



Developmental Parenting

A Guide for
Early Childhood Practitioners

by

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BROOKES
PUBLISHING CO.®

Baltimore • London • Sydney



Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Post Office Box 10624

Baltimore, Maryland 21285-0624

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www.brookespublishing.com

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Typeset by Integrated Publishing Solutions, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Manufactured in the United States of America by

Versa Press, Inc., East Peoria, Illinois.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Roggman, Lori A.

Developmental parenting : a guide for early childhood practitioners / by Lori A.

Roggman, Lisa K. Boyce, and Mark S. Innocenti.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-55766-976-6 (pbk.)

ISBN-10: 1-55766-976-7 (pbk.)

1. Home-based family services—United States. 2. Parents—Services for—United States. 3. Child development—Study and teaching—United States. 4. Parenting—Study and teaching—United States. I. Boyce, Lisa K. II. Innocenti, Mark S. III. Title.

HV699.R65 2008

362.82'86—dc22

2008027176

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data are available from the British Library.

2012 2011 2010 2009 2008
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Melissa: Hi, are you Jennie?

Jennie: Yes?

Melissa: I'm Melissa Roberts, and I'm from the Developmental Parenting Program in Fairview County. May I come in?

Jennie: Oh, yes, I forgot. Okay, come on in. This is Kaylee.

Melissa: Hi Kaylee. How are you? I see you have a red block! How are you doing today, Jennie?

Jennie: Okay. You?

Melissa: I'm fine. Oh, the sun in here is lovely! It's cold outside but cozy in here. As I said on the phone when we made this appointment, this first meeting will be short. I'd like to meet with you for about a half an hour today, just to get started. We'll start our regular meetings next week.

Jennie: Okay. Do you need me to be here?

Melissa: Sure do. I mostly need to talk with you today, but I'll enjoy getting to know Kaylee, too. First, I'll explain about how the program works and get to know you and Kaylee a little better. Then, before I go, we can decide what we'll do next time and what time we'll have our regular meetings.

Jennie: Okay.

Melissa: The purpose of the Developmental Parenting Program is to help parents do more of the things that support their children's early development. So because most of what helps children develop is just interacting and talking with their parents, we'll plan most of the time for activities that you and Kaylee do together.

Jennie: Just me and her? You won't be teaching her?

Melissa: I might teach her something sometime, but that's really your job because you're her mom and her most important teacher. I'll be here to offer suggestions, give feedback, and answer questions you might have.

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Jennie: I don't think I'll be good at teaching her much.

Melissa: You're already doing lots of things that are teaching Kaylee. Just in these few minutes I heard you say her name and saw you smile at her, and I see she's playing with a brightly colored toy you have here.

Jennie: My brother gave her that.

Melissa: And you've got it out here for her to play with. She seems to enjoy it. She's already put two of the little blocks through the holes. Oh, did you see her look at you as soon as she got that one in?

Jennie: Yeah, she's a proud one. It's good she plays with her toys so I can get something done.

Melissa: I can tell she likes it when you watch her do the things she's trying. Do you play together with her toys?

Jennie: Nah, she's just a baby; she can't share very good.

Melissa: Well, that's true. You're probably better at sharing than she is, but she might let you take a turn.

Jennie: Yeah, I tell her that when she plays with the bowls. When it's my turn, I put them back away.

Melissa: The what?

Jennie: The bowls. I have plastic bowls in the kitchen, you know, from cottage cheese and stuff? And she plays with them sometimes.

Melissa: Yeah, toddlers love kitchen stuff—bowls and pans.

Jennie: No, I don't let her play with my pans.

Melissa: What does she do with the bowls?

Jennie: She just plays. She puts them on the floor and then puts them together.

Melissa: Does she put the smaller ones inside the bigger ones?

Jennie: Yeah, she does that.

Melissa: That's cool. She compares the sizes and nests them.

Jennie: I guess.

Melissa: Does she ever stack them?

Jennie: I don't know, I haven't noticed.

Melissa: See if she'll try that. Those are great toys—unbreakable and replaceable. And those are the kinds of things you can do to help her development.

Jennie: Okay, so I'll share my bowls with you, Kaylee!

Melissa: That's great! So let me get back to describing the Developmental Parenting Program. The purpose of the program is to help you help your child's development. Every week you and I will plan something for Kaylee and you to do together the next week while I'm here. It can be something really simple, like rolling a ball back and forth, or helping Kaylee wash her hands. But we can start with something you already enjoy doing with her.

Jennie: And you just watch?

Melissa: I can play too, but it's my job also to give you ideas and feedback and answer questions you have about child development.

Jennie: Well, Kaylee can't wash her hands good; I do that for her.

Melissa: Well, there are a million other things we can do. What kinds of things do you like doing with Kaylee?

Jennie: We don't do much. We go down to the playground sometimes but she can't do much. She's too little.

Melissa: If you like going, we can do that for our visit and just see what we can find to do. The little things she does and things she looks at can all be ways for her to learn. Be thinking about things she's learning on the playground, and we'll talk about it when I'm here.

Jennie: Okay, that's okay. I like going outside. Sometimes this apartment just gets to me. We don't have to stay here for the home visit?

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Melissa: We can go other places where you and Kaylee go.

Jennie: Cool.

Melissa: So let's figure out a good time to have our visits. Is Wednesday a good day, usually?

Jennie: Yeah, but she's getting sleepy now, so it would be better earlier.

Melissa: How can you tell she's sleepy?

Jennie: She's getting frustrated with her favorite toy. That's always the first sign.

Melissa: I like that you can tell that from her behavior. You're "reading" her signs.

Jennie: I guess so.

Melissa: Is there anyone else in your family who would like to join us on the home visits?

Jennie: Her daddy sometimes comes by in the mornings.

Melissa: Would you like to meet when he's here?

Jennie: Nah, I don't want to do that now. Maybe later.

Melissa: Okay, maybe later. Would 12:30 work for me to come on Wednesdays?

Jennie: Yeah, that's good.

Melissa: Great! Okay, well, that's all we need to do this week. Oh, I do have a few forms to fill out. . . .

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