

sparkler

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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 Toddlers
12 - 24 months




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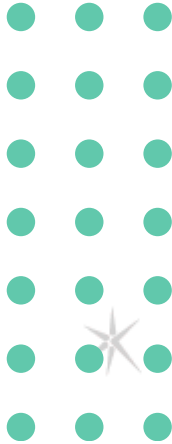


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QUESTIONS?





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!



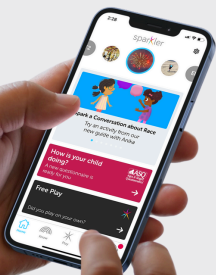
Grow

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 12 - 24 month old toddlers 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

12 - 24 MONTHS

The months between your child's first and second birthdays are a fun, exciting, and important time in their 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, which 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 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.



What is the ASQ?

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a series of questions that helps parents, teachers, and pediatricians find out how children's skills (communications, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, personal social) are developing. Learn more in Sparkler's app.





12 months

Plays games such as “peek-a-boo” and “pat-a-cake”

Waves “bye-bye”

Calls a parent “mama” or “dada” or another special name

Understands “no” (pauses briefly or stops when you say it)

Puts something in a container, like a block in a cup

Looks for things they see you hide, like a toy under a blanket

Pulls up to stand

Walks, holding on to furniture

Drinks from a cup without a lid, as you hold it

Picks things up between thumb and pointer finger, like small bits of food.

18 months

Moves away from you, but looks to make sure you are close by

Points to show you something interesting

Helps you dress them by pushing arms through sleeves or lifting up feet

Tries to say three or more words besides “mama” or “dada”

Follows one-step directions without any gestures, like giving you the toy when you say “Give it to me”

Plays with toys in a simple way, like pushing a toy car

Walks without holding onto anyone or anything

Scribbles

Climbs on and off a couch or chair without help.

24 months

Notices when others are hurt or upset, like pausing or looking sad when someone is crying

Points to things in a book when you ask, like “Where is the bear?”

Says at least two words together, like “More milk”

Tries to use switches, knobs, or buttons on a toy

Plays with more than one toy at the same time, like putting toy food on a toy plate

Kicks a ball

Runs

Walks (not climbs) up a few stairs with or without help

Eats with a spoon.



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.





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: FEEL IT

INSTRUCTIONS:

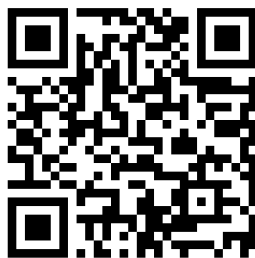
1. Let's play a game! I've put an object from around our home under a sheet.
2. Reach your hand under the sheet. What do you feel? Are you touching something hard, soft, fuzzy, or spiky? Are you touching something cold or warm? Tell me about the thing you feel. Can you guess what the object is?
3. Let's try it again with another object!

WHY?

When your child uses their sense of touch to solve the mystery of what's under the sheet, he or she asks questions and makes informed guesses. This builds curiosity!



Try "Animal Bath" to promote EMPATHY



Try "Our Home" and develop IDENTITY



Try "Bug Hunt" to practice SELF-REGULATION

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PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



Mind

FEATURED ACTIVITY: NAME THAT BOOK

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. It's time for us to read! I'll think of one of our favorite books.
2. Before I pick up the book, I'll say the first few lines to you — we know this book so well!
3. Do you recognize the words from this favorite book? Can you find this book on the shelf? Let's read it together!

WHY?

Reciting lines from familiar stories helps your child exercise their memory.



Try "Back Easel" to
learn about SHAPES



Try "Pattern Tower" to
learn about PATTERNS



Try "Pillow Fort" to practice
FLEXIBLE THINKING



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PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



Body

FEATURED ACTIVITY: COMING THROUGH!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's make a tunnel by attaching a sheet to two chairs or other furniture.
2. Now let's move our bodies through the tunnel without touching the sheet.
3. Let's make the game more difficult by putting the sheet closer to the ground.



WHY?

Crawling through a tunnel helps your child exercise their big muscles.



Try "Body Drumming" to exercise BIG MUSCLES



Try "Lily Pad Hop" to coordinate BIG MUSCLES



Try "Making Tracks" to strengthen SMALL MUSCLES



PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.

Words

FEATURED ACTIVITY: ROLL, TOSS, BOUNCE!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's pass a ball back and forth!
2. Listen for my words. I'll say, "roll," "toss," or "bounce" to let you know how to pass the ball to me.
3. I'll pass the ball back to you the same way. Let's keep going!



WHY?

Games that require children to follow verbal directions help them to practice listening and understand language in a fun way!



Try "My Story" to learn
about STORIES



Try "Read To A Stuffed
Friend" to practice
EXPRESSION



Try "Find Things That Go"
to practice EXPRESSION



Supporting Your Child (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

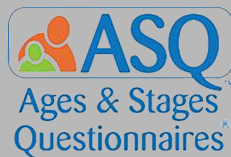


Access Code:
OH

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

