

Tip Sheets

Infants and Toddlers: Early Language Development and School Readiness



Language is an important tool in the development of self-regulation skills. A University of Indiana study (2015) found

that language skills were predictive of the child's growth in self-regulation, and that self-regulation predicted behavioral adjustment.

Inadequate early language skills can influence the child's ability to control behavior. Language provides children with a means to help direct their behavior and guide their actions especially in frustrating and challenging situations. The ability to self-regulate is critical in helping children:

- Control their bodies
- Identify and express emotions
- Regulate behavior
- Focus attention

Each of these skills is important in being ready to engage in formal learning opportunities.

The Importance of Everyday Interactions

Readiness for later learning and success in school begins at birth. Everyday interactions and experiences are what truly promote learning and school readiness. Daily experiences help infants and toddlers to develop the necessary skills for school success, which include the ability to:

- Communicate needs and ideas with others
- Cooperate and take turns
- Get along with others
- Exhibit a love for learning.

These skills are sometimes referred to as social and emotional literacy, which also includes:

- The ability to self-regulate
- An understanding that others have feelings
- Respect for others
- Confidence
- A sense of competency

School readiness and success is dependent upon mastery of these skills—all of which begin in the context of early caregiving relationships. In fact, studies have shown that the daily use of talking, singing, and reading with infants beginning at birth contributes to building the architecture of the brain and the development of language, math, reading, and social skills.

Additional Resources

Talking is Teaching

<http://talkingisteaching.org>

Zero to Three

<http://www.zerotothree.org>

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