

# 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 Children  
2-3 Years Old



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## 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!



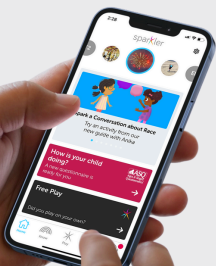
#### Grow

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 2-3 year 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

## 2 - 3 YEARS

Your little one continues to grow and learn quickly throughout this year. 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.

	 Heart	 Words	 Mind	 Body
24 months	<p>Notices when others are hurt or upset, like pausing or looking sad when someone is crying</p>	<p>Points to things in a book when you ask, like “Where is the bear?”</p> <p>Says at least two words together, like “More milk”</p>	<p>Tries to use switches, knobs, or buttons on a toy</p> <p>Plays with more than one toy at the same time, like putting toy food on a toy plate</p>	<p>Kicks a ball</p> <p>Runs</p> <p>Walks (not climbs) up a few stairs with or without help</p> <p>Eats with a spoon.</p>
30 months	<p>Plays next to other children and sometimes plays with them</p> <p>Shows you what she can do by saying, “Look at me!”</p> <p>Follows simple routines when told, like helping to pick up toys when you say, “It’s clean-up time.”</p>	<p>Says about 50 words</p> <p>Says two or more words together, with one action word, like “Doggie run”</p> <p>Names things in a book when you point and ask, “What is this?”</p> <p>Says words like “I,” “me,” or “we”</p>	<p>Uses things to pretend, like feeding a block to a doll as if it were food</p> <p>Shows simple problem-solving skills, like standing on a small stool to reach something</p> <p>Follows two-step instructions like “Put the toy down and close the door.”</p>	<p>Uses hands to twist things, like turning doorknobs or unscrewing lids</p> <p>Takes some clothes off by himself, like loose pants or an open jacket</p> <p>Jumps off the ground with both feet</p> <p>Turns book pages, one at a time, when you read together</p>
3 years	<p>Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave, like at a childcare drop off</p> <p>Notices other children and joins them to play</p>	<p>Talks with you in conversation using at least two back-and-forth exchanges</p> <p>Asks “who,” “what,” “where,” or “why” questions</p> <p>Talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time</p>	<p>Draws a circle, when you show them how</p> <p>Avoids touching hot objects, like a stove, with a warning</p>	<p>Strings items together, like large beads or macaroni</p> <p>Puts on some clothes independently, like loose pants or a jacket</p> <p>Uses a fork</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.





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## 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

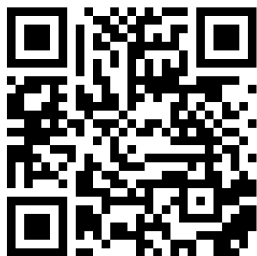
### FEATURED ACTIVITY: FREEZE DANCE!

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's play Freeze Dance! I'll turn on some music.
2. Let's jump, shake, dip, and move our bodies to the music.
3. Let's freeze like statues when I pause the music! Hold still until the music starts again. Ready? Dance!

#### WHY?

Dancing and stopping helps your child practice self-regulation and self-control.



Try "BIG RESCUE" to promote EMPATHY



Try "Button Hunt" and develop PERSISTENCE



Try "Scribble Your Heart Out" to explore FEELINGS



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## PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



Mind

### FEATURED ACTIVITY: LAUNDRY SORT!

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Help me sort this laundry into piles!
2. Let's put all of the shirts into one pile. Now let's put the pants into a pile...and the socks into a pile...
3. Look at all of the piles we made! Let's count them.

#### WHY?

Sorting encourages your child's developing math skills. It helps them begin to recognize patterns.



Try "Counting Plants" to  
learn about NUMBERS



Try "Find the Shapes" to  
learn about GEOMETRY



Try "How Do We Get  
There?" to develop MEMORY

# PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.

 Body

## FEATURED ACTIVITY: FOSSILS

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Fossils are the remains of animals or plants that lived a long time ago. Let's make our own fossils!
2. Let's press a ball of playdough or clay until it is flat, and at least 1 cm thick.
3. Let's gently press a small toy into the playdough to leave an impression. What is left on the playdough when we remove the toy? Let's look closely together.



### WHY?

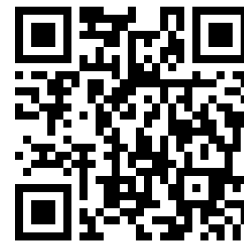
Pressing and working with playdough helps strengthen your child's fingers.



Try "Over, Under, and Through" to exercise BIG MUSCLES



Try "I See Colors" to practice PERCEPTION



Try "Lily Pad Hop" to strengthen BIG MUSCLES

## PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.

Words

### FEATURED ACTIVITY: BIRTHDAY SONG!

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's pretend it's someone's birthday and sing to them!
2. Let's sing together! Do you know the words and the tune?
3. Let's pretend to be cows. How do cows sing "Happy Birthday?" What about dogs? Sheep?



#### WHY?

Singing songs is a great way to encourage your child to use words for expression.



Try "Family Book" to learn about STORIES



Try "Fruit Collage" to practice EXPRESSION



Try "Roll, Toss, Bounce" to practice COMPREHENSION



## 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

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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](mailto:support@playsparkler.org)

