She/he can eat by himself and get dressed with little help. Encourage and help him/her as he/she tries. Your child will also enjoy helping you with small chores at home such as sweeping, organising food from market or washed clothes. Praise and show him/her how to do it properly to build his/her confidence to continue learning.
While your toddler is eager to be independent, young children can easily get frustrated and upset. You can teach your toddler to behave well by providing love, clear rules, and a degree of routine. Make sure your displays of affection for your child outnumber any consequences or punishments. Hugs, kisses and play reassure your child of your love. Praise and attention can motivate your toddler to follow the rules more so than punishment.

Your child continues learning through his/her curiosity and asking a lot of questions. Respond to your child’s questions lovingly with short explanation.
We love you. We can’t wait to meet you.

Look at your beautiful eyes Amina.

Baba, Mama.

Baba, Baba... Mama, mama...

Bye...


Once upon a time...

Yes. Blue cup, well done.

Blue.

Mummy gone.

Mummy is gone to the market. We’ll done.

What is that, Dad?

That is a bus, taking people to another village.

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

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