

INTRODUCTION	The importance of early childhood education for parents and children
ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm up: vocabulary practice 2. Conversation 3. Reading Comprehension 4. Nursery Rhymes 5. Talking about my child using tenses 6. Let's Read 7. Early Childhood Services

The importance of early childhood education for parents and children

Many students on the home tutor scheme have young children. Often the reason they require a home tutor is because they find it difficult to get to classes while they are raising their families, often with little support. A lot of English materials are aimed at pregnancy and childbirth, or school age children, and very little at the early childhood years of 0 to 5. It is an important time for migrant and refugee children to learn English so that they are prepared for school and don't feel isolated or disadvantaged once they begin. It is equally as important for parents to be able to contribute to their children's English education, be able to access early childhood services for their children and be able to converse effectively with teachers and other parents.

On the program we have seen the negative impacts of parents who lack English language skills. A gap widens between them and their children when their children start school, quickly learn and begin to converse in English. Children can also become embarrassed by, or take advantage of their parents' language inability. As a result, parents can become unknowingly or unwillingly removed from their children's education and schooling life. We have also commonly seen the situation where young children have to take on the responsibility as translator for the whole family. This can put unnecessary stress on young children and their parents as a result of the relationship, or hierarchical shift, that this can create within the family.

I have developed this lesson plan to give you a basis for teaching and encouraging parents with small children to learn language relating to early childhood. I will also provide you with information on where to access further resources so that you can expand on the topics that are relevant to your student. I hope it is of assistance and helps in the all empowering journey of English education that you are providing for your student.

1. Vocabulary practice

Infant	alphabet	tantrums	crawling
Toddler	nursery rhyme	nappies	pram
Childcare	immunisation	toilet training	high chair
Pre-school	family day-care	potty	cot
Kindergarten	mothers group	breastfeeding	change table

2. Conversation

Discuss each of the words above in the vocabulary list. Explain the meaning of words your student doesn't know, or ask your student to look them up in the dictionary.

Initiate discussion for each word and ask your student to explain their experiences with each word. If they require writing practice, ask them to write a sentence about their experience.

i.e. tantrums

conversation questions

1. Do you know what tantrums are?
2. Has your child ever had a tantrum?
3. What happened/how did you feel?
4. How did you resolve the situation

It may help if you also discuss some of your own experiences to initiate discussion.

Writing practice

Tantrum: My 2 year old daughter had a *tantrum* at the shopping centre last week.

3. Reading comprehension

Read the following passage to your student then ask them to read it aloud focusing on pronunciation. For vocabulary practice, ask them to underline any words they don't understand and look up their meanings. If they are at a Post-beginner level, and above, ask them to complete the comprehension questions below.

We use our hands, eyes, face and words to communicate with very young babies, because this shows them how people communicate. Soon, the baby's noises will sound like adult talk.

We sing rhymes and jingles with children so that they learn to hear and match words that sound the same. When English is a second language, adults sometimes share rhymes in their first language with children.

Letting children scribble and draw helps them learn to write. Over time, children learn that writing is a particular kind of 'drawing' that carries a message. When we write in front of children and talk to them about it, they learn that writing helps us to carry information and to remember things.

Being close to a special adult while looking at a book makes a baby feel warm and safe. Very young babies like nursery rhyme books. The rhythms of the rhymes and the sounds of the words soothe them and they may touch, smell and even chew the book. Later, children will hold the book the right way up and turn the pages. They may choose favourite stories. Learning how a book works and that it is fun, is an important part of learning to read.

Adults talk to children about what they see on TV because they want them to be thinking, not just watching. They encourage children to join in games and songs because that keeps their minds active and they learn things they can do away from the TV.

Comprehension Questions

1. What was the passage about?
2. What are the meanings of the following words (look them up in dictionary if required)

Rhyme _____

Jingle _____

Rhythm _____

Scribble _____

3. When English is a second language what do adults sometimes do?
4. What does letting children scribble and draw help them to do?
5. What kind of books do young babies like?
6. What is an important part of learning to read?
7. Why do adults talk to children about what they see on TV?

4. Nursery Rhymes

1) Talk to your student about nursery rhymes. Ask them whether they know any in English? Do they have nursery rhymes in their own language? Do they sing these to their children? What do they think the benefits of nursery rhymes are? Do they, or their children, have a favourite nursery rhyme? etc.

2) Practice the following nursery rhyme with your student (or another one of your choice). Encourage them to sing to their children and teach them songs if they are toddlers.

Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are

Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are!

5. My child Using tenses

Talk to your student about one of his/her children. Ask them to create sentences using past or present tense, depending on the current age of the child, using the following verbs.

Present

Past

Has	had	<i>e.g my child <u>has</u> two teeth</i>
Go	went	<i>I <u>go</u> to mothers group</i>
Take	took	<i>I <u>took</u> my child to playgroup when she was little</i>

Ask the following questions and ask your student to circle the answers that represent their child. They will also need to cross out which is the incorrect tense (where applicable):

My baby has/had breastmilk	My baby has/had formula
My baby is crawling	My baby is not yet crawling
My baby is walking	My baby is not yet walking
I go/went to mother's group	I don't/didn't go to mothers group
My baby has teeth	My baby does not have teeth
My baby sleeps/slept well	My baby doesn't/didn't sleep well
My baby eats solids	My baby doesn't eat solids yet
My baby can talk	My baby can't yet talk
My baby goes/went to day care	My baby doesn't/didn't go to day care

6. Let's Read

Let's Read is a national initiative The Smith Family is involved to promote reading with young children 0-5 years. Let's Read seeks to address research that has found that children who have not developed emergent literacy skills (this includes the ability to identify names of letters and manipulate sounds) by school age are unlikely to catch up with their peers.

Reading with young children is the single most important activity that parents can do to develop a child's future ability to read and write. Reading aloud with children also supports their language development, promotes a parent child bond and helps parents relate positively to their child. The aim of Let's Read is to encourage and empower parents to read with their young child, to make reading part of the daily routine and have fun with their child.

As a tutor you are in a position to be able to share this information with your student and encourage them to read to their children in English. This will be a valuable tool that will benefit both parent and child.

On the lets read website there is useful information for parents, some of which is available in community languages.

<http://www.letsread.com.au>

7. Early Childhood Services

Today's children are tomorrow's parents and their future ability to nurture will be greatly influenced by the parenting they receive.

What's out there to support parents?

Early childhood health centres

Early Childhood Health Centres, operated by New South Wales (NSW) Health, provide a very valuable free service for new parents. Centres, located throughout the region, offer:

- an initial health check before your child is 6 weeks old at your home or the clinic
- regular appointments at your chosen centre
- courses/workshops in parenting
- details on free council childhood immunisation clinics
- details on specialist services for when you need some extra help and
- advice over the telephone
- new parent groups

All these services are offered **free** of charge to New South Wales residents.

Early Childhood Health Centres are staffed by health professionals including registered nurses who specialise in Child and Family Health. Your Child and Family Health nurse can give you information about how to care for babies and young children, including information on:

- Breastfeeding
- Coping with sleeping and crying
- Your baby's growth and development
- Immunisations
- Safety
- Good ways to play with your baby or toddler
- Your own wellbeing

If you are new to the area, you can also seek information from the staff about child-friendly family doctors in the local area and health centres that you can take your children for free dental check-up. The staff at the hospital where you have your baby will ask you which centre you would like to visit. They will make sure you have all the information you need to contact the centre before you go home. You can also find Early Childhood Health Centres listed in the phone book under 'Early Childhood Health Centres' or 'Community Health Centres'.

CHILD CARE FACILITIES

These can all be found by asking at the early childhood health centre or by looking up the relevant child care facility in the local phonebook.

Playgroups

Provide a non-stigmatising environment in which parents can talk to trained workers about their parenting practices. Playgroup is a lot of fun for children and provides parents with the opportunity to establish social and support networks within their communities.

Pre-School / Kindergarten

Pre-school is a planned educational program for children in the years before a child commences school. Children are usually aged between 3 and 5 years of age. Pre-schools usually operate from 9am – 3pm.

Day care / Childcare centres / Long day care

Day care centres usually care for children under school age, in premises specially built or adapted for child care. They provide all-day or part-time care for working families and offer developmental programs within their care programs. Meals are usually provided with some long day care centres.

Family day care

Family day care service is a network of experienced carers who provide care and developmental activities in their own homes for other people's children. Care is often flexible and can be tailored to suit each family's needs including care outside normal working hours.

PARENTAL ASSISTANCE

Early Intervention

The Early Intervention Program run by the Benevolent Society works with families where there is a pregnancy or child under 3 years and parents are finding parenthood challenging. They provide one-to-one support, home-visiting and support groups.

<http://www.bensoc.org.au/director/whatwedo/childrenandfamilies/earlyintervention.cfm>

Home Visiting Services

The Benevolent Society & Good Beginnings Volunteer Home Visiting Services offer practical support, information, and encouragement to families with young children. Trained volunteers visit families in their home and can offer assistance with appointments, shopping, finding out what's in the local community or just enjoying time in the park.

The Volunteer Home Visiting Program is a free service and families can refer themselves or be referred by other service providers.

There are a number of reasons why families may be interested to have a volunteer home visitor, including:

- additional stresses around the birth of a new baby or a multiple birth
- feeling isolated from family and friends
- a disability in the family
- difficulty in accessing services and/or getting out of the house.

Volunteer Home Visiting services are available in Eastern Sydney and South West Sydney, Inner West Sydney and Lower North Shore.

Tel: 9339 8000 (Benevolent Society) or 9211 6767 (Good Beginnings)

The following services provide telephone advice and support.

Tresillian ph: (02) 9787 0855

Freecall 1800 637 357 (outside Sydney Metro region) (24 hrs)

Tresillian Child and Family Health Nurses are available to provide advice for parents of children 0 to 5 years. Available 24 hours, 7 days.

Karitane ph: (02) 9794 1852

Freecall 1800 677 961 (outside Sydney Metro region) (24 hrs)

Karitane Child and Family Health Nurses are available for consultation on a wide range of issues concerning children 0 to 5 years. Available 24 hours, 7 days.

Parent Line (Centacare) ph: 13 20 55

Telephone counselling for parents. Available 9am-4:30pm, Mon-Sat.

Further Resources:

The Office of Early Childhood Education & Child Care

Early Childhood Learning Resources Project:

http://www.oceccc.gov.au/education/learning_resources.htm

Government Education Portal for early childhood:

<http://www.education.gov.au/goved/go/pid/15>

Early Childhood Australia: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>