

# LEARNING HAPPENS EVERYWHERE!



The period of childhood from age 0-3 is the most critical in brain development and acquiring skills needed for learning language and early reading skills. These skills are mastered even more during the age of 4-5. Families are our children’s first and most important teacher. We are excited to share these tips that can begin as early as infancy and continue in the prime years before children attend school. United Way of Story County through the Story County Reads coalition of partners supports many community efforts to prepare children for school during early childhood.



## AGE 0-3

Health	Read	Feelings	Cognition	Approaches to learning
Hold toys in various positions to encourage your baby to stretch and reach the toys.	Tell your baby a story and engage with eye contact and exchange of sounds with active responses.	Imitate emotions with your face and name them. Encourage your baby to mimic the faces and name the emotions.	Name things with your baby (the people, things, and places that are in your environment).	Play the game “Now you see it, now you don’t”. Show your baby a toy and then cover it with a cloth. Ask “Where is it?” and then reveal it with “Here it is!”
Begin teaching how to eat or drink with fingers, spoons, forks, and cups. Name all the objects.	Find opportunities to teach your baby new sounds and new words: if you hear “Ba”, use the opportunity to teach words that begin with “B”.	Help your child build a “calm down corner” somewhere in the house as a space where they can go to support self-regulating their emotions.	Try mirror play – while in front of a mirror touch your child’s facial features and name them.	Sticky play: use sticky substances to make a collage using stickers, dots, or masking tape.
Have your baby try different kinds of fruits and identify the colors of the fruits and names for them.	Read to your baby. Choose books with bright colors and tell a story using the pictures that also go along with the words on the page.	Make faces in the mirror together and name them.	Practice sound recognition with animal sounds.	Touch feel and grasp (Soft toys such as stuffed animals or rattles provide infants with opportunity to hold and feel items and use their grasp reflex)
Play “Simon Says”. Focus on activities that support gross motor skills such as hopping, bending over, touching toes, etc.	Talk about book characters as you read together. Tell new stories about the characters.	Talk about characters in a book as you read together and ask “How do they look? Are they happy/unhappy, etc.”	Teach your child the ABC song and letter recognition.	Do some action that your baby can copy

## AGE 4-5

<b>Health</b>	<b>Read</b>	<b>Feelings</b>	<b>Cognition</b>	<b>Approaches to learning</b>
Bake something yummy together and talk about what you're measuring and mixing.	Read to your child. Describe and name things you see in the pictures. Ask them to retell the story with a different ending.	Draw the emotions. Have your child draw out different faces with emotions and explain the emotions.	Write out your name and help your child write their own name.	Play "Mystery Box". Have a variety of objects in a box. Start by describing each object using textures, size, etc. Have them guess what is in the box.
Obstacle courses (Obstacle courses allow children to learn new ways to do things. They can go over, under, around, or through things)	Have a pajama day! (Wear your jammies all day and read bedtime books)	At the end of the day, talk about what you did that day and what part was your favorite	Count it out (Count the number of steps it takes to walk from one end of your house to the other)	Work on a puzzle together
Fruit sorting (Go to the kitchen/supermarket and sort fruit by size and color. Talk about texture, shape, price, etc.)	Read three books before bedtime. Let your child choose the books	Express feelings with different colors	Less or more (Set up the table and ask your child if you have more plates or spoons. Count them as you set them up)	Hiding or finding (Invite your child to look for an object while you provide clues)
Visit a space outdoor space so you can run and play together	After listening to a story, have your child tell you what happened first, next, and last.	Draw a picture of something you saw today. Describe how you feel about it.	Color a picture together. Cut into puzzle pieces and try to put it back together	Practice taking turns and sharing

## FAMILY FRIENDLY PLACES TO GO IN STORY COUNTY

### Parks and Playgrounds

#### Inis Grove Park

2500 Duff Ave Ames, IA 50010 [\(515\) 239-5350](tel:5152395350)

Large recreation area with basketball & tennis courts, picnic pavilions, playgrounds & trails.

#### Brookside Park

1325 6th St, Ames, IA 50010 [\(515\) 239-5350](tel:5152395350)

Recreational green space featuring volleyball & tennis courts, ball fields & a wading pool. \*Born Learning Trail at this park

#### Stuart Smith Park

1501 S 4th St, Ames, IA 50010 [\(515\) 239-5120](tel:5152395120)

Walking trail, river, and playground equipment, great place for a picnic.

#### McFarland Park

56461 180th St, Ames, IA 50010 [\(515\) 232-2516](tel:5152322516)

Soft-surface trails, a 6.5-acre lake, picnic shelters and grills, a bird blind, and more.

#### Moore Memorial Park

3050 Northridge Pkwy, Ames, IA 50014 [\(515\) 239-5350](tel:5152395350)

Lots of shade and playgrounds, and trails.

#### Daley Park & Greenbelt

340 Wilder Blvd, Ames, IA 50014 [\(515\) 239-5350](tel:5152395350)

Modest green space featuring a basketball court, a children's playground & covered picnic shelter.

### Pools and Water Play

#### Furman Aquatic Center

[1635 13th St. Ames, IA 50010](https://www.furmanaquaticcenter.com/) [\(515\) 232-7665](tel:5152327665)

550' lazy river with a waterfall and two tremendous water slides both over 200' in length. There's a 50-meter pool that boasts a 150' drop slide, basketball hoops, 3-meter platform,

### Farmer's Markets

#### Ames Farmers Market

Main Street Station 526 Main Street Ames, IA 50010

Fresh fruits, veggies, meats & breads. Hand crafted goods. Family entertainment.

#### Cedar Valley Farmers Market I

SE Corner of Kimball Avenue & Rodgeway Road Waterloo, IA 50201

Fresh fruits & vegetables, beautiful custom artisan jewelry & jewelry you can have created for you! Microgreens to homemade soaps! Shell's fresh baked breads & pies! Sparkly paparazzi jewelry! Tied blankets & matching cute stuffed bears! Wildflower acres honey & honeycomb!

#### North Grand Farmers Market Association

2801 Grand Ave, Ames, IA 50010 [\(515\) 232-3679](tel:5152323679)

Fresh fruits and veggies, farm-raised eggs and meats, fresh-baked pies, breads, pasta, plants, flowers, crafts, jewelry, baskets, and artwork.

#### Colo Farmers Market

Lincoln Hwy and US 65 Colo, IA 50056

Fresh veggies, pastries, and handmade goods

### Museums

#### Ames History Museum

416 Douglas Ave # 101, Ames, IA 50010 [\(515\) 232-2148](tel:5152322148)

Quality interactions that make Ames history compelling and relevant

and a 1-meter springboard. A 5,000 square foot recreational pool includes zero depth entry, spray features, a large play structure, a children's slide, and a toddler slide.

**Municipal Indoor pool**  
1925 Ames High Dr, Ames, IA 50010 (515) 232-4561  
Lap pool in Ames High School, offered lessons

**Fawcett Family Aquatic Center**  
1717 Fawcett Pkwy, Nevada, IA 50201 (515) 382-2230  
Slide and pool area, offered lesson

**Farmhouse Museum**  
601 Farmhouse Ln, Ames, IA 50011 Located in: Iowa State University (515) 294-7426  
The Farmhouse Museum sits as a monument to early Iowa State history and culture.

**Christian Petersen Art Museum**  
603 Morrill Rd, Ames, IA 50011 (515) 294-9500  
The Art on Campus Program, the University Museums' Visual Literacy and Learning Program, and contemporary changing art exhibitions.

**Bartlett House Museum**  
619 Grand Ave, Story City, IA 50248 (515) 460-1749  
The Bartlett House Museum is a Queen Anne style home built in 1903 for Henry Torkel Henryson and his family. H. T. was the son of Torkel Henryson who brought early settlers from Norway to this area in 1855.

**Boone History Center**  
602 Story St, Boone, IA 50036 (515) 432-1907  
You will see the Kate Shelley Exhibit, an exhibition honoring Boone's young railroad heroine, Kate Shelley, talking about her life and especially about her bravery on the night of July 6, 1881, when 17-year-old Kate crawled across a bridge in the middle of the night, during a raging storm, to alert Chicago & Northwestern Railroad officials that a pusher engine had crashed through another bridge into Honey Creek.

#### Little Free Libraries

For a full list of the little free libraries in Story County, see a full list at Raising Readers in Story County's website at:  
<https://www.raising-readers.org/programs/all-ages/little-free-libraries/>