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# Everyday Experiences Make *a...*

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# CAREGIVER GUIDE

# ... Lifetime of Differences.

## *Dear Caregivers,*

Boy are your children special! They are learning each and everyday during each and every moment.

During the first three years, a child develops a wide variety of skills. Children learn to move, to make their needs known, to explore their world, and begin taking care of themselves.

The very first teacher of all of these skills is you, the caregiver. Your love, understanding, and guidance will help your child to grow, develop, and learn all sorts of wonderful skills.

Each day, you interact with your child many, many times. Your daily routines may at times seem dull or boring, hectic and confusing, but many of these routines are filled with enriching magical moments that help your child learn about his/her world.

Wonderful opportunities for interaction with your child occur during the things you do on a regular basis.

You interact with your child as you feed her, when you dress him, when you play, when you bring the child to the grocery store or the bank, driving in the car, riding the Metro, or commuting home from work.

Within these brochures you will find ways and ideas to help you make all of those interactions helpful, therapeutic, and fun. Daily routines are magical moments filled with learning opportunities. These daily routines and activities are considered natural environments.

## **Natural Environments**

- Preparing meals
- Eating breakfast, lunch, dinner or snacks
- Dressing and diaper changing
- Bathing
- Playtime at the park, library, child care, or on the floor
- Commuting on the Metro, on a bus, in a cab, or in a car
- Running errands to the bank, grocery store, or pharmacy
- Cleaning the apartment
- Doing laundry
- Naps and bedtime
- Going to church, synagogue, mosque
- Eating in restaurants
- Child care centers
- Parent day out programs

## **Things to Remember**

- The tender years from birth to three are so important. This is the time when children build strong foundations for learning from positive relationships with people in their environments.
- Babies love to know you are there and love to be touched, talked to, and held.

- Talk to your children wherever you are. Label and name everything in your child's environment.
- Children love new opportunities and they learn from them. Expose your infant and toddler to new ideas, safe household objects, different foods, textures, sounds and playmates.
- Learning opportunities are all around us in all that we do each day with our children.
- Remember that learning does not necessarily always have to occur in structured, planned activities.
- All that you do around children can be enriching. Remember everywhere you go can be exciting for your child.
- Moving around their environment helps children to develop strong muscles, increase awareness of their bodies and the space around them, build confidence, and encourage risk-taking. New and different opportunities to move and develop are so important.
- Enjoy and appreciate each moment with your child. These moments go by so quickly.

**Show me *the way to* achieve my best *each* day!**