



Developing a Learning Culture in the Home

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Babies are highly intelligent and the most socially influenced creatures on earth. The foundations of their brain architecture are established early in life through interactions between the baby, the adults and the environment. When babies come into the world their brains are a jumble of neurons ready to be connected and wired up.

As the first teachers of their young children, parents have the privilege and the huge responsibility to optimise their children's wellbeing and their learning. Each child is unique; but all babies need love and consistency of care; they need to feel safe and secure, they need to be exposed to the richness of language and communication, and families' and communities' cultural, ethical, spiritual values, through songs, stories, rituals, music, artefacts and above all their attachment and engagement with their parents or carers.

Their social, emotional, moral, spiritual, and cognitive development depends on the responses they experience from their parents/carers and the wider environment.

Four areas of engagement to empower parents and carers to enrich and optimise their babies' learning are as follows: 1) **O**pportunities, 2) **R**ecognition, 3) **I**nteraction and 4) **M**odelling.

For example, how often do parents make time to play with their babies? Do they ensure that they recognise and value their infants' activities? How frequently do they interact with their children and hold a conversation to learn about their feelings and attitudes? How aware are parents and carers of the impact of their own behaviours on their children? Adults need to think of the positive attitudes that make babies, growing children and teenagers to feel valued and good about themselves.