

# Promoting Wellness in Young Children



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Infancy and early childhood are important periods of growth. Children attain many basic abilities during this time. Many developmental scholars believe that the early years of life provide an important foundation for future success. Over the past several years, scholars have highlighted several areas of interest that parents and caregivers can focus on to help better promote good developmental outcomes and well-being. Here is a small sampling of some of these issues.

**Attachment Security:** There is growing evidence that children thrive in later life when they are provided stable, nurturing relationships in their early years. Parents, grandparents and caregivers who are sensitive, responsive, and loving help young children feel secure in their surroundings. For example, an infant's cry is an important signal that adults should respond to immediately and consistently. Researchers have found that



when adults are more responsive to infant crying, they have children who actually cry less down the road and feel more secure. A history of responsive care helps children develop trust in those around them. This trust is a springboard that helps children learn to interact appropriately with others and develop a strong sense of curiosity about the world around them. This strong sense of curiosity can then lead to more competent problem solving abilities, more outgoing children, greater independence, and overall better mental health.

**Play:** One way to promote healthy, secure attachments is through playful interactions with adults. Play provides complex forms of stimulation with a responsive adult. Adults can adjust their play to fit ongoing circumstances as well as the individual needs and growing abilities of children, an ability that cannot be easily mimicked by computers, toys, or videos. During playful interactions children also develop language, social, emotional, and even physical skills. For instance, playful interactions can center around age appropriate books where adults and children can work together to talk about pictures, ideas, and ask curiosity building questions. Play does not require expensive toys or elaborate activities. Instead, simple, one-on-one interactions such as singing songs, repeating nursery rhymes, drawing pictures, or building with blocks, can provide a healthy setting for growth. Adults are encouraged to provide meaningful opportunities to play with young children.



**TV Viewing:** Recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended that children under two years of age be exposed to little or no television viewing. AAP also recommended that for older children, television viewing be restricted to one to two hours of educational programming per day. The rationale for such a recommendation is that during the formative years, children's brains are creating important connections. Long periods of TV viewing displace many opportunities that might otherwise help to enhance children's optimal brain development, such as physical activity, playing with peers, playing with toys, and interacting with adults. Recent research suggests that extended television viewing during these formative years, especially programming that is fast paced with rapid changes in scenes, may be related to difficulties later in childhood with tasks that require more sustained attention.

**For more information, visit the AAP Website (<http://www.aap.org/parents.html>)**

# Great New Books for Children Ages 1-5

Selected by Marsha D. Broadway, Juvenile Literature Librarian  
Harold B. Lee Library

Reading to preschoolers provides unique opportunities to laugh, learn, and love for both child and adult. Children ages one to five are learning concepts, counting, and language. They are exploring their world and eagerly investigating almost everything. Reading together allows you to hold your children close while you discover and discuss together.

The following list includes concept, alphabet, counting and simple story books by award-winning authors and illustrators. Need more books? Look for others by these people.

- **My Shining Star: Raising a Child Who Is Ready to Learn** by Rosemary Wells. Viking, 2006.  
*Rosemary Wells will be a featured author at the Midwinter Symposium on Book for Young Readers on February 3, 2007.  
For more information and to see if you or your spouse is eligible for tuition waiver go to <http://bfyr.byu.edu>.*
- **Black? White! Day? Night: A Book of Opposites** by Laura Vaccaro Seeger. Roaring Brook Press, 2006.
- **Click, Clack, Splish, Splash: A Counting Adventure** by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006.
- **Counting Ovejas** by Sarah Weeks; illustrated by David Diaz, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006.
- **Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!** by Mo Willems. Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.
- **Edwina, the Dinosaur Who Didn't Know She Was Extinct** by Mo Willems. Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.
- **Flotsam** by David Wiesner. Clarion, 2006. (2007 Caldecott Medal Winner.)
- **Good Boy, Fergus!** by David Shannon. Blue Sky Press, 2006.
- **How Do Dinosaurs Go To School?** by Jane Yolen; illustrated by Mark Teague. Blue Sky Press, 2007.
- **I'm Dirty!** by Kate and Jim McMullan. Joanna Colter Books, 2006.
- **Lilly's Big Day** by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow Books, 2006.
- **Max's ABC** by Rosemary Wells. Viking, 2006.
- **Olivia Forms a Band** by Ian Falconer. Anne Schwartz Books, 2006.
- **Playtime Rhymes for Little People** compiled by Mary Finch. Barefoot Books, 2006.
- **So Sleepy Story** by Uri Shulevitz. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2006



## Upcoming Events

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY WELLNESS PROGRAM

- FEBRUARY 19** Cross-Country Ski Day
- FEBRUARY 22** Managing Conflict Well and Wise
- MARCH 22** Bullying Well and Wise
- MARCH 23** 3K Fun Walk for Heart Health



To register, or for more information visit: [wellness.byu.edu](http://wellness.byu.edu) or call 422-5884