

SPARK

Strong, Prepared And Ready for Kindergarten



... a love of learning

Talk

Talk with your child every day...this helps your child learn words.

Read

Read with your child every day...this helps your child enjoy learning.

Play

Play with your child every day...this helps your child get along with others.

Move

Move with your child every day...this helps your child develop motor skills.

Explore

Explore with your child every day...this helps build your child's creativity.



Help your child be ready for school ... right from the start.

44 E Galena Blvd | Aurora, IL 60505 | 630.896.4636 | SPARKaurora.org

Infants

0—18 Months

- Say your baby's name often.
- Take turns making the same sounds as your baby.
- Talk to your baby during bath time, play time, diaper changing and feeding time.
- Talking to your baby will help your baby learn new words and mimic sounds.

- Look at books together—black and white picture books strengthen eyesight.
- Point to pictures in books and talk about what you see.
- Read before nap time and bedtime. This routine can calm your baby.

- Give your baby time to move and play with you.
- Look and smile at your baby.
- Play with your baby using rattles, toys and games like peek-a-boo.
- Talk with your baby during these activities.

- Dedicate time every day for active movement.
- Limit time spent in items that restrict movement (swings, walkers, bouncy seats, etc.)
- Aim for no TV/screen exposure for infants.
- Allow for tummy time as

- Give your baby a variety of interesting toys to play with.
- Take your baby on a walk daily to explore his or her surroundings.
- Use your imagination to find interesting things for your baby to smell, hear or see.
- Join an infant/toddler playgroup.

Toddlers

18—36 Months

- Help your child learn to talk by adding words.
- Help your child learn new words by explaining what is happening during the day.
- Name your toddlers feelings such as happy, sad, mad and scared.
- Sing simple songs. Use lots of rhyming words.

- Sit close to or hold your toddler when looking at books together.
- Let your toddler choose a book, turn the pages and point to pictures or words.
- Read your child's favorite books over and over again.

- Children learn when they play.
- Give your child time to explore new objects, places and people. Play outside often.
- Play make-believe with your child. Use dress-up clothes, puppets, boxes, pots and pans.

- Allow your child to develop touch and balance by using soft shoes or bare feet while your child is learning to walk.
- Turn on the radio and dance with your toddler. Limit TV/screen time.
- Throw and kick different sizes and textured balls with your child.

- Explore the outdoors together by touching bark, examining twigs and watching spiders.
- Take your child to the zoo, park and beach.
- Play "I Spy" with your child. For example, adult says "I spy something red," and child responds "I see a stop sign."

Preschoolers

36—60 Months

- Talk with your child about his or her day. Ask questions that begin with who, what and why.
- Use complete sentences to describe what is happening around you and your child.
- Ask children "what if" or "I wonder" questions.

- Have fun while you are reading books and looking at pictures with your child. Use silly voices.
- Retell stories in your own words. Listen to your child retell stories.
- Point out words inside and outside of your home.

- Play with toys and create things using blocks, crayons, play dough, sandboxes and playgrounds.
- Follow what your child is interested in when playing together.
- Describe what your child is doing.
- Pretend to cook, care for babies, dress up and go to work.

- Create an obstacle course that encourages climbing, crawling, throwing and jumping.
- Exercise daily with your child.
- Be silly, wiggle and dance to music with your child.
- Limit TV/screen time.

- Go on a nature scavenger hunt.
- Encourage your child to help grocery shop.
- Expose your child to different cultures through food, music, dance, clothes and stories.
- Visit your local museums, libraries and other friendly areas.

Talk

Read

Play

Move

Explore

Lighting the way so all of Aurora's children reach their full potential.



Start up funding for SPARK was generously provided through a grant from the Dunham Fund.