The First 5 Years

Why are the first 5 years of life so important?

* 90% of brain capacity is developed in the first 5 years of life.
* The brain will never be able to learn and develop as easily and quickly as it does in the first 5 years.
* What happens now effects the future!

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| What do children need in the first five years? | |
| Stimulation | Children need playtime, different types of activities and to use their curiosity. Ask them questions, let them explore their surroundings and use their imagination, read with them. |
| Attention | Brain connections are made through relationships. Have conversations with your child, listen to them, play with them, follow their lead, limit screen time and spend time together. |
| Encouragement | Children need to feel capable. Give them positive statements, fill their buckets, notice what they do well, let them try new things without help, cheer them on. |
| Love | Children need to feel valuable to others. Tell your child what is special about them, say “I Love You”, show affection, give hugs and high fives, |
| Health | Healthy bodies make for healthy brains. Keep up with doctor and dental exams, encourage physical activity, feed them a healthy diet full of fruits and veggies, limit high sugar food and drink. |
| Routines | Daily routines help children feel safe. Have meals together as a family, have a set bedtime with a relaxing bedtime routine, make sure they get 10-12 hours of sleep per night, keep to a daily schedule. |