

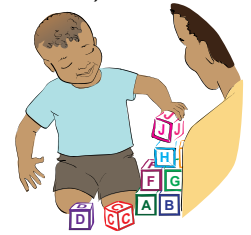
# Healthy Brain Development Tip Sheet

For Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS); Refugee Resettlement; Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS); Early Care and Education Providers

All providers can support families to build a strong, positive relationship with their child, within a stimulating and culture-filled environment, that will contribute to the child's healthy brain development. This Prepared to Learn and Multisensory Learning Tip Sheet corresponds to page 18 and 19 of the [Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development Handbook](#).

## Conversation Starters: (or staff, families, and partners can design program-specific questions)

- What do you and your child like to do together?
- What are some of the things you do with your child everyday?
- How do you maintain your family traditions and/or home language?
- What practices from your culture do you use to help your child learn?



## Cultural Considerations:

- Some newly arrived families may be more focused on meeting their basic needs and adjusting to the U.S., making it hard to initially focus on their child/children's learning.
- Traumatic events, or trauma-related mental health issues resulting from refugee experiences, may make parental engagement with children challenging (due to depression, fatigue, stress, etc.).
- Some refugee parents may not think of home-based activities as learning opportunities. Parents from cultures or environments without preschools may not know that children are learning during this period of life.
- Establishing routines may take a while for some families who have lived for years in refugee camps or other low opportunity situations. Families from cultures with a less structured sense of time may struggle to develop daily, time-based routines.
- Some cultures may put more emphasis on children listening to and obeying parents without discussion.

- The television may be on all the time in some refugee households for a variety of reasons: as a way of hearing English, as a distraction for children, as a novelty, as a symbol of prosperity, or as a means of keeping in touch with the home country or language through foreign news.
- Parents who do not know English may have difficulty determining what is appropriate TV content for children. Some refugees and their children may be desensitized to televised violence, or highly sensitive to violence, depending on what they have experienced.



## Remember to Mention:

- Positive adult-child relationships and interactions will help build a healthy brain.
- Although brain development is a lifelong process, what children experience within their first 5 years is critical for healthy brain development.



# Healthy Brain Development Tip Sheet (cont'd)



## Remember to Mention:

- Keeping children physically and emotionally safe is important for their developing brain.
- Children need repetition as well as new opportunities to use and develop their five senses (touching, smelling, tasting, listening, and seeing).
- Exposing children to a variety of opportunities and activities (indoor and outdoor) for “hands-on” learning with every day real objects engages all five senses and helps the brain to strengthen connections and form new ones.
- Learning experiences such as cooking and playing games can support exploration with all five senses, which stimulates children’s social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development.



## Applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/hspss/1304>

45 CFR 1304.21 Education and early childhood development

45 CFR 1304.40 Family partnerships (c)(2) and (e)(3)

## Resources on ECKLC:

### Early Head Start National Resource Center

- **Brain Development**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/brain-dev>

### National Center of Health

- **Links Between Health and the Five Essential Domains of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDELF)**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/link-between/five-domains.html>
- **Healthy Children Are Ready to Learn. HHS/ACF/OHS/NCH. 2012. English.**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health/individual-wellness-plans/healthy-children-ready-learn.pdf>

### National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

- **Healthy Start, Grow Smart: Prepare My Child for School Healthy Start, Grow Smart: Prepare My Child for School. DOA/ED/DHHS. Healthy Start Grow Smart Series. 2002.**  
[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/for-families/Growing%20Up/Developmental%20Milestones/parent\\_pub\\_00109\\_122205.html](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/for-families/Growing%20Up/Developmental%20Milestones/parent_pub_00109_122205.html)
- **Brain-Based Parenting**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/for-families/Everyday%20Parenting/Family%20Life/BrainBasedParen.htm>

