“It is not only the skills children have when they enter school that matter for later success but also the path they followed in getting to these skills.”

– Rowe, Raudenbush, & Goldin-Meadow, 2012

The Importance of Early Interactions

**Science Says**

- School-readiness starts from birth. Early cognitive and social experiences play an important role in children’s early development.
- Children are particularly attuned to other people, and learn best from face-to-face interactions.
- Children are incredibly social. Using eye gaze, pointing, parentese, and back and forth interactions between caregiver and child draws children’s attention to their environment and supports learning.

**Try it at Home**

- Follow your child’s lead. When she hands you a toy, playfully hand it back to her. Continue playing this back and forth game until she lets you know she’s done.
- Speak with your infant in a sing-song, exaggerated tone of voice. This is called parentese and it supports language learning. Respond to your baby’s babbles with complete sentences in parentese.

**The Take-Home**

Supportive relationships are the foundation for a “school ready” child. Warm and responsive caregivers help children learn to trust others. When children trust others, they gain confidence to explore their world.

Want to Learn More?

modules.ilabs.uw.edu/module/importance-early-interactions/
Questions? ilabsout@uw.edu

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