

ACT EARLY DC PARENT TOOLKIT



2021

ACT EARLY DC PARENT TOOLKIT

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ACT EARLY DC PARENT TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION



The Act Early DC Parent Toolkit was designed to introduce families/caregivers to the five Strengthening Families Protective Factors and to provide tips on how families can support their young children during the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond.

Act Early DC, a project of DC Autism Parents in partnership with the DC Developmental Disability Council, is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD).



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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

FRAMEWORK

The Strengthening Families Framework was developed by the Center for Study of Social Policy (CSSP). This framework is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

The five protective factors at the foundation of Strengthening Families are:

Parent
Resilience

Social
Connections

Knowledge of
Parenting and
Child Development

Concrete
Supports in
Times of Need

Social and Emotional
Competence
of Children

Read how CSSP defines the five protective factors by [clicking here](#).

PARENT RESILIENCE

Parent Resilience

Resilience is the ability to manage your reactions to stress and to function well even when bad things happen. During these tough times, try to pay attention to what helps you calm down, tap into your own inner strength, and feel more hopeful.

Daily Self-Care

Take time for yourself every day, so you can take better care of everyone else who needs you. Here are a few to get you started:

- Rest
- Exercise and/or develop a home yoga practice
- Read a book/listen to an audio book-audible is offering free stories for kids
- Deep breathing/meditation
- Watch your favorite TV show
- Write in a journal and or start a gratitude practice
- Take a warm bath or shower
- Light a candle and sit in silence

Be Strong Families Daily Webinar Series

During physical distancing and self-quarantine, Be Strong Families is offering opportunities to online learn and grow and share together! Since March 23, 2020, Be Strong Families has been offering daily webinars, Monday—Friday on topics related to Staying Strong and Positive for Ourselves and Our Children. To learn more please visit:

<https://www.bestrongfamilies.org/covid-19-support>

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Social Connections: Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support.

Connecting with families and friends we have positive relationships with makes parenting easier. During COVID-19, we have had to maintain distance to keep everyone safe and find new ways to stay connected even when we cannot be together physically.



Parent Cafés

The Parent Café program is a nationally recognized peer-to-peer learning process to keep children safe and families strong. Parents and caregivers create safe spaces to explore their strengths and learn from themselves and each other how to use the Strengthening Families Protective Factors™ with their loved ones.

<https://www.bestrongfamilies.org/>

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KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING

AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.

As a parent, you already have what it takes to help your young child learn and grow, but knowing what to expect can make parenting a lot easier.

Here are some tips to help guide you:

Daily routines are calming not only for children, but for parents, too. Plan regular mealtimes, playtime, nap time, bath time, and bedtime. It is okay, if you get off track with your routine, but get back on track when you can.



Pay attention to your feelings.



Learn about the difference stages of development and what to expect.



Young children can experience grief. Your family may have lost a loved one or have a family member who is sick. Talk to your child about how they are feeling.



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KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING

AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Developmental Milestones: Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving “bye bye” are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move (crawling, walking, etc.).

What most children do by this age:



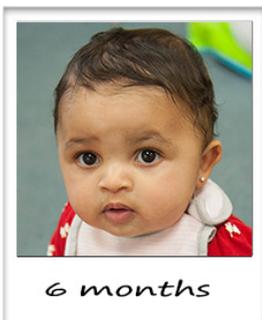
2 months

- Coos, makes gurgling sounds
- Begins to follow things with eyes and recognize people at a distance
- Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy



4 months

- Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears
- Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it
- Brings hands to mouth



6 months

- Responds to own name
- Begins to pass things from one hand to the other
- Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)



9 months

- Understands “no”
- Looks for things she sees you hide
- Pulls to stand



1 year

- Uses simple gestures, like shaking head “no” or waving “bye-bye”
- Follows simple directions like “pick up the toy”
- May stand alone

To learn more,
visit
ActEarlyDC.org

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KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING

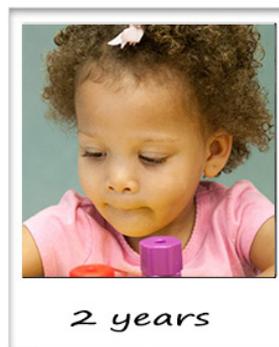
AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Developmental Milestones: Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving “bye bye” are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move (crawling, walking, etc.).

What most children do by this age:



- Says several single words
- Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say “sit down”
- Walks alone



- Knows names of familiar people and body parts
- Follows two-step instructions such as “Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet.”
- Begins to run



- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Understands what “two” means
- Runs easily



- Tells stories
- Names some colors and some numbers
- Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds



- Uses future tense; for example, “Grandma will be here.”
- Counts 10 or more things
- Can use the toilet on her own

To learn more,
visit
ActEarlyDC.org

POSITIVE PARENTING TIPS

Positive Parenting: behaviors you can do to help your child love, trust, explore, and learn.



Answer when your baby makes sounds by repeating the sounds and adding words. This will help him learn to use language.

Read to your baby. This will help her develop and understand language and sounds.

Distract your baby with toys and move him to safe areas when he starts moving and touching things that he shouldn't touch.

Ask her to find objects for you or name body parts and objects.

Encourage your child's growing independence by letting him help with dressing himself and feeding himself.

Play matching games with your toddler, like shape sorting and simple puzzles.



Set up a special time to read books with your toddler.

Help your child to explore things around her by taking her on a walk or wagon ride.

Teach your child simple songs like Itsy Bitsy Spider, or other cultural childhood rhymes.

Let your child help with simple chores.

Be clear and consistent when disciplining your child. Explain and show the behavior that you expect from her. Whenever you tell her no, follow up with what he should be doing instead.

Encourage your child to play with other children. This helps him to learn the value of sharing and friendship.



HOME VISITING

Home visiting programs support expectant parents and the families of young children before childbirth and in the earliest months and years of a child's life. Participation in home visiting programs is free, voluntary, and serves as a preventative and early intervention resource for families. Trained family support workers visit families in their homes, or wherever families are most comfortable, and provide a wide variety of services meant to help families meet their goals. Services are different in every program and for every family, but often include:

- Help understanding prenatal care and preparing for birth
- Help understanding newborn and young child health and development
- Skill-building in positive parenting practices and building a safe home environment
- Support for moms in the postpartum period, including maternal depression screening
- Child development screenings
- Referrals to programs and services that families need (such as health insurance or WIC)

DC offers 14 different home visiting programs. To learn more, please visit: <https://www.dchomevisiting.org/dc-home-visiting.html>

ACT EARLY DC PARENT TOOLKIT

READING TO SUPPORT

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Research has found that providing children from birth to five with frequent, language-rich experiences – such as talking, reading, and singing – can have important benefits on their brain development and future school success.

Sing, Talk, and Read (STAR) Program

DC Public Library (DCPL) has developed resources for families to support early literacy in their children.

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they are taught these skills in school. Singing, talking and reading are important parts of early literacy that can start at birth.

- **Singing** is a fun way for your child to learn new words. It helps them learn and remember words and helps them hear the smaller sounds in words.
- **Talking** with your child helps them learn more words. Conversation and storytelling help your child understand how a story is organized and give context to what they will read later in school.
- **Reading** with your child is an important way to help them get ready to learn to read. They will understand reading as a fun activity. They will see words in books and learn new words.

Visit the DCPL website to learn more: <https://www.dclibrary.org/STAR>

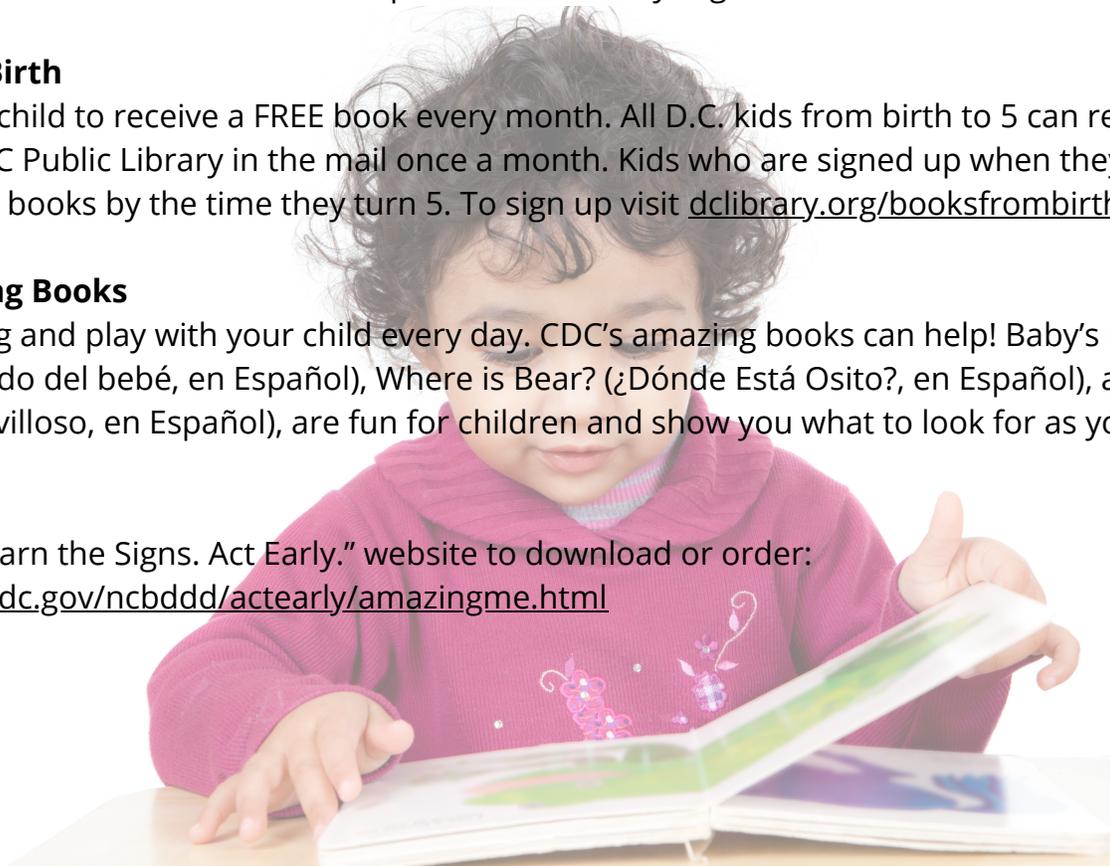
Books from Birth

Register your child to receive a FREE book every month. All D.C. kids from birth to 5 can receive free books from DC Public Library in the mail once a month. Kids who are signed up when they are born will receive 60 books by the time they turn 5. To sign up visit [dclibrary.org/booksfrombirth](https://www.dclibrary.org/booksfrombirth)

CDC's Amazing Books

Talk, read, sing and play with your child every day. CDC's amazing books can help! Baby's Busy Day (Un día ocupado del bebé, en Español), Where is Bear? (¿Dónde Está Osito?, en Español), and Amazing Me (Soy Maravilloso, en Español), are fun for children and show you what to look for as your child grows.

Visit CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." website to download or order: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/amazingme.html>



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CONCRETE SUPPORT

IN TIMES OF NEED

Concrete Support in Times of Need: Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.

Prior to COVID-19, many families worried about paying their bills, having safe shelter, access to health care, and providing food and clothing for their children. Now far more families are facing these challenges, many for the first time. Asking for help to support our children is one of the most important things parents can do.

In this section, you will find the following resources:

- Food Assistance
- Greater DC Diaper Bank
- Family Success Centers
- Financial Navigator Program
- Health Insurance and Medical Assistance
- Mental Health
- Utility Resources
- Internet Access



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FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

The District's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) helps pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to age five buy healthy food and receive nutrition and breastfeeding counseling.

If you think you may be eligible for WIC:

- Please contact your local WIC site to schedule an appointment.
- Visit: dcwic.org/how-to-apply-for-wic
- Call: (202) 442-9397

Important changes to DC WIC operations during COVID-19:

- WIC sites are providing all services over the phone.
- All benefits will be mailed to participants.
- For additional information on DC WIC, visit dcwic.org/covid-19

Finding WIC-issued formula at the store:

- If you are having trouble finding your WIC-issued formula at the store, please speak to the store manager to see when shipments are scheduled. Some stores are able to put items (such as formula) on hold for customers.
- Participants with checks for special formulas may order these formulas at [any authorized pharmacy location](#). These pharmacies have 48 hours to obtain your special formula.



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps)

The District's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps residents buy the food they need. Eligibility and minimum benefits for the program have been expanded. If you think you may be eligible for SNAP benefits, you can complete and submit an application through the DC Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS has a combined application for public benefits, so you can apply for SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, financial assistance), and Medical Assistance (Medicaid, Alliance and other medical assistance programs available through DHS) with the same application. Learn more about the [Combined Application for Public Benefits](#) here.

If you are a current SNAP recipient, please be aware recertifications of benefits are scheduled to begin in March 2021. If your contact information has changed since you first applied/your last recertification, it is important to update your information to ensure that you are notified when it is time to recertify. You can update your information at dcbenefits.dhs.gov; through the District First mobile app (formerly DC Access) on both Android or iPhone; or by calling DHS at (202) 727-5355; for the hearing impaired you may call TTY/TDD 711.

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DC WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC) LOCATIONS

Northeast Sites	Northwest Sites	Southeast Sites	Southwest Site
<p>Unity East of the River 4414 Benning Road NE Washington, DC 20019 (202)388-7752</p>	<p>Unity at Upper Cardozo 3020 14th Street NW Washington, DC 20009 (202) 299-1554</p>	<p>Unity at Anacostia Satellite 1500 Galen Street SE Washington, DC 20020 (202)610-5491 or 5492</p>	<p>HUH at Bolling Air Force Base Parent Support Program Military Families Only Building 113 Brookley Ave SW Washington, DC 20032 (202)865-4942</p>
<p>Unity at Parkside 765 Kenilworth Ter NE Washington, DC 20019 (202) 388-8177</p>	<p>Children's National Health Systems 111 Michigan Ave NW Washington, DC 20010 (202) 476-5594</p>	<p>Children's at MLK The Big Chair 2101 MLK Jr. Ave SE - 5th Fl Washington, DC 20020 (202) 476-6994</p>	
<p>Mary's Center Brentwood 1060 Brentwood Rd NE Washington, DC 20018 (202)269-0487 or (202)232-6679</p>	<p>Mary's Center Georgia Ave 3912 Georgia Ave NW Washington, DC 20011 (202)545-8042 or (202)232-6679</p>		
<p>Mary's Center Ft. Totten 100 Gallatin St NE Washington, DC 20018 (202) 232-6679</p>	<p>Mary's Center Ontario Rd 2333 Ontario Rd NW Washington, DC 20009 (202)232-6679 or (202)420-7152</p>		
	<p>Children's at Marie Reed 2175 Champlain St NW Washington, DC 20009 (202) 476-6986</p>		
	<p>Howard Univ. Hospital 2041 Georgia Ave NW Washington, DC 20060 Room - #1 K03 (202)865-4942</p>		



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GREATER DC DIAPER BANK

<https://greaterdcdiaperbank.org/our-programs/diaperhubs/>

In response to COVID-19, the Greater DC Diaper Bank has created Diaper Need Hubs, a place where families can get food and diapers at one location.

Organization	Address	Appointment Process	Notes
Bread for the City	Not applicable	Call (202) 561-8587 or (202) 265-2400 to get more information about diaper delivery.	Delivering food and diapers to families in need throughout DC, no distribution site.
Dupont Park SDA Church	3942 Alabama Ave SE Washington DC 20019	The line assembles in the parking lot of Dupont Park Adventist School. During COVID-19, remain in your car. Cars can assemble in the parking lot of Dupont Park. Diaper Distribution on the: 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th Tuesday of each month: 10 am – 12 pm Diaper Distribution on the: 3rd Sunday of each month: 10 am – 12 pm	Metro Bus Line to our site: W4 Food Pantry is open to the public on the same days and hours. Families in need of diapers shall bring proof (Birth Certificate, Insurance Card etc.) of child's date of birth (DOB).
Educare	4501 Lee Street NE Washington, DC 20019 Phone: (202) 727-5604	Distribution days and times: Thursdays: 10 am – 1 pm	Families in need of diapers should bring proof of child's date of birth (DOB). Food is being served at Thomas Elementary (at 650 Anacostia Ave. NE) during this time.
Francis on the Hill	Not applicable	Walk-up Tuesdays 2 pm – 3 pm Meridian Hill Park Entrance: 15th & Chapin Streets NW Walk-up Thursdays 2 pm - 3pm Cardozo High School parking lot 13th & Chapin Streets NW	Families in need of diapers should bring proof of child's date of birth or provide your zip code. Food distributions are available at both Meridian Hill Park and Cardozo High School on dates and times noted. Website: https://www.followingfrancis.one/francisonthehill
Martha's Table	2375 Elvans Road SE Washington, DC 20020	Diapers available Mondays ONLY 11 am – 2 pm	Families in need of diapers should bring proof of child's date of birth (DOB). Food is also available at this site.

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FAMILIES FIRST DC

FAMILY SUCCESS CENTERS

Families First DC Family Success Centers (FSC) provide referrals to services and resources that will help families thrive; Parent support, including learning and mentorship opportunities, as well as emphasis on developing stronger family-level communication; Emotional wellness and mental health programming; and Engagement and socialization with other families. Services are rooted in five “protective factors” to empower communities and families. Families from anywhere in DC can access services and build new relationships at any of the ten centers.

Ward 7 Centers and Organizations

- Benning Terrace/Benning Park: East River Family Strengthening Collaborative
- Clay Terrace: Sasha Bruce Youthwork
- Mayfair/Paradise: North Capital Collaborative
- Stoddert Terrace/37th Street: Life Deeds
- Benning Road & Minnesota Avenue: East River Family Strengthening Collaborative

Ward 8 Centers and Organizations

- Woodland Terrace: Smart from the Start
- Anacostia: Martha’s Table
- Congress Heights: Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative
- Washington Highlands: A Wider Circle
- Bellevue: Community of Hope



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FINANCIAL NAVIGATORS

PROGRAM

The District's free Financial Navigators Program helps District residents who are facing critical financial struggles during the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency. The program is administered by the Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking and connects District residents with trained Navigators by phone. Navigators help individuals and families access programs and services to manage income disruptions and other financial concerns.

Residents can access virtual services by calling (202) 231-7908, emailing fn@upo.org or by completing the web form at finnav.org/interest-dc. A staff member with the Financial Navigators Program will send a short service agreement and follow up with a phone call to begin the personal session.



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HEALTH INSURANCE AND

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Health Insurance

DC Health Link

In response to the devastating economic and health impacts of COVID-19, the American Rescue Plan reduces premiums for health insurance through DC Health Link, provides health insurance for as little as \$2/month to people who lost their jobs, and pays for 100% of COBRA for laid-off workers. To learn more please visit: <https://dchealthlink.com/coronavirus/americanrescueplan>

Medical Assistance

If you and your family do not have full health insurance coverage from your job or Medicare. The District of Columbia offers medical coverage to income eligible residents through Medicaid, Alliance and DC Healthy Families programs.

You can apply for medical assistance in different ways:

- Create DC HealthLink account - [Go there](#)
- Call **1 (855) 532-5465** and submit an application over the phone or
- Get help from a trained expert by calling **1 (855) 532-5465** or going to the [DC HealthLink website](#)

Print out the application for [Coverage with Financial Assistance for Families](#) and

Mail it to:

DC Health Link
Department of Human Services
Case Record Management Unit
P.O. Box 91560
Washington, DC 20090

Or come in person to any ESA Service Center:

Service Center	Address	Operating Status
Anacostia*	2100 Martin Luther King Avenue, SE	CLOSED
Fort Davis*	3851 Alabama Avenue, SE	CLOSED
Congress Heights	4049 South Capitol Street, SW	OPEN
H Street**	645 H Street, NE***	OPEN
Taylor Street	1207 Taylor Street, NW	OPEN

Or Fax it to: (202) 671-4400

MENTAL HEALTH

If you are concerned about your mental health (or a loved one's mental health), help is available. Contact your health care provider or the Access HelpLine at **1(888)7WE-HELP** or **1-888-793-4357** to get connected to services provided by the Department of Behavioral Health and its certified behavioral health care providers. This 24-hour, seven-day-a-week telephone line is staffed by behavioral health professionals who can refer a caller to immediate help or ongoing care.



UTILITY RESOURCES

Help is available for District residents facing higher utility bills due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency (PHE).

COVID-19 Consumer Protections

- **No utility disconnections:** An emergency District law provides that electric and natural gas services cannot be disconnected due to non-payment during the COVID-19 PHE or for 15 calendar days afterward. Please note that consumers are still billed for services consumed. Regardless of the law, customers cannot be disconnected from service if they enroll in a repayment plan based on what they can afford to pay.
- **No telecommunications disconnections:** Another emergency law bars telecommunications service providers from disconnecting, suspending, or degrading service for non-payment, or noncompliance with a deferred payment agreement, during a PHE or 15 calendar days afterward.
- **Help with water bills:** Through the Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge Residential Relief Program Emergency Residential Relief Program, eligible households struggling with unpaid DC Water bills may receive up to \$2,000 in one-time emergency assistance during the PHE and 105 days afterward.

Ongoing Utility Assistance Programs

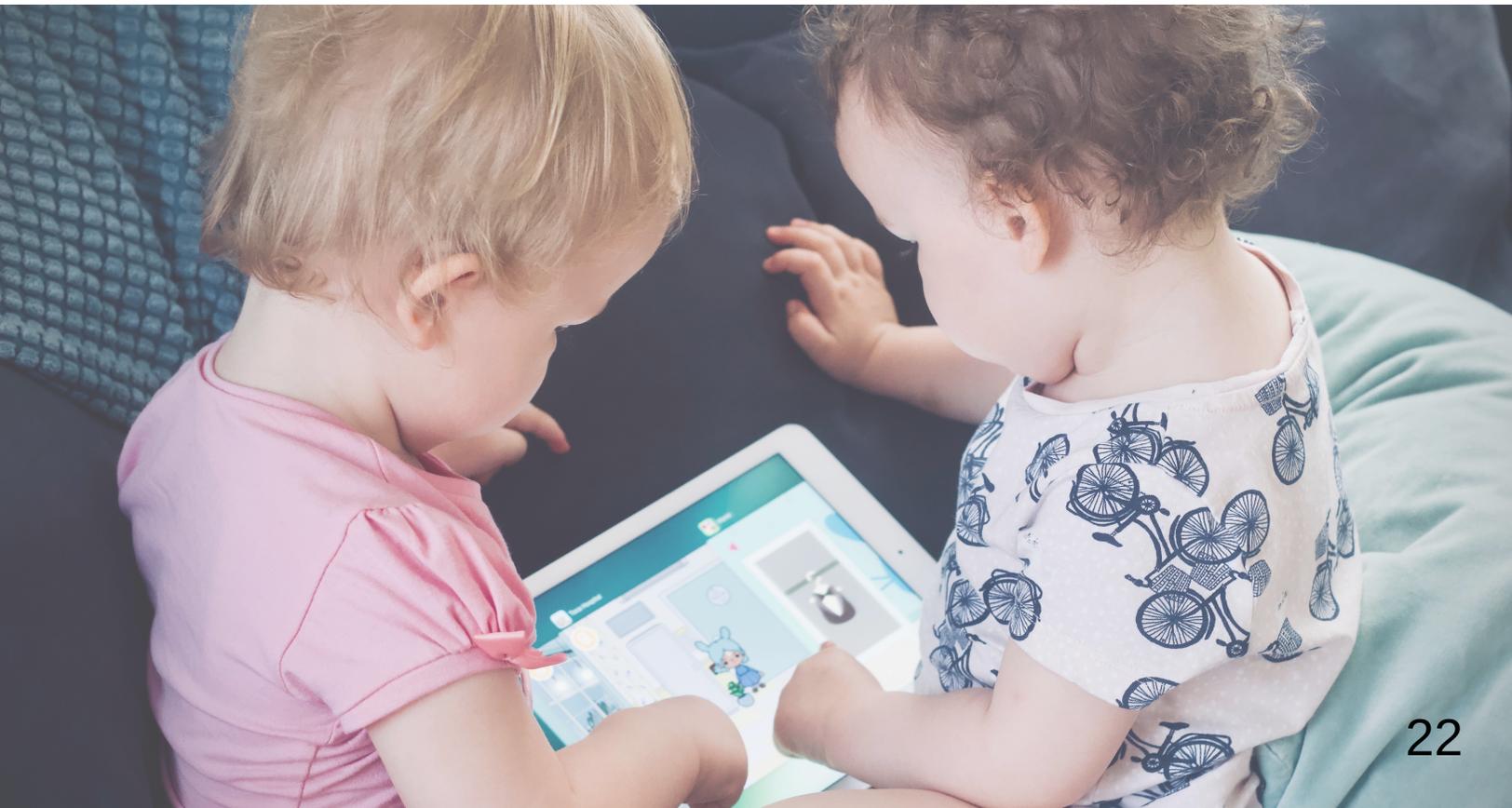
- **Consumer bill of rights:** Provides safeguards for utility consumers.
- **Utility complaint mediation:** The DC Public Service Commission's Office of Consumer Services and the Office of the People's Counsel Consumer Services Division can help consumers with utility company problems.
- **Utility Discount Program:** The DC Public Service Commission requires Verizon Washington, DC; Pepco; and Washington Gas to offer a discount to low-income District residents.
- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program:** Eligible households may receive between \$250 and \$1,800 as a one-time regular energy assistance benefit through this Department of Energy & Environment program, and up to \$600 for a qualifying crisis benefit.

INTERNET ACCESS

Comcast Internet Essential (\$9.95/month): (855) 846-8376; <https://internetessentials.com/apply>.

RCN Internet First (\$9.95/month): (800) 746-4726; <https://www.internetfirst.com>

Verizon Fios (\$19.99/month): (800) 837-4966; <https://www.verizon.com/info/low-income-internet/>



ACT EARLY DC PARENT TOOLKIT

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

Social and Emotional Competence of Children: Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.

Early Childhood Social and Emotional Competence Road Map

2 Months

Begins to smile at people



2 Months

Tries to look at parent

2 Months

Can briefly calm herself (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand)

6 Months

Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger

4 Months

Copies some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning

4 Months

Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops

4 Months

Smiles spontaneously, especially at people

6 Months

Responds to other people's emotions and often seems happy



6 Months

Likes to look at self in a mirror

9 Months

May be afraid of strangers



9 Months

May be clingy with familiar adults

1 Year

Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"



1 Year

Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story

1 Year

Shows fear in some situations



9 Months

Has favorite toys

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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

Social and Emotional Competence of Children: Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.

Early Childhood Social and Emotional Competence Road Map

18 Months

May have temper tantrums



18 Months

Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll

18 Months

Explores alone but with parent close by

2 Years

Shows more and more independence

2 Years

Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games

2 Years

Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)



3 Years

Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"

3 Years

Shows a wide range of emotions



3 Years

May get upset with major changes in routine

4 Years

Would rather play with other children than by himself

4 Years

Is more and more creative with make-believe play



5 Years

Wants to be like friends

5 Years

Can tell what's real and what's make-believe



5 Years

More likely to agree with rules

4 Years

Cooperates with other children

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CONCLUSION

Thank you for using the DC Act Early Parent Toolkit. We Hope you have found this to be a quick and easy way to find help in times of need. Please share this toolkit with others.

This toolkit was developed by Yetta Myrick, CDC's Act Early Ambassador to the District of Columbia and President and Executive Director of DC Autism Parents (DCAP), with the support of DCAP Treasurer, Pauline G. Myrick.

This toolkit would not have been possible without the help of our partners:

- DC Developmental Disability Council
- DC Title V Program
- Strong Start Early Intervention Program
- Early Stages
- DC Health
- DC Help Me Grow
- DC Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
- DC Head Start Association
- Child and Family Services Agency
- Children's National Hospital-Child Health Advocacy Institute
- Thrive by Five DC
- Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.
- University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disability (UCEDD) at Georgetown University
- DC Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Program
- SPACeS in Action

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