

PRESENTED BY:



# STRIVE FOR 5: TALK, READ, SING EARLY LEARNING BOOT CAMP

Educator Guide

[www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)



DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH:



# WELCOME TO STRIVE FOR 5!

Welcome to STRIVE for 5!, a hands-on program designed to give you instant tools and ideas to promote children’s language development and improve the quality of your early learning environment. We are pleased you are participating in this five-week program! We have designed the program so that it is easy to use – everything is in one place, and you’ll have direct access to a great support system to ensure your success.

The goal of STRIVE for 5! is to support the growth and development of young children from infancy to age five. STRIVE for 5! was developed by early learning educators, researchers, and authors from several key organizations. The initiative was created by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) and *Too Small to Fail* in partnership with the National Head Start Association (NHSA) and The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).

STRIVE for 5! was built just for you! We understand that you manage so many tasks in order to provide quality care and education to the young children and families you serve. STRIVE for 5! can be done on your time – where and when it is convenient for you. It is divided into five user-friendly segments with key information and tools to help you create a language-rich early learning environment filled with activities like talking, reading, and singing.

## **GETTING STARTED: 5 EASY STEPS**

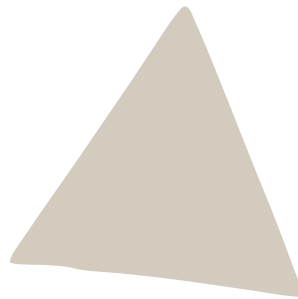
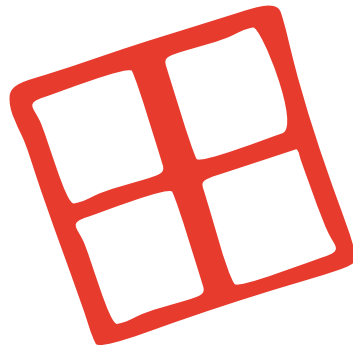
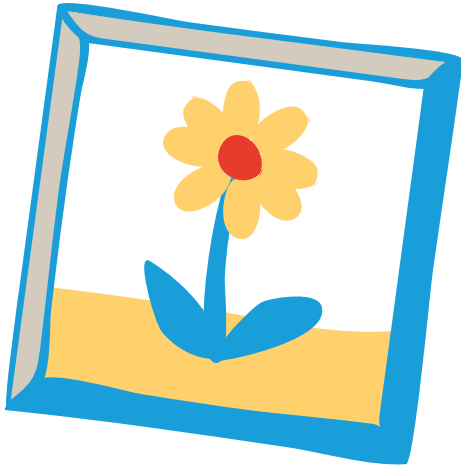
1. Visit the program’s website, [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)
2. Watch the “Welcome to STRIVE for 5!” video for an introduction to the program and what you will learn.
3. Explore the contents of the STRIVE for 5! tote bag – review the books, Little Things cards, and other fun materials.
4. Read through the rest of this guide and each of the segments.
5. Plan your timing and approach to the STRIVE for 5! program.

This STRIVE for 5! Educator Guide will take you through each week of the program. It is also a place to keep personal notes, thoughts, and ideas in the journal pages.

Each segment in the STRIVE for 5! program is designed to give you valuable information on literacy and language development to use immediately in your home or center. We also have a glossary and resource pages along with tips on how to engage parents and accommodate dual language learners and learning differences.

We encourage you to use the forum on the STRIVE for 5! website. It’s a place where you can talk about the program with other early educators from across the country, ask questions, and give each other ideas about ways to improve your practice. To make sure we are providing you with the best information and tools possible, please complete a short survey at the beginning and end of the program (available at [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)). And best of all, at the end the STRIVE for 5! program, you will receive a certificate of completion from Too Small to Fail, NHSA, HMH, and NAFCC.

We look forward to working together. Now let’s STRIVE for 5!

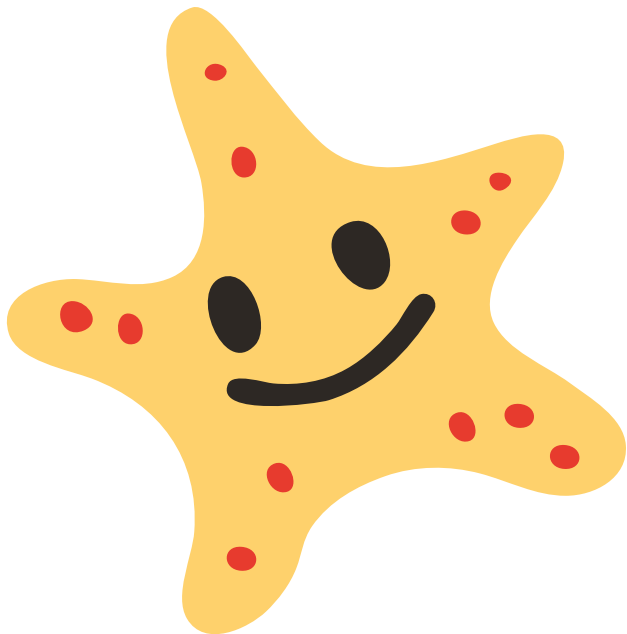




# STRIVE FOR 5

## WEEK ONE:

GETTING TO KNOW YOUNG CHILDREN



# GETTING TO KNOW YOUNG CHILDREN

The human brain is an amazing organ! Compared to the adult brain, children’s brains are much more impressionable and greatly shaped by their early experiences (neuroscientists use the word “plastic”).<sup>1</sup>

This is important for educators, caregivers, and parents to know – young brains are very open to positive and enriching environments. They are also more vulnerable to environments that are not nurturing or supportive.<sup>2</sup>

Brain science research demonstrates that the early months and years of a child’s life offer a critical opportunity to shape his or her future. As educators, parents, and caregivers, each of us plays an incredibly powerful role in boosting children’s early brain development. By applying the science of how children learn, we can all strive to create a nurturing and stimulating environment that includes plenty of play and brain-building activities like talking, reading, and singing.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

1. What is happening in the developing brain
2. Key facts on children’s early language development
3. The important role of play in learning
4. How to observe young children and identify developmental milestones
5. Five smart things to do while observing children

## WATCH *GETTING TO KNOW YOUNG CHILDREN* VIDEOS:

1. Introductory Video for the Week – How Children Learn
2. What Is Learning: Science to Practice
3. Language Development and Learning
4. Importance of Play!

<sup>1</sup> A. Gopnick, A. Meltzoff, *The Scientist in the Crib: What early learning tells us about the mind*, Perennial.

<sup>2</sup> Zero to Three, *Brainworks*.

# HOW CHILDREN LEARN!

The first five years are the most important in shaping a child's future health, growth, ability to learn, and success in school and life.

1. Two core skills linked to reading achievement are recognizing sounds and letters and knowing the alphabet.
2. Children learn language by engaging in back-and-forth interactions with caregivers even before they can speak, hearing and singing songs, having stories told or read to them, repeating rhymes, and playing games.
3. Children learn everything through playful learning. Play is how children learn!
4. Over time, children can learn about math and spatial reasoning in just 15 minutes of free play with blocks. The simplest, open-ended toys are often the best!
5. Children are naturally curious. Give them recycled materials such as old boxes, plastic bottles, and empty tubes. See what they create.



# CHECKLIST FOR OBSERVING YOUNG CHILDREN



These 10 general questions can help you in recording your ongoing observations of the children in your classroom. Use the *Tip Sheet – Learning Milestones* for each developmental level (available on [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)). Send it home with parents, too!

- What skills can the child do independently?
- How does the child express his/her needs?
- How does the child attend to his/her social and physical surroundings?
- What does the child do when he/she gets frustrated (such as when a tower of blocks falls while building it)?
- How does the child interact with the children around him/her?
- How does the child react to transitions (such as being asked to change activities to do something else)?
- How does the child communicate (single words, sentences, gestures, etc.)?
- How does the child use materials or objects during play?
- How long does a child stay on task?
- Does the child seek out help or support from others?





## FIVE SMART THINGS TO DO!

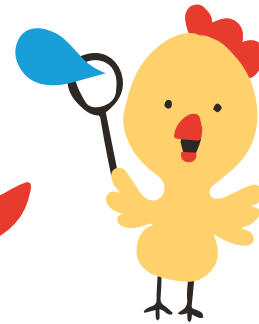


1. Select one of the Little Things cards from the tote bag and engage the children in the activity.



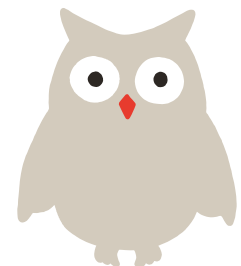
2. Write down what the children do and their approaches to the activity.

3. Review the milestones on the STRIVE for 5! website. Mark where each child is at in his/her language development.



4. Select one learning goal for each child in the language development milestone and plan a simple activity to support that goal. Share with parents to continue at home.

5. Place the Wall Talker Posters in your classroom in key areas. You can also download these at [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com) to print and share with parents.



### Dual Language Learners (DLL) and learning differences (LD) tips –

**DLL:** Adjust the Little Things to include key vocabulary in both languages.

**LD:** Break up larger tasks into smaller ones. Write what the child can do or is doing not what he/she cannot do.

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUNG CHILDREN: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Reflect on the things you have learned about how children learn.  
Write down information about their development and what you would  
like to know more about.

**What surprised you as you watched the children play?**

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**What are three things you learned from the videos?**

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**How might you change the schedule with the children to promote better ways to help them learn?**

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**What new materials or activities will you add to the learning environment to support language development?**

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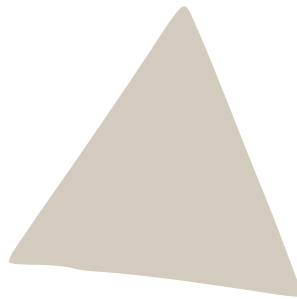
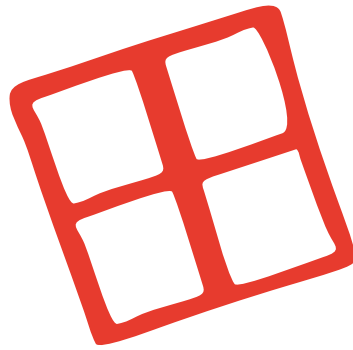
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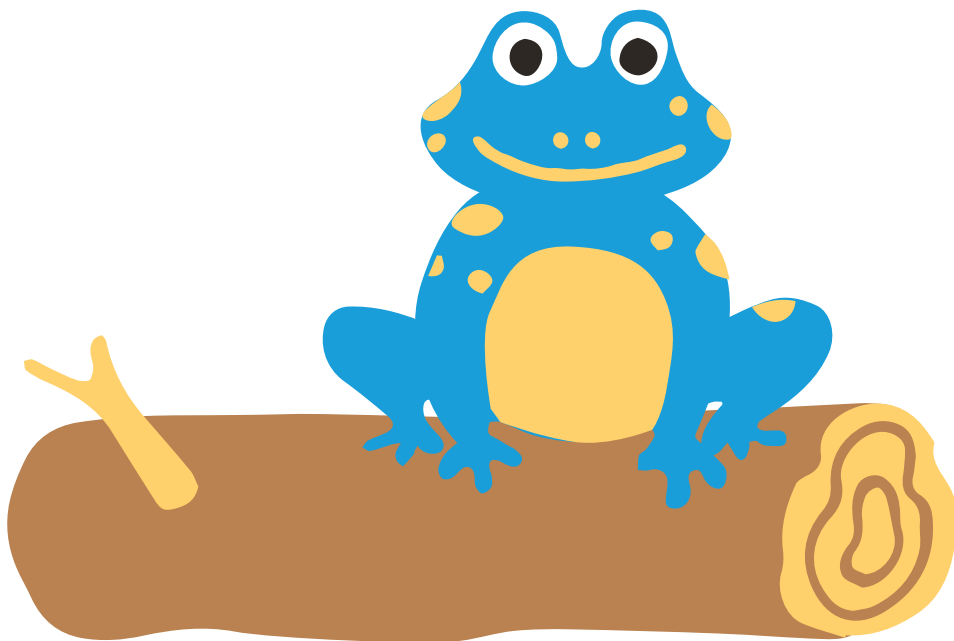




# STRIVE FOR 5

## WEEK TWO:

ENGAGE CHILDREN IN PLAYFUL LEARNING



# ENGAGE CHILDREN IN PLAYFUL LEARNING

When learning is fun, children are engaged and motivated.<sup>1</sup> Include time for both free play (child's choice) and guided play (supported by teachers) every day. Children develop language, social, communication, and other essential skills as they play – it is how they learn!

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

1. More information about the different types of play
2. How you can support children's learning and language development through playful learning
3. Research facts about the benefits of playful learning in early education
4. Five things you can do to nurture playful learning experiences
5. How to use your observations of children during playful learning

## WATCH ENGAGING CHILDREN IN PLAYFUL LEARNING VIDEOS:

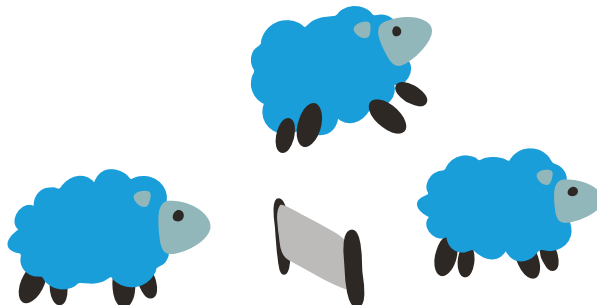
1. Engaging in Playful Learning – Introduction
2. Play and Learning Go Hand in Hand
3. Free Play and Guided Play
4. Play is Children's Work



<sup>1</sup> *A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool: Presenting the Evidence*, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Laura E. Berk, and Dorothy Singer, 2008, Oxford University Press

## PLAYFUL LEARNING FACTS

1. Play provides a natural motivation to learn since children are doing things that they enjoy and interest them.
2. When children play, they gain an understanding about the world since they are testing ideas about their environment, objects, and people.
3. Free play is play where children choose the activity and move at their own pace.
4. Guided play takes place when teachers follow the children's interests and enhance their learning by asking questions, introducing new concepts, and initiating new activities for the children to explore.
5. Play provides fun and easy opportunities for talking, reading, and singing, which help build language skills.
6. Play supports the building of self-control skills for success in school and life.
7. Children build connections to family and friends through play which supports self-confidence and social-emotional development.
8. Dramatic play helps children deal with their fears, reduce stress, and develop emotionally.
9. As children grow, their play becomes more creative and experimental.
10. Play is essential to healthy child development.



# TYPE OF PLAYFUL LEARNING

When observing children at play, write down the types of play you see:

**Dramatic play** – pretend play, fantasy play, acting out daily life, role playing

**Physical play** – using gross motor skills (running, jumping, ball play, etc.)

**Constructive play** – building with blocks and other materials

**Cooperative play** – engaging with other children in unstructured play or games

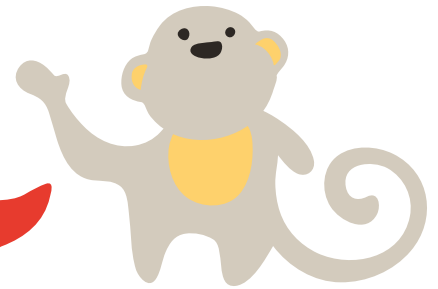
**Creative play** – drawing, painting, and using other art materials



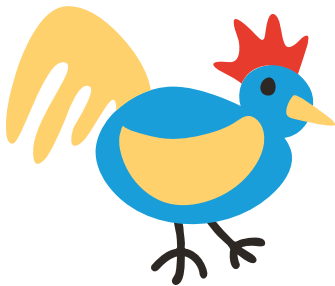


## FIVE SMART THINGS TO DO!

1. Use the *Play is Learning* Tip Sheet (available on [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)) as your guide to encourage all types of play. Share with parents.



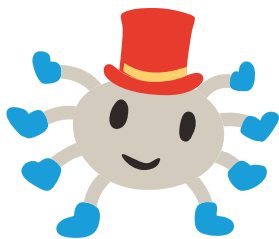
2. Select a Little Things card and practice guided play with the children.



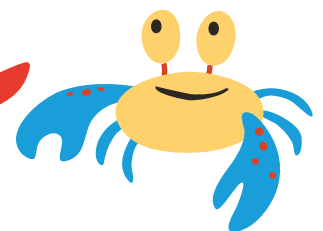
3. Use language and storytelling as children play.



4. Ask open-ended, exploratory questions (how and what) during play to learn what the children are thinking and learning.



5. Read a story to the children and help them act it out.



### DLL and other learning differences tips –

**DLL:** Select stories and books from varying cultures.

**LD:** Keep stories short and talk about the characters throughout the day. Keep activities fun and simple.

# ENGAGE CHILDREN IN PLAYFUL LEARNING: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Write down your thoughts on learning through play and how you will use the ideas presented in the guide and in the videos.

**Write down ideas on how you can use guided play.**

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**What are three things you learned from the videos?**

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**What things can you add to the classroom to support play and language learning?**

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**What types of play do you see most in your classroom? What types of play can you add more of?**

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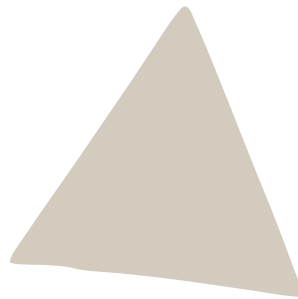
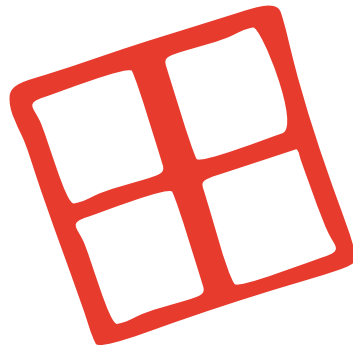
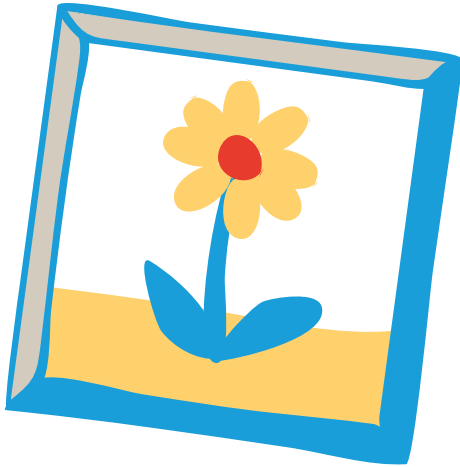
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# STRIVE FOR 5

## WEEK THREE:

CREATING A LITERACY-RICH ENVIRONMENT



# CREATING A LITERACY-RICH ENVIRONMENT

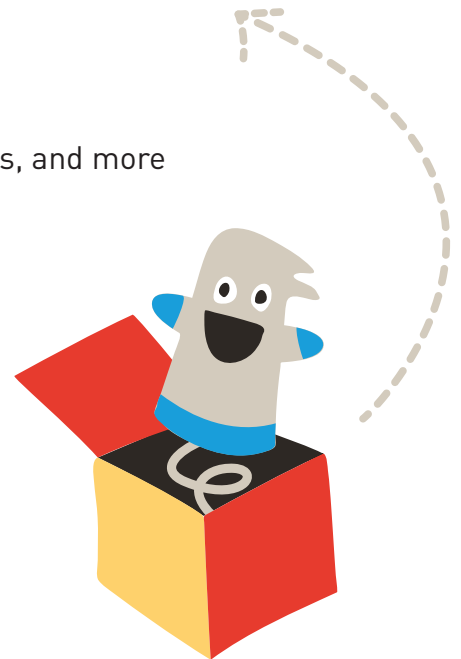
A literacy-rich environment is one in which children are exposed to continuous and purposeful verbal interactions with peers and adults. Your environment should be comfortable and accessible, and as much as possible, include a variety of literacy materials.<sup>1</sup> This type of classroom ensures language learning is everywhere – not just in the reading corner, but also in all play areas.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

1. What is a literacy-rich environment?
2. How to create a literacy-rich environment
3. Tips on creating small group spaces, quiet spaces, and more
4. How to use the *Talking is Teaching Tip Sheet* (available at [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com))
5. How to use books to create engaging learning activities

## WATCH *CREATING A LITERACY-RICH ENVIRONMENT* VIDEOS:

1. Creating a Literacy-Rich Environment – Introduction
2. Developing Language through Play
3. Language and School Readiness
4. Play and Reading



<sup>1</sup> Center for Early Literacy Learning

## LITERACY-RICH ENVIRONMENT ESSENTIALS

1. Listen and talk with the children about everything around them.
2. Talk, read, and sing throughout the day's routines and activities, including snack time, diaper time, and naptime.
3. Place talking, reading, and singing materials in different play areas in the classroom.
4. Offer both fiction and non-fiction books and eBooks.
5. Provide print materials such as weather charts, name cards, labels, and alphabet cards.
6. Offer a range of reading materials – books, magazines, and storyboards.
7. Have writing materials available – pencils, crayons, markers, paper, letter stamps, easels, and paints.
8. Provide language development props – flannel boards, puzzles, and letter blocks.
9. Create different spaces for learning – quiet reading corners, small group areas, activity centers, outdoor areas, and large group spaces.
10. Include reading and writing in all activities, such as a science project or a math lesson.



## WHAT TO DO DURING AND AFTER READING A STORY

You can inspire a love of books and stories in children by reading aloud with them every day. Here are some tips to help children learn through books:

- Preview the book before reading it to the children.
- Introduce the story by holding up the book.
- Show children the cover, read the title, and point to the picture. You might say, *“Today we are going to read Three Billy Goats Gruff. Can you see the pictures of the goats?”*
- Ask a few open-ended questions. For example, *“Have you ever seen a goat? Who knows what goats like to eat?”*
- Open the book and hold it so all children can see the pictures.
- As you read aloud, be expressive with your face and voice to keep children engaged.
- Point out things in the pictures that relate to what you read. *“See the three goats? One is eating hay. What is the second one eating?”*
- Allow the children to make comments and ask questions along the way.
- Ask questions at the end of the story. *“What did the goats want to do? How did they trick the troll? What was your favorite part of this story?”*
- Extend the story with a hands-on activity. *“Let’s go to the block area and see if we can build a few bridges (just like the goats).”*

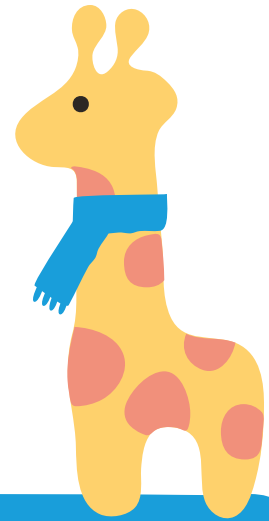
**Suggested side note:** If you’re reading one-on-one with a child, hold them on your lap and cuddle as you share a book together. This can help them develop positive attitudes towards books and reading starting at an early age.





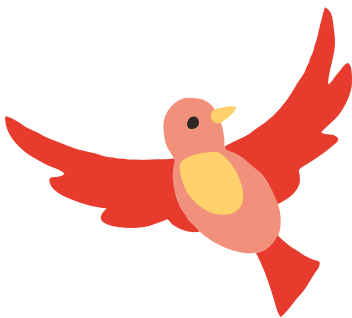
## FIVE SMART THINGS TO DO!

1. Use the *Talking is Teaching* Tip Sheet (available at [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)) as your guide to support children's language development. Share the Tip Sheet with parents.



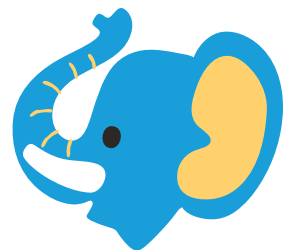
2. Select a Little Things card and use them to talk, read, sing, and play with children.

3. Read one of the books from your STRIVE for 5! tote bag.



4. Create a learning activity from one of the books you read.

5. Make five simple changes in your room to prompt more talking, reading, and singing activities throughout the day.



### DLL and other learning differences tips –

**DLL:** Select stories and books from varying cultures. Label items in two languages in one of your learning areas to start.  
**LD:** Give the children a tour of the new changes in the classroom helping them adjust. Have a variety of books at different reading levels and use audio books as well.

# CREATING A LITERACY-RICH ENVIRONMENT: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Write your thoughts on practicing the ideas from this week and how you will use ideas presented in the guide and in the videos in the future.

**What five things can you do to make your spaces be more language-rich?**

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**What are three things you learned from the videos?**

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**How can you use the books and storytelling to develop activities for the children?**

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**How do the wall posters support you in the classroom?**

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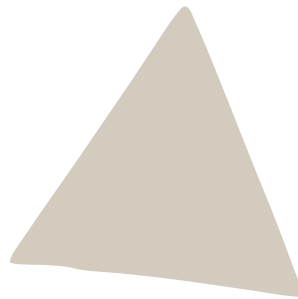
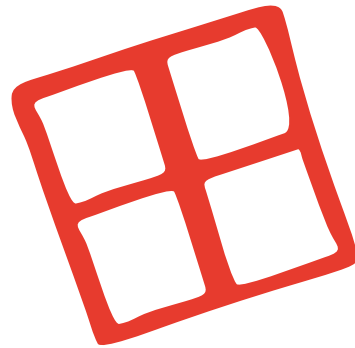
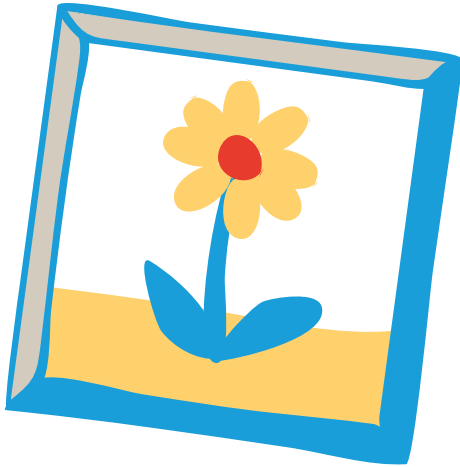
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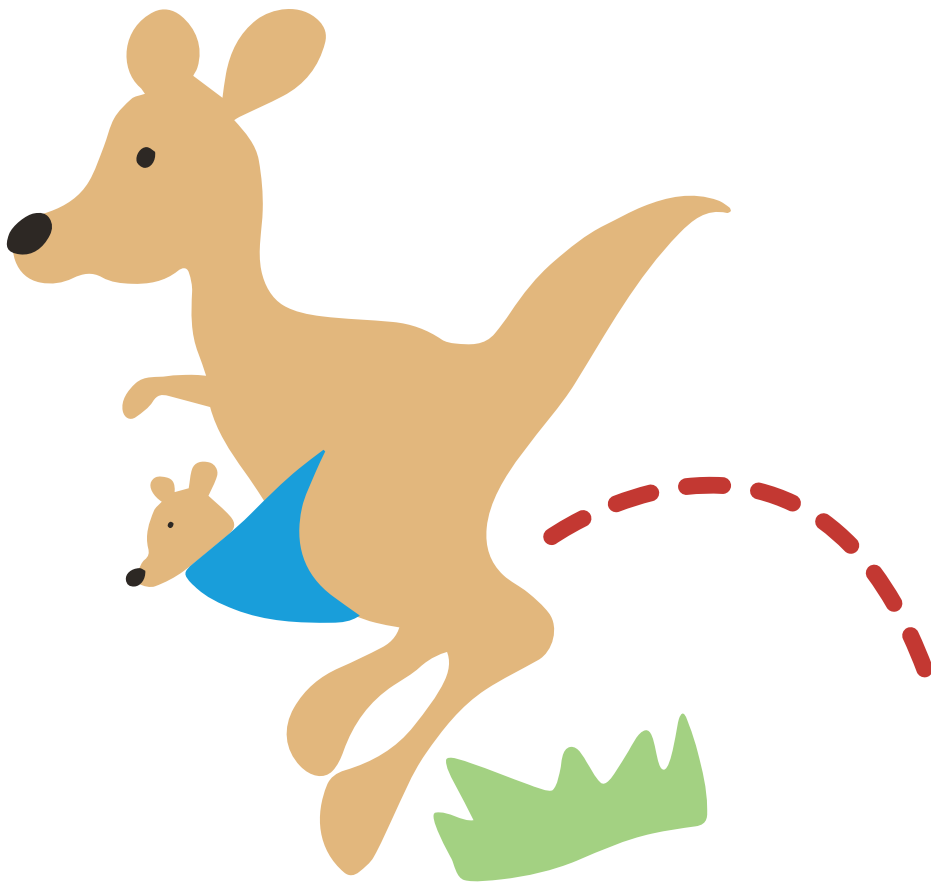




# STRIVE FOR 5

## WEEK FOUR:

CONNECTING WITH PARENTS & FAMILIES



# CONNECTING WITH PARENTS & FAMILIES

The parent-early educator connection is powerful and crucial to a successful educational experience for children. Parents play a critical role in supporting their child's early development. When parents and educators trust and collaborate with each other, children do better academically, behaviorally, and socially.<sup>1</sup> While it may often be hard to get parents involved beyond drop-off and pick-up, there are simple ways educators can build strong connections with families.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

1. What parents think about when it comes to early learning
2. Methods to help you connect with parents
3. How to create a contract with parents
4. Key connection opportunities
5. How to help parents extend their child's learning at home

## WATCH *CONNECTING WITH PARENTS/FAMILIES* VIDEOS:

1. Connecting with Parents – Introduction
2. Understanding Parents' Needs
3. Communicating Effectively with Parents
4. Goal Setting and Working Together



<sup>1</sup> National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) in December 2011

## CONNECTIONS – KEY TIMES TO CONNECT

Connect with parents at every opportunity. Here are some things you can do at each connection:

1. **Drop-off:** Tell parents what their child will be doing today. Give them a sample lesson plan.
2. **During the day:** Take a photo of the child's work or a quick video. Email or text it to the parents.
3. **Pick-up:** Share the day's highlight; make sure the daily report is given to the parents and includes one thing their child did that was unique and an open-ended question they can ask to spark a rich conversation about their day.
4. **Circle time:** Invite parents to join at least once a month where they can see how their child starts his or her day. They will also see how you read aloud to the children which may remind the parents about the importance of doing this at home.
5. **Conferences:** Take time to meet with parents one-on-one about their child's learning at least three times per year.
6. **Sick child:** Contact parents when their child is out and continue to make a great connection.
7. **Behavioral issues:** In addition to addressing the issue, talk with the parents positively about their child, his or her strengths, and how they may be able to work on challenges at home. Parents connect better when they're empowered with tools and strategies to improve the issue.
8. **Transitions:** Talk with parents about moving to a new classroom, a new teacher, or a change in schedule. Always inform parents through a personal conversation when these things happen. Parents will appreciate it, and it can help their child adjust.
9. **Hallway greetings:** Take the time to introduce parents to other parents. Connecting families helps them support each other and you.
10. **Special Events:** Plan special family connection activities such as a potluck dinner, a children's art show, or a sing-along throughout the year.

## CONNECTIONS – MAKING AN IMPACT

You can create...

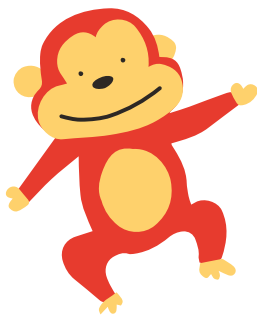
- **Teacher Bio** – Write up a simple bio of who you are. Include your interests, where you went to school, why you like your job, etc. Parents will get to know you, and they will feel connected.
- **Parent Survey** – Ask a few questions. Find out what their expectations are. Would they like to be a “guest” to read or sing a song? How is the best way to reach them (i.e. email, phone, text)?
- **Daily Report** – Create a simple daily report to share with parents. Include what their child ate, how long he/she slept, but most importantly, list one achievement.
- **Weekly Plan** – Let parents know what will happen each week. Focus on learning goals, featured books and songs, and activities they can do and conversations they can share at home (i.e. in an email notice, a posted newsletter, or a note with the Friday daily report for the upcoming week).
- **Parent Contract** – Design a simple contract. Agree on regular communications, what parents will do and what you will do. Together, map out the goals for their child.





## FIVE SMART THINGS TO DO!

1. List five things for each child that you want to share with his/her parents. For example, you can send home a *Diaper Time is Learning Time* Tip Sheet (available on [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)).



2. Provide regular fun and easy activities parents can do with their child at home to promote early language development. Use the ideas from the Little Things cards or parent handouts.

3. Create your own parent-teacher contract.



4. Set up a schedule to ensure you touch base with parents at least once per week.

5. To model reading strategies, invite parents to join the class during one circle time when you are reading to the children.



### DLL and other learning differences tips –

**DLL:** Explain the child's typical day step by step to the parents. Ask them how they would like to participate and make suggestions.

**LD:** Ask the parents about what the child can do at home. Suggest simple activities where you know the child will feel successful.

# CONNECTING WITH PARENTS & FAMILIES: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Write your thoughts on implementing the ideas from this week and how you will use ideas presented in the guide and in the videos.

**What are the hardest things to talk to parents about?**

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**How can you make changes to connect more with families?**

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**What things were most helpful from the videos and guide?**

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**Write what you would like to have in a parent-teacher contract.**

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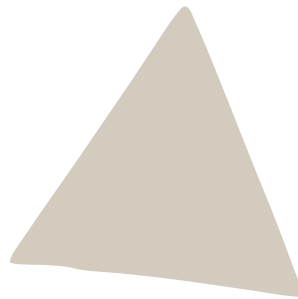
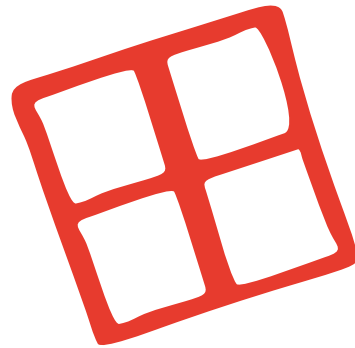
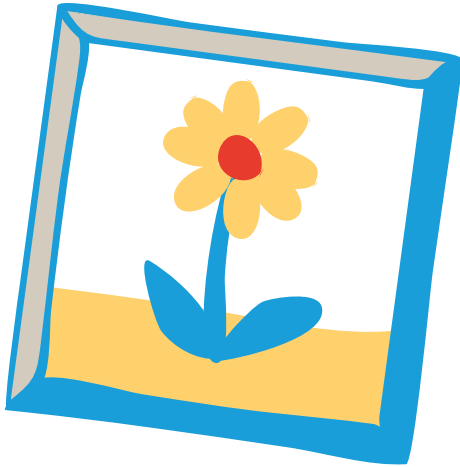
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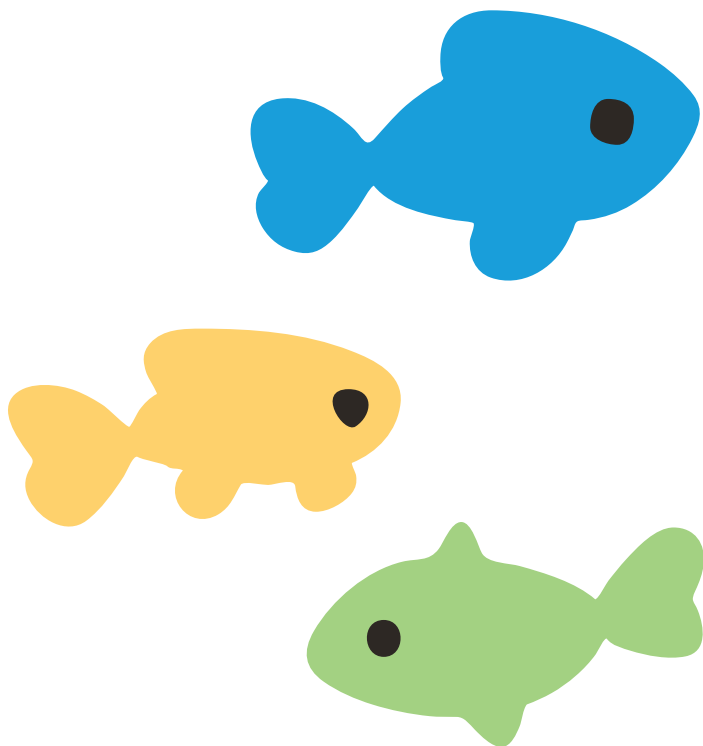




# STRIVE FOR 5

## WEEK FIVE:

SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS



# SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS

Every educator has the tools to differentiate learning and adapt what happens in the classroom. We work to meet students where they are and build toward a desired learning outcome. How we present the content, how we help the students process that content, and the desired learning outcome may vary but the approach always begins with the child.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

1. How to use naturalistic observations to explore where your students are, what their individual learning styles are and more
2. How to support Dual Language Learners (DLL)
3. How to create an inclusive classroom for children with learning differences
4. How to explain the benefits of bilingualism
5. How to adjust routines and expectations

## WATCH *MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS* VIDEOS:

1. Supporting the Needs of Diverse Learners – Introduction
2. DLL and the Benefits of Bilingualism
3. Creating an Inclusive Classroom
4. What is a Learning Style?



# THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

Children come in all shapes and sizes. They come from different communities and bring different strengths and perspectives. They also come with diverse learning needs and approaches. Early learning is the time to model creating an open and inclusive community – lessons and values that will last a lifetime and are critical for being a good member of the community in an increasingly diverse world. Here are some ideas for creating an inclusive classroom:

1. Diversity is not a lesson plan. It is an approach. It includes conversations about each child’s background, traditions, and language.
2. Let the child choose the stories to tell or read. Children add unique stories from their culture and home life.
3. Use bilingual text, family photos, and drawings to showcase each child’s family and experiences.
4. Include a rich vocabulary and activities from the children’s own interests and experiences (see *Week 4 – Creating a Literacy-Rich Environment*).
5. Children develop a sense of belonging when they see themselves represented throughout their classroom in the dolls, pictures, art, books, and other materials.
6. Include parents. Invite parents to read, sing, or tell stories. Ask parents to tell you how things are done in their home and what they feel is important to model at school.
7. Use naturalistic observation, children’s work, and notes to understand each child’s needs, skills, and interests (see the *Tip Sheet – Natural Observations* available at [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)).
8. Adjust routines and expectations. Parents with different cultural backgrounds may have different expectations of children at certain ages. Some may wish for greater independence earlier while others may want children to have more support.
9. Provide all children with supportive and positive interactions with others, promoting empathy and understanding. Team up “buddies” to support each other and change it up regularly so all children get to know each other.
10. Support and encourage dual language learning. Research shows that becoming proficient in two languages is not only possible but very beneficial for young children.

## DIFFERENTIATION – FIVE EASY STEPS

Select a Little Things card and write how you will break up the activity into these five steps. Use this process with other activities as well.

- **Content** – Adjust the content for the children. Use things they are familiar with. For example, when presenting words that begin with the letter “B,” choose both English and words from a child’s native language. When asking to build something, perhaps ask a child to pick something that he or she is most interested in.
- **Materials** – Bring out materials to play with that are age-appropriate and varied. Let the children select them and give everyone access to them. If a child is overwhelmed, scale back and have him/her try using just a few of the items.
- **Interaction** – Present the content in different ways. Use books, videos, outdoor play, art, and dramatic play to teach a skill or concept. Children respond differently to a variety of approaches. Some like to sit and work on something alone while others may be more social and learn better with a buddy.
- **Expansion** – Build from where the children are. For example, if a child is playing with blocks and doing well, add another shape or color and ask what he or she can do with the new item. Or once a child can identify a letter, see if she/he can find it in a variety of words (use both English and her/his native language).
- **Outcomes** – Remember, every child develops and learns new skills at his or her own pace. Some children have a stronger interest and may learn something more quickly in one area but not in another.





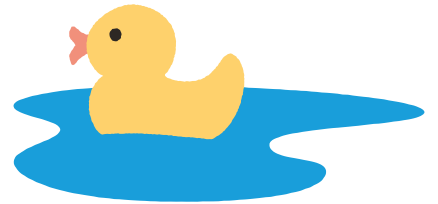
## FIVE SMART THINGS TO DO!

1. Use the observation tips in the *Natural Observations* Tip Sheet (available on [www.striveforfive.com](http://www.striveforfive.com)). Send home to parents.



2. List how you think each child likes to learn (learning style).

3. Take out a Little Things card and adapt the activity for each child.



4. Select songs to learn from the children's native languages. You can even ask parents to help provide music!

5. Read aloud one of the tote bag books and ask how the characters are different from one another and how they are the same.



### DLL and other learning differences tips –

**DLL:** Implement the suggestions above and include multicultural books and items in the classroom.

**LD:** Make adaptations as suggested above based on your observations.

# SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Write your thoughts on implementing the ideas from this week and how you will use ideas presented in the guide and in the videos.

**How will you change your classroom to meet the needs of your current students?**

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**What learning styles do your current students display?**

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**Write down three things you learned from this week's material.**

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**Write what you can do to improve your observations of the children in your class.**

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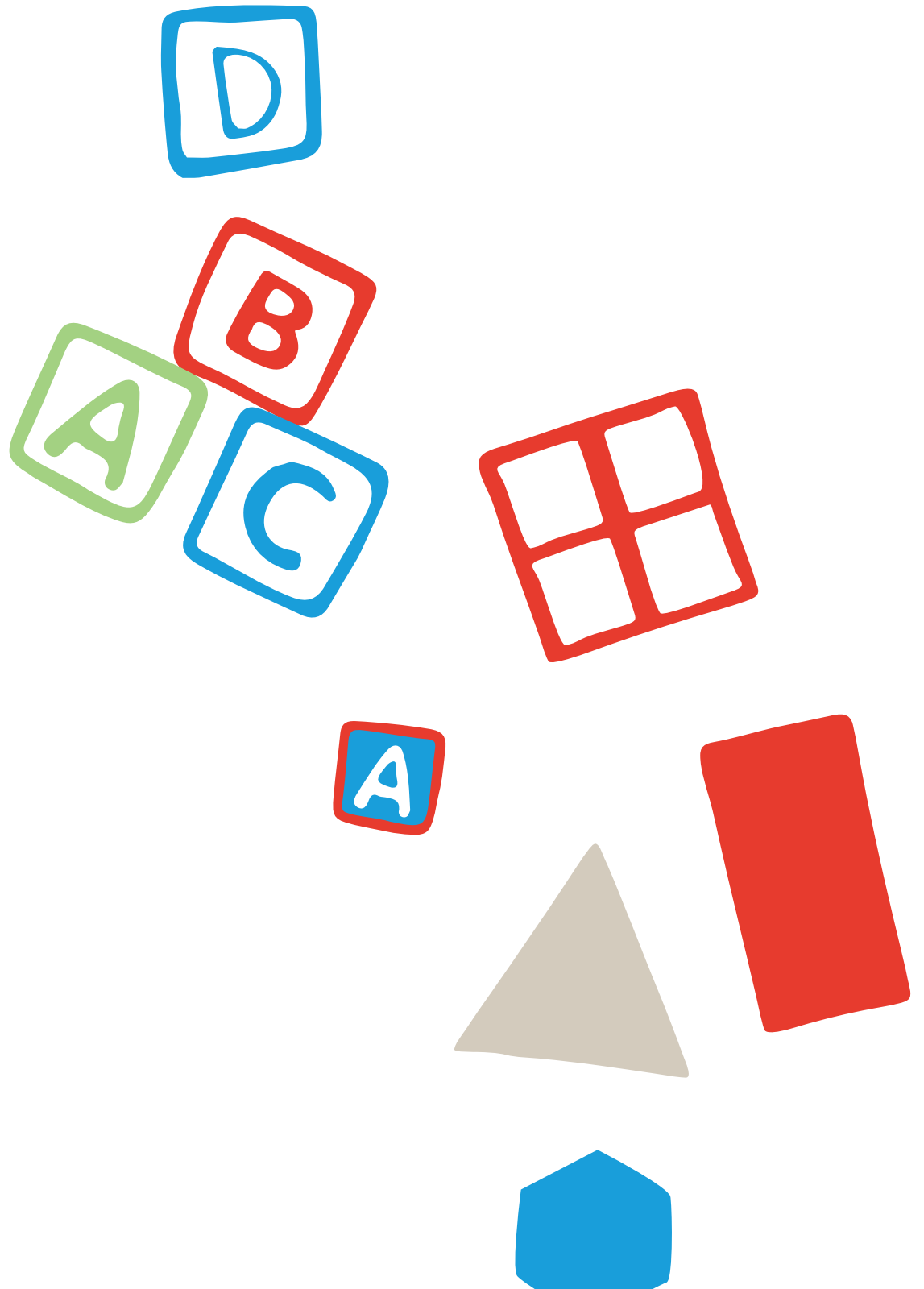
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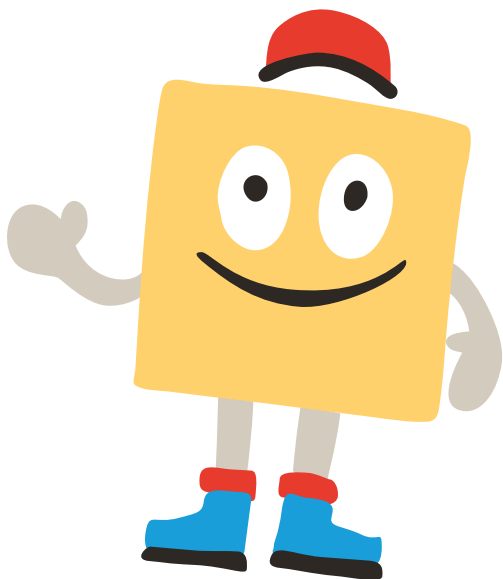
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# APPENDIX



## STRIVE FOR 5! GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

**Creative Expression** – Children develop their imagination and skills to express individual interests, abilities, and knowledge through a variety of media.

**DLL** – Dual Language Learner, an active learner of the English language while using their native language. In order to support DLL children in any early learning setting, there needs to be a strong focus on language development, social interactions, book reading, and storytelling.

**Executive Function** – Self-regulation, often called executive function, is a core set of skills that includes: inhibition control, working memory, planning and organizing, and cognitive flexibility. Early executive function development has a strong association with school readiness and learning.

**Free Play** – Unstructured play where each child chooses the activity and moves at his/her own pace

**Guided Play** – Teachers follow where the children’s interests are and enhance their learning by asking questions, introducing new concepts, and initiating new activities for the child to explore.

**Language & Literacy Skills** – Language and literacy skills establish a “staircase” of increasing skills in what students must be able to do to read, write, build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective. It includes reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar, phonics and phonemic awareness, and written expression.

**Learning through Play** – Children learn best through play, when they’re active and engaged. Play provides active exploration that builds and strengthens brain pathways.

**Literacy-Rich Environment** – A learning environment that focuses on the importance of speaking, reading, and writing. It involves selecting materials, arranging the classroom, and guiding instruction that will facilitate language development and positive literacy experiences.

**Little Things Cards** – Easy-to-use cards with playful, engaging, and hands-on ideas that blend several learning areas in every activity

**Mathematics** – Mathematical experiences in early childhood focus on 1) numbers (whole numbers and operations) and 2) geometry, spatial relations, and measurement. This area also includes problem solving and interpretation of data.

**Natural Observation** – This includes observations of children at play, work samples, and teacher checklists.

**Physical & Healthy Development** – Skill areas of physical development, fine motor skills, healthy habits, and sportsmanship. Children’s health and well-being impact learning.

**Posters** – Helpful posters to place in key areas of the learning environment with reminders of things to do to enhance children’s learning

**Science & Scientific Thinking** – Active investigation, observation, and experimentation of the natural and man-made world. Children build a foundation for abstract and scientific thought leading to decision making and problem-solving skills.

**Science of Learning** – Research on understanding how we learn and using that understanding to optimize learning at home and in the classroom

**Social-Emotional Development** – The ability to form satisfying, trusting relationships with others, play, communicate, learn, face challenges, and experience and manage a range of emotions. Young children develop these skills and attributes through meaningful relationships with others.

**Social Science & Culture** – The exploration, understanding, and developing knowledge in economics, geography, and history. In the early years, this begins with children’s personal experiences and their initial understanding of themselves, their families, and school.

**Tip Sheets** – Supportive handouts and guides to explain key elements within STRIVE for 5! They provide tips on observing children, developmental milestones, promoting playful learning, and helping children learn through talking, reading, and singing. Use the tip sheets as handouts to share with parents.

**21st Century Skills** – These are the core skills, knowledge, and expertise for students to master to succeed in work and life in the 21st century. They cover how a child approaches learning, communicates, collaborates, and demonstrates critical thinking.

## HELPFUL WEBSITES

1. ***Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing*** (Too Small to Fail) offers engaging tips, articles, videos, and other resources to help parents and caregivers support their children’s early brain and language development. **[www.talkingisteaching.org](http://www.talkingisteaching.org)** or **[www.toosmall.org/community/resources](http://www.toosmall.org/community/resources)**
2. ***Healthy Children*** (American Academy of Pediatrics) is a helpful resource for educators and parents backed by 64,000 pediatricians with articles and tips on children’s health, learning, development, safety, and more. **[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)**
3. ***Curious World*** offers a world of educational videos, games, and books tied to early learning curriculum, expertly selected to engage young minds. **[www.curiousworld.com](http://www.curiousworld.com)**
4. ***Get Ready to Read*** is designed to support educators, parents, and young children in the development of early literacy skills in the years before kindergarten. It offers free activities and resources. **[www.getreadytoread.org](http://www.getreadytoread.org)**
5. ***Colorín Colorado*** is a national multimedia project that offers a wealth of bilingual, research-based information, activities, and advice for educators and families of English language learners (ELLs). **[www.colorincolorado.org](http://www.colorincolorado.org)**



## FIVE GREAT BOOKS

1. *A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool: Presenting the Evidence*, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Laura E. Berk, and Dorothy Singer, 2008, Oxford University Press
2. *Helping Children Succeed*, Paul Tough, 2016, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
3. *From Play to Practice: Connecting Teachers' Play to Children's Learning*, Marcia L. Nell and Walter F. Drew, 2013, NAEYC
4. *Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs*, Ellen Galinsky, 2010, William Morrow Paperbacks
5. *From Parents to Partners: Building a Family-Centered Early Childhood Program*, Janis Keyser, 2006 NAEYC

## FOUR SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS:

### **Too Small to Fail**

Too Small to Fail, a joint initiative of the Clinton Foundation and The Opportunity Institute, aims to help parents and businesses take meaningful actions to improve the health and well-being of children ages zero to five, so that more of America's children are prepared to succeed in the 21st century. Too Small to Fail is working to raise awareness among parents and caregivers about the importance of language-rich parenting in the earliest years of a child's life and to provide parents and caregivers with prompts and tools to use in their everyday lives to help them talk, read, and sing more to their young children.

Contact at [www.toosmall.org](http://www.toosmall.org)

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### **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt**

HMH Early Learning resources are designed to support educators, administrators, caregivers, and families as they help to nurture, teach, and raise children from infancy through age seven. Informed by scientific research on how children learn best, our solutions focus on personalizing learning for every child. HMH gives parents and educators a comprehensive set of resources to use as they help children explore all their possibilities.

Contact at [www.hmhco.com/earlylearning](http://www.hmhco.com/earlylearning)

### **National Association for Family Child Care**

NAFCC is dedicated to promoting quality child care by strengthening the profession of family child care. NAFCC represents professional providers throughout the United States and in some cases, on U.S. Military bases located internationally.

Contact at **[www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org)**

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### **National Head Start Association**

NHSA is a nonprofit organization committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in life if given the opportunity that Head Start offers to children and families. Since 1974 it has worked diligently for policy changes that ensure all at-risk children have access to the Head Start model of support for the whole child, the family, and the community. NHSA is the untiring voice for more than 1 million children, 200,000 staff, and 1,600 Head Start grantees in the United States each year.

Its mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education

Contact at **[www.nhsa.org](http://www.nhsa.org)**

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