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Parenting Counts

A program of Talaris Institute

Toolkits for Parents

*Parenting Information
You Can Trust*



Why Parents

- **Parents and caregivers: direct influence on children**
 - powerful force for changing social norms.
- **Many organizations have good programs**
 - but struggle with reaching parents.
- **Parents and caregivers are usually motivated**
 - but often lack trusted, comprehensive information.



What's Most Important?

Overwhelming importance of three key principles:

- Starting from birth-- early stimulation/brain development
- Parent-child attachment
- Social-emotional development/emotion regulation

Reaching Parents—Social Marketing

We assume parents

- Care about their children and know something about parenting.
- Want
 - validation of what they already know
 - better information about what they don't know
 - guidance around bad or confusing information
 - constant reminders and reinforcement.
- Need to be approached when they are busy doing other things they consider more urgent.
- Start at different points. Some need little more than reminders; others may need much more.

Working with Partners

We assume partners (hospitals, child care agencies, home visit organizations, community groups, libraries, museums, churches, etc.)

- Have excellent existing programs for parents, children and families.
- May lack adequate language and tools to talk with parents and caregivers about social and emotional development.
- Need appealing, researched-based, highly adaptable enrichment materials that fit into existing programs without large training requirements for staff.

Toolkit Design

- Multi-media to address different learning styles
- Age-group oriented—infant, toddler, preschooler
- Show/model, don't just tell
- Parents as trusted sources talking to viewer
- Can work with or without a coach/trainer—Discussion Guide
- Parenting Guide for basic content/messages; Toolkit for interactive use
- Web support for maintaining relationships with and among parents











What is success?

- Parents and caregivers reach a new level of awareness that:
 - It starts at birth.
 - Parenting is the key ingredient.
 - It is about social and emotional development.
- For some, increased awareness may be a first step; for others, awareness may result in immediate behavioral changes.



Cultural Competence and Evaluation

- Importance of culturally sensitive and accessible materials
- Beyond the materials: role of trusted sources and parents.
- Learn and adapt: with partners, evaluate the effectiveness of toolkits in their programs.