TIPS TO "MAXIMIZE LOVE, MANAGE STRESS"

With Your Infant (0-12 months)

- **Hold, kiss, and cuddle.** Provide lots of loving attention and touch. Babies don't get spoiled, so there is no need to hold back on showing love.
- **Respond to them.** Answer your baby in a loving voice when they make a sound or movement.
- **Play together.** Hold your baby close, smile, and make silly sounds or faces. Play games like "peek-a-boo." Take a break if they seem overwhelmed or try to look away.
- **Comfort them.** Comfort your baby when they get fussy or cry. They might be tired, hungry, or uncomfortable. Try rocking them or singing a lullaby. It will take time to learn what works best.
- **Have a routine.** Have consistent times and ways of doing daily activities like feeding, bathing, reading, and bedtime. Routines help babies and young children feel safe and know what to expect. They also help adults manage stress.

With Your Toddler (12-36 months)

- **Snuggle up.** Hug and cuddle with your toddler so they feel safe and loved.
- **Encourage them.** Be supportive and encouraging when your child tries new things.
- **Involve them.** Invite your toddler to help with everyday tasks, like handing you clothes for the laundry.
- **Talk about feelings.** Help your child describe how they feel. Let them know that all feelings are OK, and that you are there for them when they are happy or upset.
- **Offer choices.** Offer choices like what to wear or eat, but give a limited number of options. For example, "It's time for a snack. Do you want an apple or grapes?"
- **Set basic limits.** Focus on safety-related rules like not hitting people. Put "No" in front of the thing you don't want your child to do, then distract them with another activity. Use the same rules consistently so your child learns them. Do your best to stay calm.

Take care of yourself. When life gets stressful, it's important to take care of yourself so you can be there for your child. Try sharing tasks with friends or family members, taking walks, doing a hobby you enjoy, or practicing deep breathing. Try different strategies and see what works best for you. Be sure to ask for help when you need it, and talk to your doctor if you often feel sad or stressed. All parents and caregivers need help.

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TIPS TO "TALK, SING, AND POINT"

With Your Infant (0-12 months)

- **Talk a lot.** Talk to your baby from the time they are born during activities like changing, feeding, bathing, and errands. Describe what you are doing.
- **Use a playful voice.** Smile and look into your baby's eyes. Exaggerate the sounds of words.
- **Follow their interests.** Talk about the things your baby looks at or reaches for. Notice which ways of talking or singing seem to interest them the most.
- **Go back and forth.** When your baby makes a sound, show excitement on your face and in your voice. Respond with words. See how long you can keep the "conversation" going back and forth between the two of you.
- **Sing.** Your baby's favorite songs might be those that repeat words or have rhyming sounds.
- **Point to objects.** Point to objects and name them—especially the things that seem to interest your baby.

With Your Toddler (12-36 months)

- **Describe life.** Talk about the everyday things you see and do together. Most things are new and interesting to a toddler!
- **Use your hands.** Point to the objects you talk about. Encourage your child to point to objects that you name.
- **Listen and respond.** Show your toddler that you are interested in what they have to say. Respond to their comments and questions.
- **Expand on what your child says.** For example, if they point to a dog and say, "Doggie," you can reply, "Yes, that is a doggie. It's brown and soft."
- **Ask questions.** Get your toddler to think. Ask questions that start with "Who…?" "What…?" or "Why…?" For example, "Why do you think the boy is sad?" Show interest in their answers.
- **Sing.** Sing songs and recite nursery rhymes from your childhood, from books, or make up new ones. Your toddler may especially enjoy the ones with rhyming sounds or hand motions. Try singing the same song whenever it's time for a special activity like bath time.

Use any language. Speak in whatever language you are most comfortable. All languages help children's development. It's great if your child grows up speaking more than one language!

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TIPS TO "COUNT, GROUP, AND COMPARE"

With Your Infant (0-12 months)

- **Move to the beat.** Tap your baby's tummy or clap their hands together to the rhythm of a song. Or rock them as you sing a lullaby.
- **Count.** For example, count and wiggle each of their toes. Or count as you gently bounce them in your lap.
- **Compare objects.** Help your baby explore things that are the same and different. Let them shake containers that make different sounds. Or give them different types of fabrics to touch (like smooth and scratchy). Talk about the differences.
- **Fill up and dump out.** For example, use a container to scoop and dump water in the bathtub. Use words like "in," "out," "full," and "empty."

With Your Toddler (12-36 months)

- **Compare sizes and amounts.** Your toddler may be interested which things are "big" or "little." You can also talk to them about whether they want "more" or "less."
- **Look for shapes.** Point out shapes and describe them to your child. "Look, that window is a square with four sides." See if they can find and name shapes around them.
- **Match and sort.** Make a game of matching and sorting objects into groups. Arrange them by color, shape, or size. For example, find as many green things as you can, then sort them from smallest to largest.
- **Measure while cooking.** Find safe ways for your toddler to participate while you are in the kitchen, like counting and helping to measure ingredients.
- **Stack blocks.** Encourage your toddler to stack blocks or other objects like plastic cups. Talk to them about what they're doing.
- **Count objects then regroup them.** Point to each object as you count and say how many there are. Split the objects into two groups. Then count each group separately. Try it again with different groupings.
- **Clap in a pattern.** Have your toddler repeat the pattern and dance with you.

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TIPS TO "EXPLORE THROUGH MOVEMENT AND PLAY"

With Your Infant (0-12 months)

- **Do tummy time.** Babies should sleep on their backs, but during the day while they are awake, make sure your baby gets some "tummy time."
- **Move arms and legs.** When you are dressing your baby or changing their diaper, hold and gently move their arms or legs. Talk or sing about what you're doing.
- **Follow their interests.** Notice what your baby looks at or reaches for. If you can, bring the object closer so they can explore it. Describe how it looks and feels.
- **Give objects to handle.** Provide objects of different colors, shapes, and textures. Use safe, everyday objects. You don't need fancy toys to keep your baby's attention!
- **Play peek-a-boo.** Hide your face with your hands and then open them up to show a big smile. You can also hide objects under a towel or blanket.
- **Let them move around.** Let your baby explore their surroundings by reaching, rolling, scooting, and crawling. Just make sure they are safe.

With Your Toddler (12-36 months)

- **Go on a walk.** Stop when your child shows interest in something and talk about it. If it is something that is safe to touch, let them touch it to find out how it feels.
- **Roll a ball back and forth.** Make a "Wheee!" sound when you roll it toward them.
- **Play obstacle course.** Make a simple obstacle course using blankets, pillows, or boxes. See if your child can go "over," "under," "around," and "through" them.
- **Make art.** Your toddler will enjoy scribbling with a crayon or chalk. They can also experiment with folding or tearing paper.
- **Play guessing games.** For example, put a few objects in a bag and have your child guess what's inside without looking. They can feel, smell, and shake the bag.
- **Act it out.** Toddlers will start to imitate grown-up activities, like putting a doll to sleep or giving it a shot. Follow their lead and play along.
- **Let them problem-solve.** If your toddler is concentrating on something, stand back and see what they can figure out by themselves. If they get stuck, give just enough help so they keep going and don't give up.

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TIPS TO "READ AND DISCUSS STORIES"

With Your Infant (0-12 months)

- **Read regularly and with expression.** Your baby won't understand for a while, but that's fine. They will hear your voice, see the pictures, and develop good feelings about books.
- **Keep it simple.** Board books with hard covers and thick pages are made especially for babies. Choose books that are short and have simple, bright pictures.
- **Snuggle up.** Hold your baby in your lap so they feel cozy and can see the pictures.
- **Involve them.** They might want to hold the book, turn the pages, or pat the pictures. They might even chew on the book. It's all part of learning!
- **Describe the pictures.** It's not important to read all—or any—of the words. Point to the pictures and describe the colors, shapes, and what the characters are doing.
- **Follow their lead.** When they start to lose interest, try another book or stop. Short periods of reading will work best.

With Your Toddler (12-36 months)

- **Have a routine.** Try to read together every day. Before bed is a great time to read, but choose a time of day that works best for your family.
- **Warm up.** Before you open the book, check out the cover. Read the title. Look at the pictures. Ask your child what they think the story is about.
- **Change your voice.** Try different voices for different characters.
- **Help them follow along.** Point to the words and pictures. Talk about the colors, shapes, and what the characters are doing.
- **Ask questions**. "*What do you think will happen next?*" or "*Why is the girl happy?*" Respond to your child's comments and questions. Show your interest in their ideas.
- **Don't be too serious.** Your toddler may want to turn the page before you have finished reading it. If they can't sit still for the whole book, that's ok.
- **Re-read.** Toddlers learn through repetition, so it is normal when they want to read a favorite book over and over. Notice how proud they feel when they master the story. But try for variety too, because new books offer new things to see and learn.

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