


Empowering Parents with Information

 bestbeginningsalaska.org/empowering-parents-with-information/

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Best Beginnings Alaska



January 17, 2019

Parents of young children today can be overwhelmed by the plethora of information available to them on virtually every aspect of child development and being a parent. When my children were babies, 40 years ago, my friends and I had Dr. Spock's *Baby and Child Care* and each other. Sometimes we asked our mothers for advice.

Here at Best Beginnings we were sure there was a way we could help parents cut through all the parenting "noise" and provide not too much and not too little information, but just enough. So we decided to ask Alaska parents what they wanted to know about child development, especially early literacy and language development, and how they wanted to get that information.

Parents told us they were looking for activities they could do with their children at home and they preferred receiving information via email. This helped us design an e-newsletter delivered right to parents' email inboxes once a week.



During the first eight weeks, parents learn about what's called the Alaska Developmental Profile, a tool teachers use to assess every child entering their kindergarten classrooms. They discover how they can help prepare their child for kindergarten, starting right now – whether their baby is two months old or 4. Every week, links are provided to age-appropriate

activities on Best Beginnings' [website](#). (Activities in Spanish and Yup'ik can also be downloaded from the website!)

There's a different topic each month – for example, read every day, persistence, and storytimes. Along with simple, easy-to-do ideas for activities to do with babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, you'll find recommendations for books on the topic – and the books are available at your local library or through the statewide library system. Samantha Blanquart, an Early Literacy Outreach Librarian with [Ready to Read Resource Center](#) selects the books and tells a little about the book to help parents check out those they think their child will like.

What do parents think about the parent newsletter?

"I like that the information is pertinent to my family and our local area."

"I appreciate that the topics were picked through research to help support a child and family prepare for kindergarten. There are many things children need to learn, with these topics it was reassuring to see the milestone my child has already achieved."

"I could read them in the small amount of free time I have in the day! Plus the links to more information for when I had more time."

Can anyone subscribe to the parent newsletter? Yes, indeed! Click [here](#) to sign up.

You can check out the content for back issues [here](#).

Testimonial

It has been a great jumpstart to my child's education and interest to learn.

[More Testimonials](#)

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AT&T

December 2018 | Best Beginnings Parent Newsletter

How to Select Books

For many families the holiday season includes gift-giving. This season we encourage you to remember the many gifts you give your child every day. Your time. Your love. Your hard work. There are so many ways to give this holiday season that don't involve toys or material things. That said, if you're looking for something perfect to wrap up for your little one, we suggest picking out a book!



Books are a wonderful gift that any child will enjoy – especially when you sit down to read with them! And with books about so many different things, you're sure to find something that piques your child's curiosity.

[Learn More](#)

Here are some guidelines to get started:

For Babies (0-12 months)

- Give them a book they can sink their teeth into. Board and cloth books are perfect for handling, throwing, and chewing on
- High-contrast images
- Rhyming words

For Toddlers (12-36 months)

- Try sturdy board books that can be carried around
- Books about activities (like bedtime, saying hello and good-bye).
- Books with few words per page
- Touch-and-feel books, pop-up books, and pull-the-tab books will be a hit.

For Preschoolers (36-60 months)

- Simple text that can be memorized or read
- Counting books, books about subjects, or science.
- Stories about people will help them mentally prepare for kindergarten (i.e. friendship, same and different, dealing with challenges).

This newsletter helps parents prepare their children for school success by building their child's communication, language, and literacy skills.



BEST BEGINNINGS
Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Best Beginnings is a public-private partnership that mobilizes people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed.

(907) 297-3300 | info@BestBeginningsAlaska.org | www.BestBeginningsAlaska.org



October 2018 | Best Beginnings Parent Newsletter

Daily Literacy

Ways You Can Help Your Child...

Get Daily Doses of Literacy

- Talk about [anything and everything!](#)
 - **Playtime**
 - Talk about the colors, shape, and feel of the toys being used.
 - Be descriptive when making requests such as "Can you pass me the round toy with the blue stripes?"
 - **Cooking & Eating**
 - Name the foods you can see and taste in each dish.
 - Narrate the steps and name the utensils as you work through a recipe.
 - **Shopping**
 - Share with your daughter a few grocery items on your list, and ask her to repeat it back to you. As you find an item ask her to recall what else you still need to find.
 - Describe two pieces of produce and ask your child which one you should pick.
- **Narrate what you do** as you go through your daily routines. Soon your son will start to connect the words you say with the actions and objects around him.
- Point out the words you see in your environment. Look for [words in your home](#) on food labels, packages, newspapers, magazines, mail, street signs, and buildings.
- Celebrate when your daughter starts recognizing symbols around her. "Look, mom! A STOP sign!" The more she realizes the **meaning** of what she's learning, the more excited and motivated she'll be.
- Give your son his full attention when he tries to talk to you. You're showing him that **his words are important** to you, which motivates him to talk and communicate even more.
- Pair a favorite book up with a favorite activity for a special story time. Take a book to read about colors with you to the museum, or a book about fall to your favorite park.
- As your child gets older **ask questions that keep the conversation going**. "What do you think of this rainy weather today?" "Where do you think all the rain goes?"
- Remember that literacy is much more than reading skills alone. Talking with and listening to your child are all important ways you [support the development of your child's communication and literacy skills](#).



[Learn More](#)

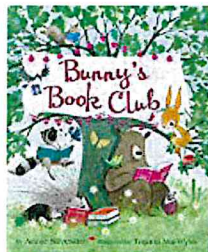
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November 2018 | Best Beginnings Parent Newsletter

Storytime

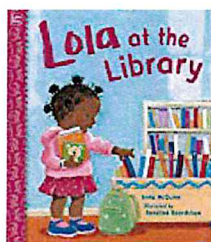


Books You'll Love... about storytime.

Get your child excited about attending storytime by reading one of these stories together.

- [Leo Loves Baby Time](#) by Anna McQuinn
- [You Can Read](#) by Helaine Becker
- [How to Read a Story](#) by Kate Messner
- [My Book Box](#) by Will Hillenbrand
- [Beatrice Doesn't Want To](#) by Laura Numeroff
- [Bunny's Book Club](#) by Anika Denise

Many of these titles are available from your local library!



[See the Full List](#)

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September 2018 | Best Beginnings Parent Newsletter

Kids & Media

Activities for Parents

Doing these three things will make a big difference in your family's relationship with screens. Give it a try!

1. Write a [family media plan](#)
2. Take [The Three C's quiz](#) to become more mindful about technology use.
3. Do a quality check on the apps your child uses now using the tips below.



Tips for Picking Quality Digital Media

- Pick apps or TV shows that give you or an older sibling an opportunity to engage with your child while they play. Studies show that children need someone to watch and engage in media with them to learn from it.
- Screen your media choices first to make sure the content is appropriate for your child.
 - Consider the values and behaviors displayed by the characters to see if they fit the characteristics you want your child to imitate.
 - Think about the following themes when deciding if something is right for your child – educational value, positive messages, violence, scariness, language, commercialism, and behaviors.
- When it comes to deciding if is something is high quality, consider the 3 C's – content, context, and your child.
- Don't be fooled by an app's popularity or marketing tactics. Just because an app says it's educational, doesn't mean it is.
- Use a trusted source for app recommendations and programming.

[See Our Top Sources Here](#)

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