10 Things Every Child Needs

Interaction
- Respond quickly to baby’s needs
- Speak in a soft, slow voice
- Be involved in child’s play

Touch
- Massage your infant
- Rock your baby
- Hold your baby while feeding

Safety
- Create a safe and healthy home environment
- Lock up cleaning supplies and medications
- Keep your child in a rear-facing car seat until age 2

Stable Relationship
- Be predictable, nurturing, and calm when interacting with your baby
- Be a loving, consistent presence for your baby
- Children who have a stable relationship with their caregiver may learn at a faster rate, feel better about themselves, and make friends more easily

Self-Esteem
- Recognize and celebrate that every child is unique from birth
- Praise your child with positive feedback
- A strong sense of self is the foundation for healthy development

Quality Care
- Take an active role in selecting the best possible childcare option
- Visit the childcare center with your child to determine their comfort level
- Make unannounced visits to your childcare center

Communication
- Talk to your baby early and often
- Use broad vocabulary
- Answer your baby’s coos
- Use positive non-verbal expressions such as smiling back at your baby

Play
- Get to know your child through play
- Be silly and have fun with your child
- Incorporate play into your routines

Music and Reading
- Sing, clap, rock, and dance with your baby
- Music stimulates brain development
- Start reading early. Make it part of your routine

Adapted from “10 Things Every Child Needs” North Dakota Department of Human Services
You can begin to establish nurturing routines the moment you bring your baby home! A nurturing routine helps establish consistency, positive self-esteem, positive self-concept, trust, and empathy.

**Bath Time**
- Keep bath water warm - not hot
- Maintain a consistent bath time when possible
- Always keep a hand on baby while bathing
- Make bath time fun - encourage play
- Communicate with baby - "I am going to wash your hair."
- Use mild soaps and shampoos

**Bedtime**
- Establish consistent nap and bedtime during baby's early months
- Start bedtime with a clean diaper
- Dim lighting
- Read your baby a story
- Sing lullabies
- Snuggle and rock your baby
- Massage to increase relaxation

**Diapering and Dressing Time**
- Create a calm and clean diapering area
- Keep baby warm while changing
- Begin and end each diaper change with a hug
- Soothe a fussy baby during changing time
- Take your time
- Be silly
- Smile at baby
- Choose comfortable and non-restrictive clothing

**Feeding Time**
- Provide your baby with a comfortable eating environment
- Cradle your baby while feeding
- Make eye contact
- If bottle-feeding, hold the baby’s bottle yourself
- Keep baby skin to skin while breastfeeding or bottlefeeding
- Encourage self-feeding around 9-10 months
- Allow toddler to reject food