

sparkler

brought to you by



Department of
Children & Youth
Help Me Grow



♥ Heart

💬 Words

💡 Mind

🧑 Body

Spark early learning!

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

For Families with Children
3 - 5 Years Old




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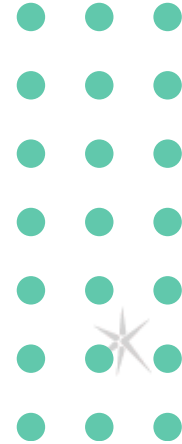
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WELCOME TO sparkler




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!



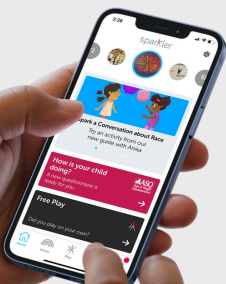

Grow

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 3 - 5 year old children 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

3 - 5 YEARS

Your big kid continues to grow and learn quickly throughout these years. 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
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>
4 years	<p>Pretends to be something else during play, like a teacher, superhero, or animal</p> <p>Asks to go and play with other children</p> <p>Comforts others who are hurt or sad</p> <p>Avoids danger, like not jumping from tall heights</p> <p>Likes to be a "helper"</p>	<p>Uses sentences with four or more words</p> <p>Says words from a song or story</p> <p>Talks about at least one thing that happened during the day</p> <p>Answers simple questions like, "What is a coat for?"</p>	<p>Names a few colors of items</p> <p>Tells what comes next in a familiar story</p> <p>Draws a person with three or more body parts</p>	<p>Catches a ball most of the time</p> <p>Serves themselves food or pours water with adult supervision</p> <p>Unbuttons some buttons</p> <p>Holds crayon or pencil between fingers and thumb (not a fist)</p>
5 years	<p>Follows rules or takes turns when playing games with other children</p> <p>Sings, dances, or acts for you</p> <p>Does simple chores at home, like matching socks or clearing the table after eating</p>	<p>Tells a story that they heard or made up with at least two events.</p> <p>Answers simple questions about a book or story after you read it</p> <p>Keeps a conversation going with more than three back-and-forth exchanges</p> <p>Uses or recognizes simple rhymes (bat-cat, ball-tall)</p>	<p>Counts to 10</p> <p>Names some numbers between 1 and 5 when you point to them</p> <p>Uses words about time, like “yesterday,” “tomorrow,” “morning,” or “night”</p> <p>Pays attention for 5 to 10 minutes during activities.</p> <p>Writes some letters in their name</p> <p>Names some letters when you point to them</p>	<p>Buttons some buttons</p> <p>Hops on one foot</p>



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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 "Family Charades" to promote EMPATHY



Try "Hide and Seek" and develop TRUST



Try "As Your Neighbors" to grow CURIOSITY and TRUST



PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



Mind

FEATURED ACTIVITY: BALL DROP

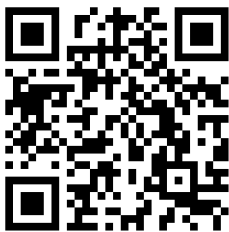
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's get a ball, hold it at our waist, and drop it on the ground. How many times did the ball bounce on the ground?
2. Let's drop the same ball from above our heads. When does the ball bounce the most? The least? Let's try bouncing from low down near our knees and compare what happens to the waist and head drops!
3. Let's try with a different ball! How many bounces can we count?



WHY?

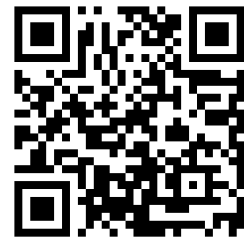
Counting bounces is a fun way for your child to practice counting and comparing.



Try "Music Collage" to develop FOCUS



Try "Back Easel" to learn about GEOMETRY



Try "¡Hola! Bonjour! Jambo! Hello!" to develop FLEXIBLE-THINKING and MEMORY



PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



Body

FEATURED ACTIVITY: MAKE PLAYDOUGH

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's make our own playdough! First let's combine 1 Cup flour, 1/2 Cup salt, and 2 Tbsp Cream of Tartar in a bowl (Cream of tartar improves the texture, but it's OK to leave it out!)
2. Now let's add a few drops of food coloring into 1 Cup of boiling water and add it to the bowl along with 1 Tbsp oil. We can add glitter too!
3. Let's mix it very well with a spoon, and then with our hands once it's cool enough, until it's no longer sticky. Now, let's play!



WHY?

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



Try "Jump To It!" to
exercise BIG MUSCLES



Try "I See Colors" to
practice PERCEPTION



Try "Obstacle Course" to
strengthen BIG MUSCLES





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PLAY ACTIVITIES

Play to support your child's growth and development.



FEATURED ACTIVITY: SEEING SHAPES

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Let's go for a walk and examine the buildings along the way.
2. What shapes do you see in the buildings? Can you find rectangles, squares, triangles, and circles?
3. Let's talk about what makes the buildings different and similar. Which is the most unusual?

WHY?

Having extended conversations with your child helps them have strong language skills and builds their vocabulary.



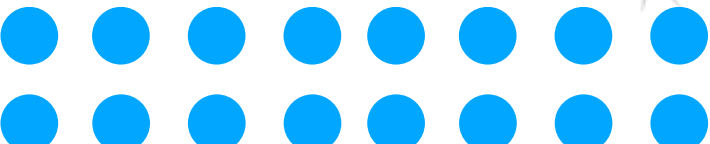
Try "Alphabet Yoga" to
learn about SOUNDS
and LETTERS



Try "Tiny Theater" to
learn about STORIES



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

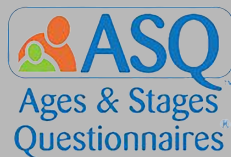


Access Code:
OH

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

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

