



FAMILY TOOLKIT

The Basics: Simple, research-backed actions that help every child thrive.

By **talking, playing, reading, showing love,** and **engaging consistently**, caregivers strengthen early brain development, build essential skills, and set children on a path for lifelong success.

This toolkit provides tips and resources to make The Basics part of everyday life.



**EVERY CHILD
ALL 5
PRINCIPLES
EVERYDAY**





The 5 Basics Principles



Maximize Love, Manage Stress



Talk, Point and Sing



Count, Group, and Compare



Explore through Movement and Play



Read and Discuss Stories

www.enrichingpartnerships.org

Make it a habit to use

All Five Basics Principles every day!

Just a few minutes each day helps build your child's brain and sets the foundation for lifelong learning.



Explore the
Five Basics Principles?



Scan the QR code to visit
our website!

Visit for a quick Brain Boost



www.thebasics.org/brain-boosts/



In Your Bag



Markers

Let the creativity flow! Markers help little ones build strong hand muscles for writing while they explore colors, shapes, and big imagination ideas on paper.

Crayons

A classic for a reason! Crayons help kids develop their grip for writing, boost coordination, and turn everyday scribbles into stories, drawings, and early learning adventures.



Scissors

Snip, snip hooray! Cutting helps kids build hand strength, coordination, and focus—important fine motor skills for writing, dressing themselves, and everyday independence.



Glue Sticks

Stick it together! Gluing helps strengthen small hand muscles while kids create, build, and learn how things fit together—great for problem-solving and creativity.

Construction Paper

So many possibilities! From collages to shapes and color games, construction paper sparks imagination while supporting early math, sorting, and storytelling skills.

Water Colors

A little messy, a lot of magic! Painting helps kids express feelings, explore color mixing, and build fine motor skills—all while having fun and relaxing through art.





Maximize Love, Manage Stress

Maximize Love, Manage Stress is the first **Basics of Greater Elgin** Principle!

Strong parent-child connections build trust and resilience. **Maximize Love, Manage Stress** encourages warmth, patience, and shared moments, helping children feel secure while parents stay calm. Love is the key to growth.

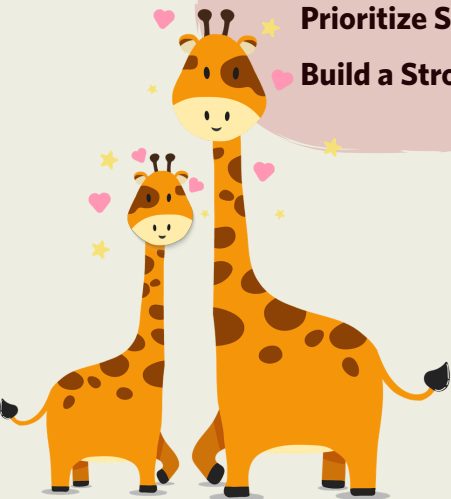
Here are some practical tips to strengthen your connection with your child while keeping stress in check:

Show Love Daily - Hugs, kind words, and quality time make kids feel secure.

Listen Actively - Give your child your full attention and validate their feelings.

Prioritize Self-Care - A calm parent fosters a calm home. Take time for yourself.

Build a Strong Support System - Connect with other parents and seek help when needed.



Scan the QR code to learn more about
Maximize Love, Manage Stress





Talk, Sing, and Point

Talking, Singing, and Pointing help children learn about the world. When parents engage with their kids through conversation, songs, and gestures, they build vocabulary, strengthen connections, and spark curiosity. These simple interactions turn everyday moments into learning opportunities, fostering brain development and emotional bonds.

Follow along here



I Love My Maracas

By Katie Kraft

I love my maracas; I make them TAP TAP TAP

I tap them HIGH, I tap them LOW

I tap them in my LAP (tap your lap yeah tap your lap)

Let's dance!

I love my maracas; I SHAKE them SIDE to SIDE

I shake to the RIGHT, I shake to the LEFT and then I make them HIDE (make them hide)

Let's dance!

I love my maracas; I tap them to the beat

I tap my SHOULDERS, tap my TUMMY, then I tap my FEET (tap your feet, yeah tap your feet)

Let's dance!

I love my maracas; I SPIN them ROUND and ROUND

I SPIN and SPIN and SPIN and SPIN until I FALL right down druuuum!

Scan the QR code to learn more about **Talk, Sing and Point**



Use your Maracas
to sing and dance
together!





Sing to Build Strong Brains



Scan the QR codes to try these songs at home!



TOOTY TA

What other songs
can you sing
together?



STICKY STICKY BUBBLE GUM



HEAD SHOULDERS KNEES AND TOES





Count, Group and Compare

COUNTING, GROUPING, and COMPARING help children make sense of numbers and patterns. When kids sort objects, find differences, and count aloud, they build early math skills and problem-solving abilities. These simple activities turn everyday moments into learning opportunities, setting a strong foundation for future learning.

Games like **ISPY** support Count, Group, and Compare by helping kids notice details and patterns. They count objects, group them by similarities, and compare differences—all while having fun!



Can you collect these nature treasures in your bug catcher?



GRASS



FLOWER



ROCK



STICK



LEAF



BUG



How many of each item did you find? Count and see!



Scan the QR code to learn more about **Count, Group, and Compare**



Explore Through Movement and Play

Children learn best when they **MOVE** and **PLAY**! When kids dance, climb, and build, they grow strong, learn to solve problems, and use their imagination to build their brains.

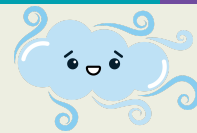
Every time they play, they are learning about the world.

Movement Prompts for kids:

- Can you run like the wind and pretend you're flying a kite?
- Show me how you would dance if you were a kite soaring in the sky!
- Pretend you're the wind—how would you move to make a kite fly high?

Kite fun:

- **Obstacle Course Flying**– Try guiding your kite around objects or landmarks like trees, cones, or benches.
- Can you make your kite fly **HIGH**? Now bring it down **LOW**!
- **Follow the Leader** – One child leads with their kite while others follow and copy their movements.
- **Wind Detectives** – Feel the wind on your face—Which is the wind blowing? Run that direction with your kite!



Scan the QR code to learn more about **Explore Through Movement and Play**





Read and Discuss Stories



Read and Discuss Stories is sharing a book with your child and talking about what you see, think, and wonder together. These conversations help children build language, understanding, and a love of learning while strengthening their connection with you.

- Look at the cover of the book and have your child predict what the book will be about.
- Pause and ask your child to name things in the pictures.
- "What's happening on this page?"
- "What's happening on this page?" Ask questions about the story.
- Let them describe the story in their own words.
- "What comes next?"
- Encourage guessing and prediction.



Make the Book Interactive

- Act out the story
- Pretend to be characters using voices and movement.
- Make sound effects in the story. Add noises (animals, cars, weather).
- Point and move
- "Can you find the dog? Show me how it runs!"



Scan the QR code to learn more about **Read and Discuss Stories**





Learning Through Play

Bean Bags

Maximize Love, Manage Stress

- Play toss or catch with smiles, laughter, and encouragement.
- Celebrate effort ("Nice try!") instead of perfection.
- Use bean bag games as a calm, bonding break.

Count, Group, and Compare

- Count how many times you can toss or catch in a row.
- Compare colors, shapes, or weights of bean bags.
- Sort bean bags into groups ("Let's put all the blue ones together").

Read and Discuss Stories

- Use bean bags during storytime — toss one when it's your turn to talk.
- Act out story actions (like hopping or flying) with bean bags.
- Ask questions and let your child retell the story through movement.

Talk, Sing, and Point

- Narrate your play: "**Up** it goes! **Down** it falls!"
- Sing action songs like "Bean Bag Toss" or "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes."
- Point and name body parts or directions as you play.

Explore Through Movement and Play

- Balance bean bags on different body parts (head, shoulder, knee).
- Create obstacle courses or silly movement challenges.
- Encourage creative movement and problem-solving.





Learning Through Play

Finger Puppets

Maximize Love, Manage Stress

- Use finger puppets to share hugs, smiles, and laughter.
- Make up gentle puppet voices that show care and affection.
- Puppets can help your child feel calm and connected.



Talk, Sing, and Point

- Have your puppet “talk” to your child about what’s happening.
- Sing simple songs together (“Twinkle, Twinkle,” “Itsy Bitsy Spider”)
- Point to body parts or objects as the puppet names them.

Count, Group, and Compare

- Use puppets to count together: “One, two, three little bears!”
- Compare puppets by size, color, or emotion.
- Make small number games part of playtime.



Explore Through Movement and Play

- Move puppets around — hopping, running, hiding, or flying.
- Let your child imitate puppet actions or make up their own.
- Encourage pretend play and creativity.

Read and Discuss Stories

- Use finger puppets to act out favorite books.
- Pause and ask questions: “What do you think happens next?”
- Let your child “read” or tell the story back using the puppets.



THE BASICS CAREGIVER'S PROMISE

By Dr. Ron Ferguson

With my **heart** I will love you
And shield you from stress.

With my **mouth** I will speak what I feel.
With soft words and sweet songs every time I behold you
I'll show you that my love is real.

With my **fingers** I'll point at the objects I name
And I'll count them in groups to compare.
With my **feet** I will take you outdoors to explore
While we play and enjoy the fresh air.

With my **eyes** I will read as I show you the world
Through bright pictures and stories in books.
These are ways to make sure that your brain is prepared
For successes wherever you look.



This my promise I make from the day of your birth
That these Basics I'll faithfully do.
For my job is to help you grow happy and smart
Starting now when your life is brand new.

You will learn that your life is an artwork.
And that you are the artist in charge.
But before you decide what to do with your life
Listen now
To the beat
Of my heart.



STAY CONNECTED!



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EPEL Website



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