

sparkler

brought to you by



Department of
Children & Youth
Help Me Grow



♥ Heart

💬 Words

💡 Mind

🧑 Body

Spark early learning!

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

For Families with Babies
0 - 12 months




TABLE OF CONTENTS



02

**WELCOME TO
SPARKLER**

03

**DOWNLOAD SPARKLER TO
LEARN MORE**

04



**EARLY LEARNING
MILESTONES FOR BABIES
(BIRTH - 12 MONTHS)**

06

SPARKLER PARENT TIPS



07

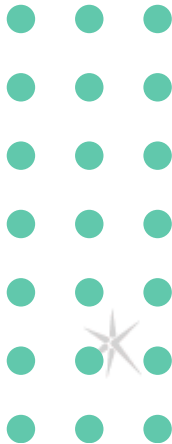


SPARKLER ACTIVITIES

11



QUESTIONS?





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!



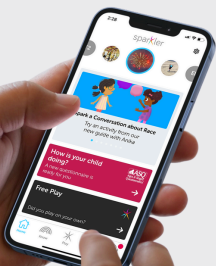
Grow

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 0-12 month old babies 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 code will connect you with Ohio Help Me Grow.

Our Program's Access Code

OH

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

BIRTH - 12 MONTHS



The first 12 months are an important time of child and brain development! 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®, a developmental screening tool that 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 U.S. 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, where you can find summaries of the milestones.



What is the ASQ?

The Ages and Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ) are series of questions that parents answer to help families, teachers, and pediatricians find out how children's skills (communications, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, personal social) are developing. Access the ASQ and learn more about screening in Sparkler's app.

	 Heart	 Words	 Mind	 Body
0-2 months	<p>Calms down when spoken to or picked up.</p> <p>Looks at your face.</p> <p>Seems happy to see trusted grown-ups.</p>	<p>Makes sounds other than crying.</p> <p>Reacts to loud sounds.</p>	<p>Watches people and toys for several seconds.</p>	<p>Holds head up when on tummy.</p> <p>Moves both arms and both legs.</p> <p>Opens hands briefly.</p>
2-4 months	<p>Chuckles (not yet a full laugh) when you try to make them laugh.</p> <p>Looks at you, moves, or makes sounds to get or keep your attention.</p>	<p>Makes sounds back when you talk.</p> <p>Turns head towards the sound of your voice.</p>	<p>Looks at hands with interest.</p>	<p>Holds head steady without support when being held.</p> <p>Brings hands to mouth.</p> <p>Pushes up onto elbows/forearms when on tummy.</p>
4-6 months	<p>Knows familiar people.</p> <p>Likes to look at self in mirror.</p> <p>Laughs</p>	<p>Takes turns making sounds with you.</p>	<p>Puts things in their mouth to explore them.</p> <p>Reaches to grab a toy they want.</p> <p>Closes lips to show they don't want more food.</p>	<p>Rolls from tummy to back.</p> <p>Pushes up with straight arms when on tummy.</p> <p>Leans on hands to support themselves when sitting.</p>
6-12 months	<p>May be shy or fearful around strangers.</p> <p>Smiles or laughs when you play "peek-a-boo."</p>	<p>Waves "bye-bye"</p> <p>Calls a parent "mama" or "dada" or another special name.</p> <p>Understands "no" (pauses or stops when you say it)</p>	<p>Puts something in a container, like a block in a cup.</p> <p>Looks for things they see you hide, like a toy under a blanket.</p>	<p>Pulls up to stand.</p> <p>Walks, holding on to furniture.</p> <p>Picks things up between thumb and pointer finger, like small bits of food.</p>



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.



sparkler

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!

♥ Heart

FEATURED ACTIVITY: PEEK-A-BOO ME!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. When we look in the mirror together, we see YOU and ME!
2. Let's touch and explore the mirror with our hands. Let's make silly faces and wave at our reflections!
3. I'll tuck or tape a small cloth to the top of the mirror so that our reflections are hidden. Let's play peek-a-boo!

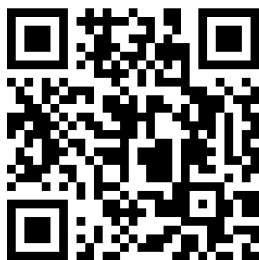


WHY?

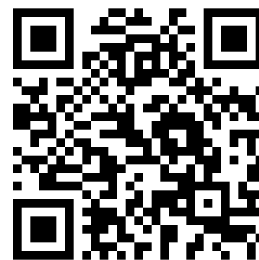
Playing with mirrors helps your child to learn to recognize himself or herself — and it builds your child's sense of self/identity.



Try "Cheek to Cheek"
to promote EMPATHY



Try "Read the Room"
and identify FEELINGS



Try "Shake and Stop" to
practice SELF-REGULATION

sparkler

PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: KISS KISS!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's get cozy and snuggle together.
2. I'll say, "Kiss!" and kiss you once, "Kiss kiss!" and kiss you twice, or "Kiss kiss kiss" and kiss you three times.
3. I love you so much!

WHY?

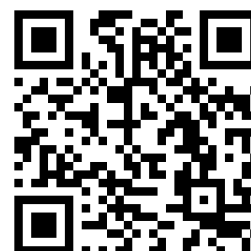
Playing "Kiss Kiss" strengthens your bond, and helps your baby start to understand early math and language skills.



Try "Shadow Theater"
to build FOCUS



Try "Sign of the Times"
to build CURIOSITY
and FOCUS



Try "Twinsies" to practice
MAKING CONNECTIONS



PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



Body

FEATURED ACTIVITY: BUBBLE BATH!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's blow bubbles in the bath!
2. If we don't have any bubble solution, we can make some by mixing 1 part shampoo and 4 parts water. A little sugar or corn syrup will make our bubbles a little stronger. We can make a bubble wand with wire, a pipe cleaner, or use string and a plastic straw.
3. I'll blow bubbles over you. How do they feel when they land and pop on your body?



WHY?

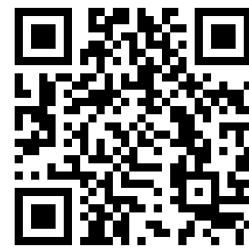
Soap bubbles are a great way to stimulate your child's senses and support his or her developing eye-hand coordination and self-regulation.



Try "Heart Yoga" to stretch your big muscles



Try "Bunny Hop" to practice PERCEPTION



Try "How Much Do I Love You?" to exercise big muscles



sparkler

PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: SPA DAY!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's pretend we're at the spa! It's time for a nice massage.
2. I'll put some lotion on my hands and pretend to be your masseuse. Are you nice and comfortable?
3. I'll label each of your body parts as I rub lotion on them. How does that feel?

WHY?

Your child learns new words every day. Labeling different things, like body parts, helps them learn words and develop language.



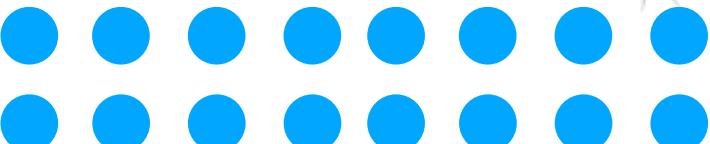
Try "Do You Hear What I Hear?" to practice COMPREHENSION



Try "Read Together" to learn about SOUNDS, LETTERS, and STORIES



Try "Vroom Vroom" to practice EXPRESSION





Supporting Your Child in Ohio (Birth - 5)

1

Monitor

Play to learn with your child using Sparkler's mobile app and monitor their early development from birth through age 5. Get 2,000+ playtime activity prompts and info on early learning milestones from the CDC.

Sparkler Mobile App

Available on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play

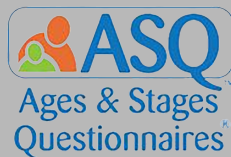


Access Code:
OH

2

Screen

Use Sparkler to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2) as your child grows up to keep checking in on their development over time and access info on how you can support their healthy early development.



3

Connect

Connect via Sparkler with Help Me Grow. If you need a referral, answers, or support, use the app to access a network of support available through Help Me Grow.



Department of
Children & Youth

Help Me Grow

4

Access Support

Access info and activities to spark ongoing healthy childhood development (birth through 5) through Sparkler. Use the app to play and learn and get tips for parents in English, Spanish, and Chinese.



Questions?

- Ask your program/provider!
- Email us at support@playsparkler.org

