

**The  
Basics™**

# **The Basics Whole-Community Strategy for Early Learning and Brain Development**

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Founder & CEO, The Basics Inc.

August 2023



# Collective Intentionality:

**What None of Us Can Do Alone,  
All of Us Can Do Together.**



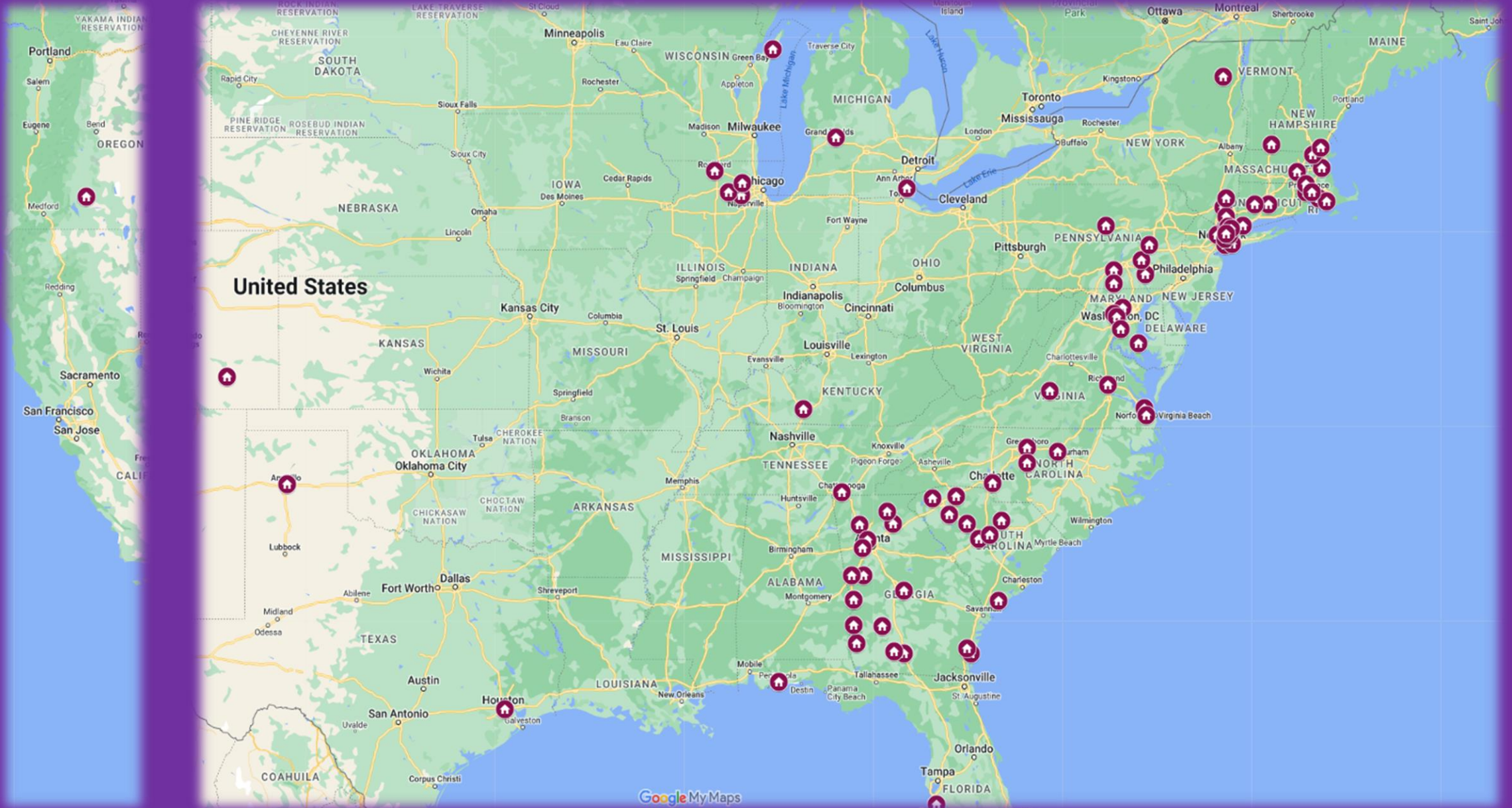
The Basics Inc. is a nonprofit organization operating under the fiscal sponsor Third Sector New England (TSNE). It emerged from the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University to build a scalable approach—**The Basics Strategy**—for addressing cognitive disparities between racial groups that emerge in nationally-representative data by the age of two.

Since launching officially in 2016, the organization has developed and deployed technology-based resources for helping families, organizations, and whole communities make five science-based principles of early caregiving—**The Basics Principles**—an everyday lifestyle for early learning and brain development.

The Basics Inc. spreads The Basics Strategy by convening and leading the multi-city **Basics Learning Network** (BLN) of coalitions in the US, Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, and Canada.

This slide deck is a slightly modified version of a presentation to the New York State P-3 Summer Institute, August 17, 2023.

# Basics Learning Network Locations



Locations in Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, and Canada not shown.



# The Basics:

- Problem & Science
- Framework:
  - 5 Principles
  - 3 Gears
  - Multi-Sector Dissemination
- Tools
- Evidence
- Art

# The Problem & The Science

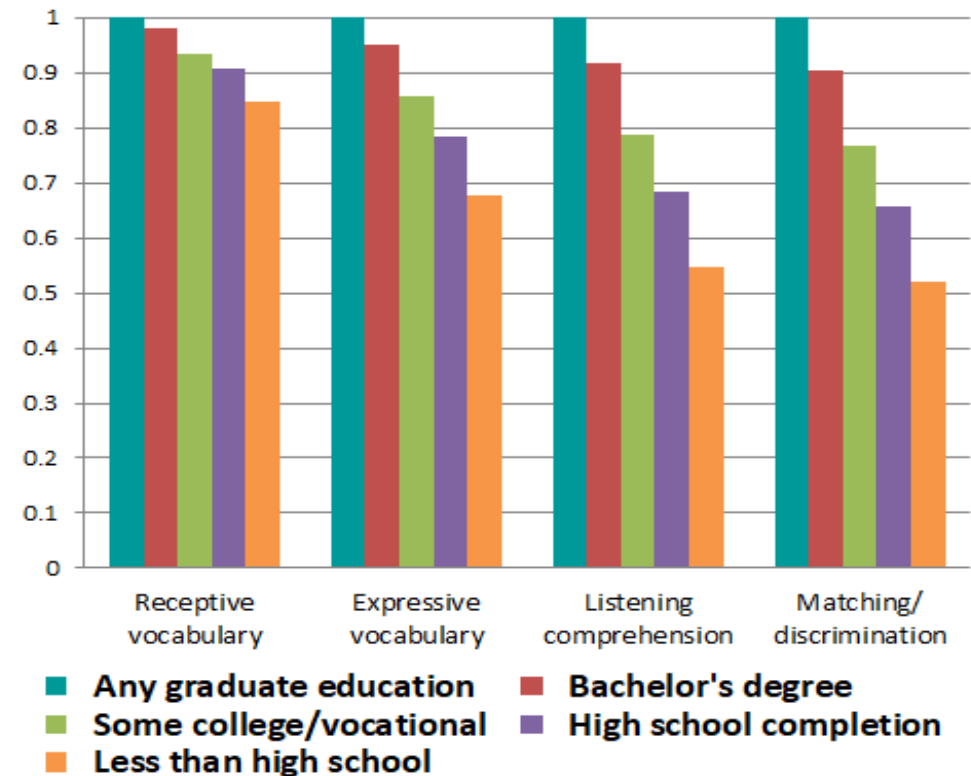
[Click](#) to view 4-minute video.

# There is an equity crisis years before kindergarten!

**Tens of millions** in the US and abroad **lack regular access** to science-based *information, supports, and reminders* needed to help the youngest children keep pace and flourish.

## Child development disparities by 24 months\* by Parent Education

(relative to those with advanced-degree parents)



\*Calculations by Ron Ferguson using the nationally representative Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort.

# The Basics Principles

[Click](#) to view 4-minute video.





# The Basics Principles



## Maximize Love, Manage Stress

*Emotional security & self-regulation skills*



## Talk, Sing, and Point

*Effective communication skills*



## Count, Group, and Compare

*Quantitative skills for math & science*



## Explore through Movement and Play

*Curiosity & creativity*



## Read and Discuss Stories

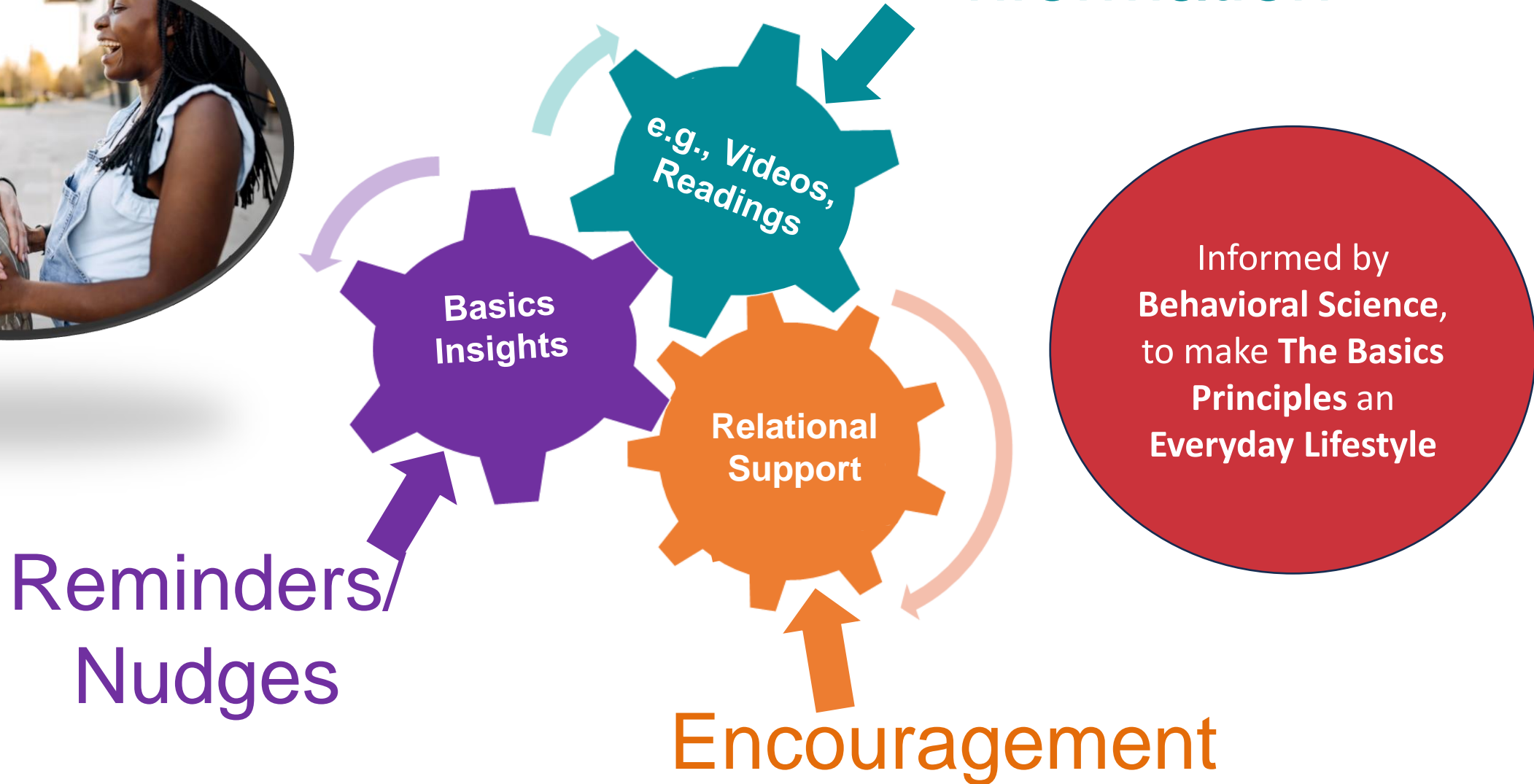
*Thinking skills and knowledge*

# The Gears

# The 3 Gears



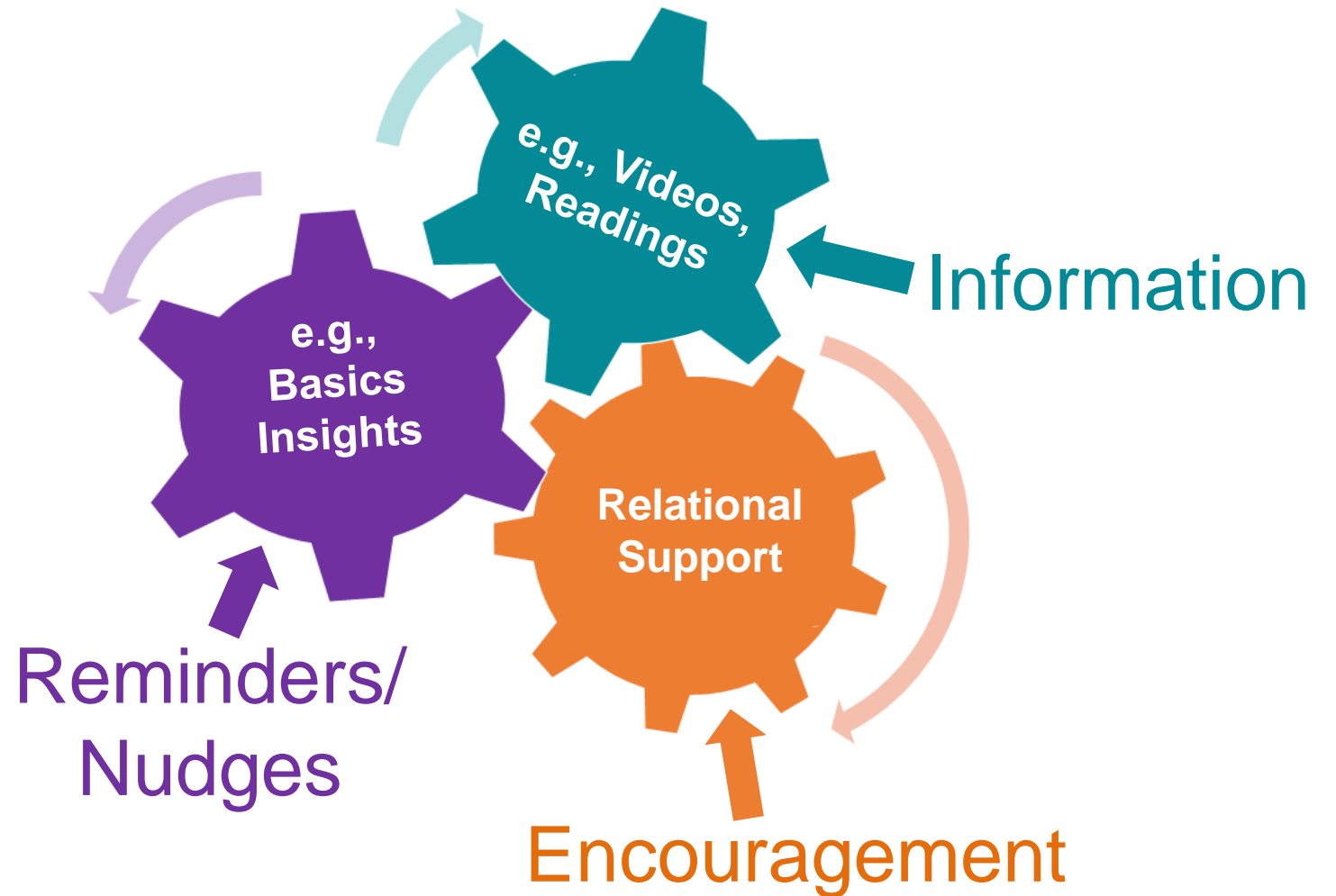
Information



# The 3 Gears



Informed by **Behavioral Science**, to make **The Basics Principles** an **Everyday Lifestyle**

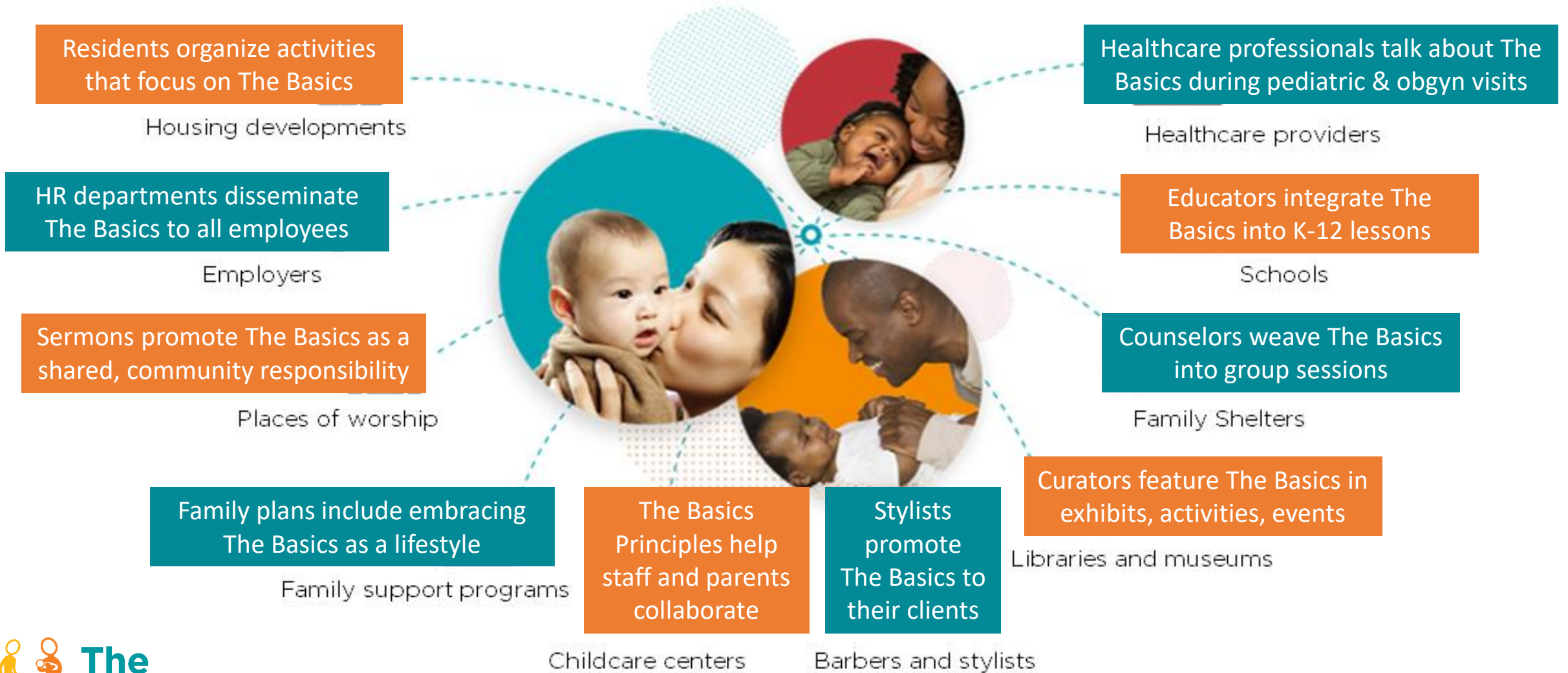


# Multisector Dissemination

All Three Gears, Regarding All Five Principles,  
Reinforced Across Multiple Sectors

[Click](#) to view 4-minute video.

# Staff from Local Backbone Organizations Reach Parents Through Partnerships with Organizations in Multiple Sectors



# Integration Into Local Programming Ecologies

The list below is from The Basics Annual Census of local backbone organizations.

Census Prompt: “If applicable, please list any important programs/brands that are being used by your organization or others in your community in combination with The Basics concepts or resources.



1. 1000 books before kindergarten
2. Babies Can't Wait
3. Bright by Text
4. Developmental Milestones
5. Dolly Parton Imagination Library K
6. Pre-K
7. Family Connection
8. Get Georgia Reading
9. HALO(Healthy Alternatives For Little Ones)
10. Head Start
11. Help Me Grow VT.
12. Nurse Family Partnership
13. Parents As Teachers
14. Raising a Reader
15. Reach Out and Read
16. Read to Grow
17. Ready 4 K
18. Ready Rosie
19. ReadyKids
20. Sparkler App
21. Stories with Ms. Sheena
22. Talk with Me Baby
23. Talking is Teaching
24. Videos from The Center for the Developing Child
25. Vroom
26. WIC

# The Tools

Click to view 4-minute video.



## RESOURCE CATALOG

This catalogue is an annotated guide to resources for promoting The Basics Principles and associated practices. The Basics Inc. has a rich array of materials including posters, handouts, video books, and more, which practitioners can use or refer to when sharing The Basics Principles with parents and caregivers. As you review the guide, imagine how these resources can help you contribute to our shared mission of giving every child a great start in life.

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- The Science Behind The Basics Principles
- Basics Insights
- Brainboosters for Everyday Life
- Getting Started with The Basics: A Guide for Organization Leaders and Coordinators
- Implementation Documentation Template
- Implementation Rubric
- Sharing The Basics in Healthcare Settings
- Parent and Caregiver Workshop: One-Hour Video Discussion
- Skill-Building Activities for Groups of Parents and Caregivers
- Skill-Building Activities for Groups of Caregivers and Their Infants/Toddlers
- My ABC Plan
- Poem: The Basics Caregiver's Promise
- Poem: The Basics Community Contract
- The Basics: Books for Little Ones
- Parent Workshop Feedback Form

Link to the Catalogue





# Posters & Print Collateral



## The Basics

**WHY?**  
Because 80% of brain growth happens in the first three years!

**Maximize Love, Manage Stress**

**Talk, Sing, and Point**

**Count, Group, and Compare**

**Read and Discuss Stories**

**Explore Through Movement and Play**

Please get involved. Help spread the word! Visit: [TheBasics.org](http://TheBasics.org)

Photos courtesy of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

## THE BASICS 5 PRINCIPLES

|  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Maximize Love, Manage Stress</b></p> <p>+++<br/>Dele todo el amor, controle el estrés</p> <p>+++<br/>Pataje Lanmou, Jere Strès</p> <p>+++<br/>علم أوامر المحبة وتمتع بإدارة الضغوط</p> | <p><b>Talk, Sing, and Point</b></p> <p>+++<br/>Háblele, cántele y señátele las cosas</p> <p>+++<br/>Pale, Chante, epi Lonje Dwèt</p> <p>+++<br/>مارس أنشطة التحدث والقناء والإشارة</p> | <p><b>Count, Group, and Compare</b></p> <p>+++<br/>Cuente, agrupe y compárele las cosas</p> <p>+++<br/>Konte, Gwoupe, epi Konpare</p> <p>+++<br/>مارس أنشطة العدّ والتصنيف في مجموعات والمقارنة</p> | <p><b>Explore Through Movement and Play</b></p> <p>+++<br/>Explore mediante el movimiento y el juego</p> <p>+++<br/>Chache Konnen Nan Fè Mouvman Epi Nan Jwe</p> <p>+++<br/>استكشف من خلال أنشطة الحركة واللعب</p> | <p><b>Read and Discuss Stories</b></p> <p>+++<br/>Lea y comente cuentos</p> <p>+++<br/>Li Istwa epi Brase lide sou Istwa sa yo</p> <p>+++<br/>اقرأ قصصًا وناقشها</p> |
|--|--|---|--|--|

**The Basics**

[TheBasicsBoston.org/welcome](http://TheBasicsBoston.org/welcome)

SCAN FOR MORE

## BASICS INSIGHTS 4 MONTHS

Science-based facts and suggested activities to boost your 4-month-old's brain development and learning!

**FACT** A big breakthrough for infants is learning that things still exist even when they're out of sight.

**TRY THIS**

- Find moments to play a fun game of "peek-a-boo."
- Hide your face with your hands, and then open them up to show a big smile.

**EXPLORE THROUGH MOVEMENT AND PLAY**

**FACT** Babies naturally imitate other people's facial expressions and sounds.

**TRY THIS**

- Smile and wait to see if your baby smiles back or stick out your tongue a little.
- Give your baby enough time to respond.
- React with pleasure when they do.
- Go back and forth.

**TALK, SING, AND POINT**

**FACT** Every day, your baby is working hard to learn new things and master new skills. Celebrate these accomplishments!

**TRY THIS**

- If your baby tries to roll over or use another physical skill, encourage them.
- If they succeed, give a big smile and a kiss.
- Say, "Hurrah! What a strong baby! You're learning so much."

**MAXIMIZE LOVE, MANAGE STRESS**

[TheBasics.org](http://TheBasics.org)



# Parent Toolkit with Videos and Tips

## English

Activities and ideas for right now, to learn and grow together with your baby.

### View Tips by Age Group

**Infants**  
(0-12 Months)

**Toddlers**  
(12-36 Months)

**Preschoolers**  
(36-60 months)

## Explore The Basics

♥ Maximize Love, Manage Stress

🗨️ Talk, Sing, and Point

🧮 Count, Group, and Compare

👣 Explore through Movement and Play

📖 Read and Discuss Stories

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Call Toll Free: 1-844-574-6285

[Click here](#) to visit.

## Spanish

Actividades e ideas inmediatas, para aprender y crecer con tu bebé.

### Consejos por Edad

**Bebes**  
(0-12 Meses)

**Niños**  
(12-36 Meses)

**Niños en edad preescolar**  
(36-60 Meses)

## Explore The Basics

♥ Dele todo el amor, controle el estrés

🗨️ Háblele, cántele y señálele las cosas

🧮 Cuente, agrupe y compárele las cosas

👣 Explore mediante el movimiento y el juego

📖 Lea y comente cuentos

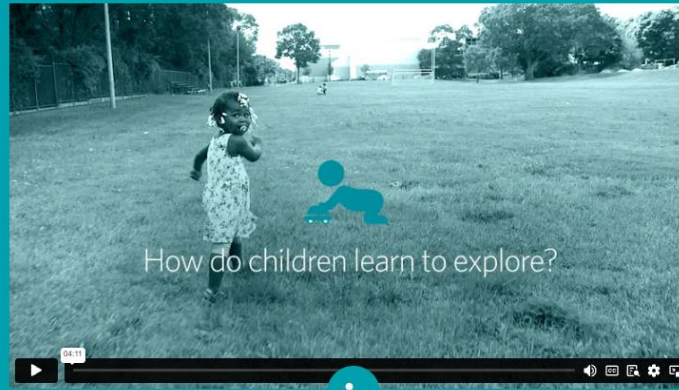
[Click here](#) to visit.

# Pages from the Parent Toolkit

[Click here](#) for this page and video.

[Click here](#) for this page and video

[Click here](#) for this page and video



## Maximize Love, Manage Stress

Staying emotionally present for your child increases their happiness, strengthens their emotional health, and builds self-control skills.

[VIEW TIPS](#)

### Plan to Avoid Stress

What situations tend to be stressful? Think about those situations ahead of time and plan how you can improve or avoid them. For example, avoid trips to the store right before your child's nap time.

### Moment of Gratitude

Take a moment to think about a few things that make you grateful right now, big or small. Reflect and enjoy that feeling for a few minutes.

### Go Easy on Yourself

Life can feel overwhelming, and we all make mistakes. Focus on the big picture and be gentle with yourself when things don't go as planned. Ask for help. All parents need help.

[See all tips](#)

## Why This Matters

Infants and toddlers thrive when their world feels loving, safe, and predictable. When you show love and respond to your child's needs, they learn they can count on you. By responding in ways that fit their emotions, you teach them to manage their feelings and behavior. Feeling secure in their relationships gives them confidence to explore their surroundings and cope with challenges.

Young children are affected by your emotions, whether you are happy or upset. So, it is important to find strategies that help you cope with stress. Caring for yourself helps you stay calm and patient with your child.

## Explore Through Movement and Play

Encourage curiosity, discovery, and a healthy body.

[VIEW TIPS](#)

### Let Them Move Around

Give your baby time and space to explore their surroundings by reaching, rolling, scooting, and crawling. Just make sure they are safe.

### Sink or Float

During bath time, guess whether an item will sink or float. Then place it in the water to find out. Try a different object. See what happens and talk about it.

### On and Off

Help your older baby push buttons or turn things on/off (with supervision). Think doorbells, light switches, or faucets. Talk about what they did and what happened.

[See all tips](#)

## Why This Matters

Infants and toddlers are like scientists—curious and excited to learn about their surroundings. Children explore and learn about the world through movement and play. There are many kinds of play: exploring objects and their features using the senses, silly games with loved ones, imaginative and pretend play, creative activities such as drawing, and physical play, such as crawling or rolling a ball. Movement and play keep children healthy and build their coordination and strength.

Your child benefits from spending some playing with others, and some time playing alone, figuring things out independently (with you nearby). Help them build on their interests and see where their curiosity takes them.

## Talk, Sing, and Point

Boost your child's language development and knowledge of the world.

[VIEW TIPS](#)

### Talk to Them

Include your baby in everyday routines by talking to them during activities like changing, feeding, bathing, and errands. Describe what you are doing.

### Rhyme Time

Make up rhyming chants for daily routines starring your baby. A bath rhyme might go like this: "Soapy Samantha in the tub/ Rub-a-dub-dub-rub-a-dub-dub."

### Name Body Parts

When changing or dressing your baby, make a game of naming and pointing to body parts. "Where's Oliver's nose? There it is. Here's my nose." Try singing a round of "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes."

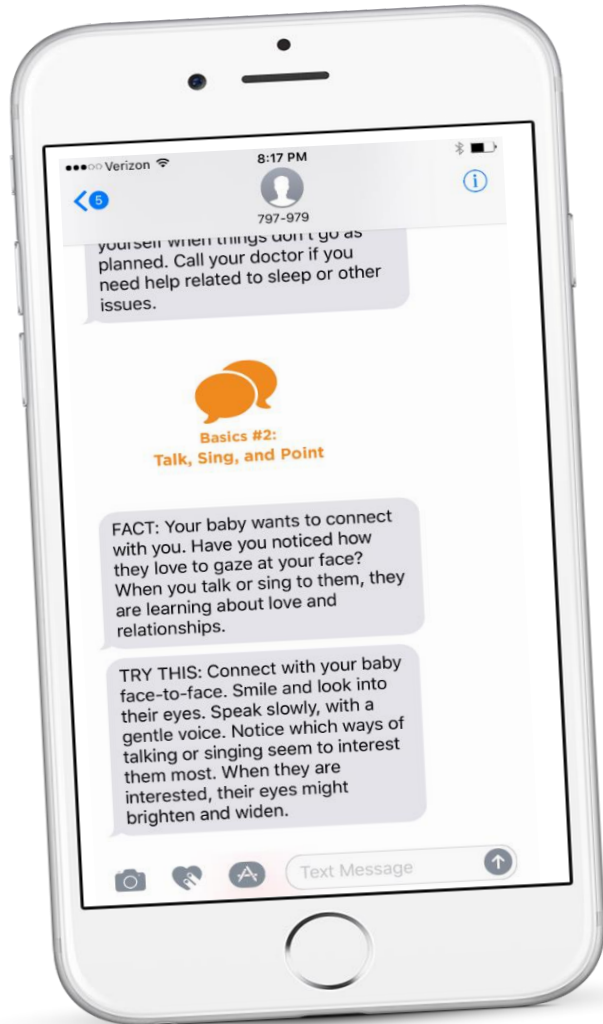
[See all tips](#)

## Why This Matters

Babies learn language from the very beginning. They pay attention to your sounds and expressions as you interact with them. Connect to your child with eye contact and talk in a loving tone of voice as you go about your day together. Take turns going back and forth, responding to their sounds with your words and facial expressions. Every time you talk, sing, or point to what you are talking about, you provide clues to the meaning of what you are saying. Talking to your child teaches them about the world and helps you get to know the fascinating person they are becoming!



# Basics Insights: Twice Weekly Text Messages, Birth to 5 (Free to Parents)



- Content based on child's age, from birth to the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday
- One of The Basics principles is covered each week with two messages, a FACT and a TRY THIS
- Aligned with key frameworks including Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework
- Intended to support ongoing conversations
- Can gather info directly from parents/caregivers

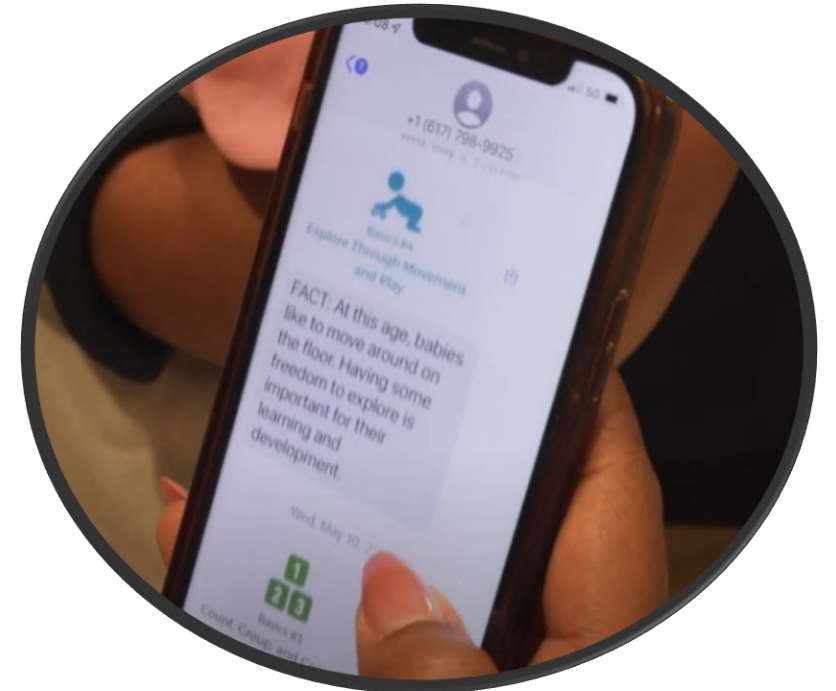
# Videos about *Basics Insights* Text Messaging

One Minute Video Introduction.

[\(Click here.\)](#)

Video Testimonial from a father.

[\(Click here.\)](#)



# Data/Evidence

# After 3.5 Months of Receiving Basics Insights

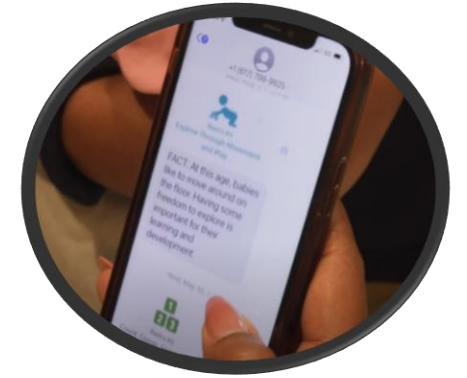
|  | Totally Agree | Mostly Agree | Agree a Little | Disagree |
|--|---------------|--------------|----------------|----------|
| ■ I <b>would recommend</b> the messages to other parents and caregivers. | 84%           | 14%          | 2%             | 0%       |
| ■ The messages <b>keep me thinking</b> about how to help my child learn. | 84%           | 13%          | 3%             | 0%       |
| ■ I <b>learn new things</b> to do with my child.                         | 67%           | 27%          | 5%             | 1%       |
| ■ The messages <b>help me understand</b> my child.                       | 65%           | 28%          | 8%             | 0%       |



\*Based on 1256 responses after 3.5 months of receiving twice-weekly messages. (12% response rate)

# 3.5-Month Impacts of Receiving Basics Insights Texts

Mean differences in standardized reported use of practices associated with The Basics Principles at the 3.5-month Basics Insights follow-up survey, relative to expected normal usage of the same practices.



Definition: “Expected normal usage of the same practices” equals the baseline response plus normal growth over 3.5 months, where normal growth is estimated from the age pattern in the baseline responses. Sample is 483 respondents with complete data on baseline *and* 3.5-month follow-up surveys.





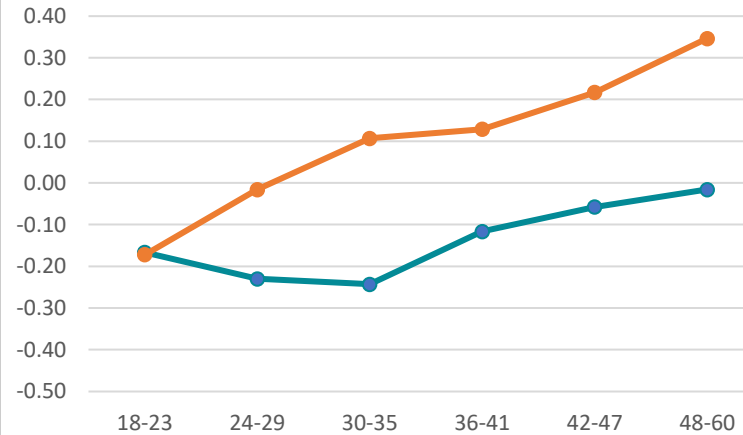
# How Self-Reported Parenting Correlates With Parental Assessments of Child Development

## Using The Basics Parental Assessment of Child Development Status

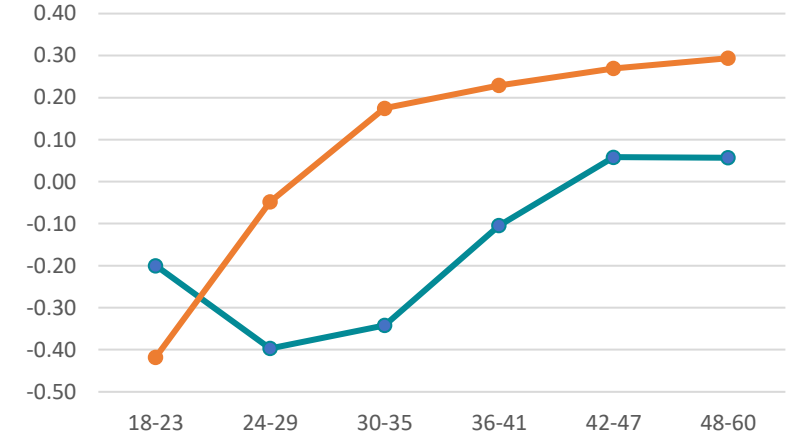
Lines represent parental assessments of child developmental status. **Orange lines** = parents were above average in the sample on a self-reported index of five parenting practices related to The Basics Principles. **Green lines** = parents were below average in the sample on the same parenting practices. Lines are smoothed plots of raw data for standardized indices.

4900 parents who had received Basics Insights text messages for at least 6 months and whose children were at least 18 months of age were sent text messages inviting them to respond to the assessment of child development. The survey also included the items on the five parenting practices. (N=540 responses)

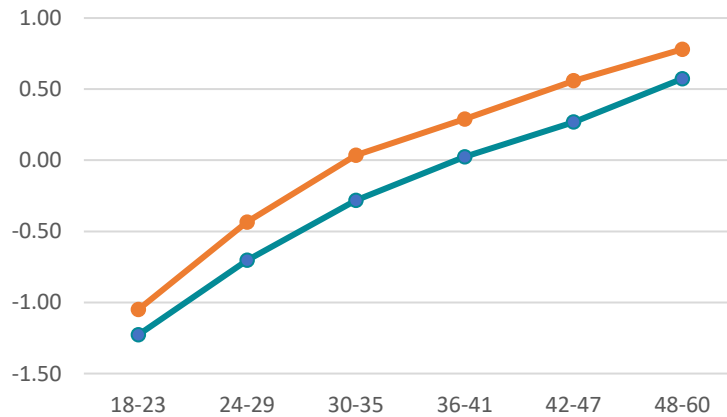
### Social Skills in Groups with Other Children



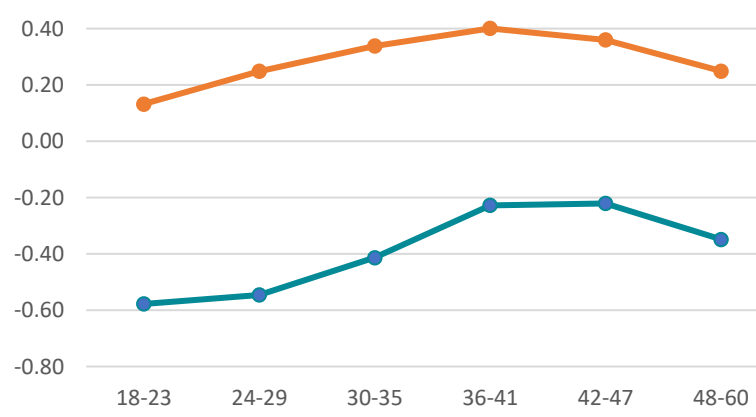
### Emotional Skills: e.g., Ability to Calm Down when Upset



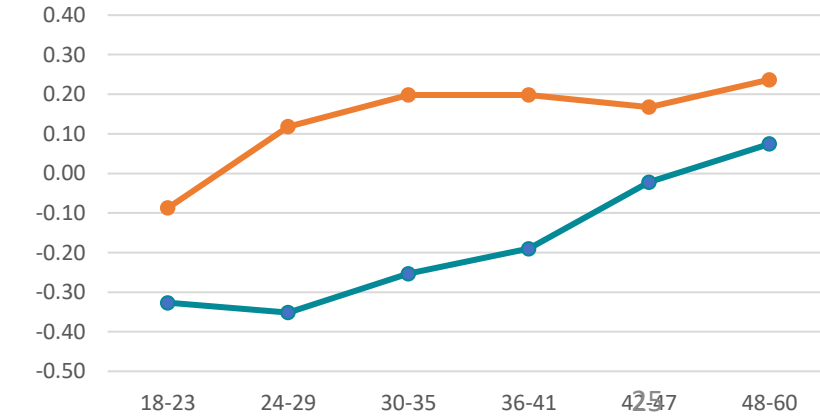
### Cognitive Skills: Counting, Sorting, & Rhyming



### Agency for Reading: Asks To Be Read To; Tries To Read



### Executive Function Skills: When confused tries more than one way



# The Art!

Maximize Love,  
Manage Stress  
Artist: Eden Soares



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# Maximize Love, Manage Stress

Artist: Eden Soares





# Count, Group & Compare

Artist: Jacob Ginga

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# Count, Group & Compare

Artist: Jacob Ginga



# The Basics Caregiver Promise

With my heart I will love you  
And shield you from stress.

With my mouth I will speak what I feel.  
With soft words and sweet songs every time I behold you  
I'll show you that my love is real.

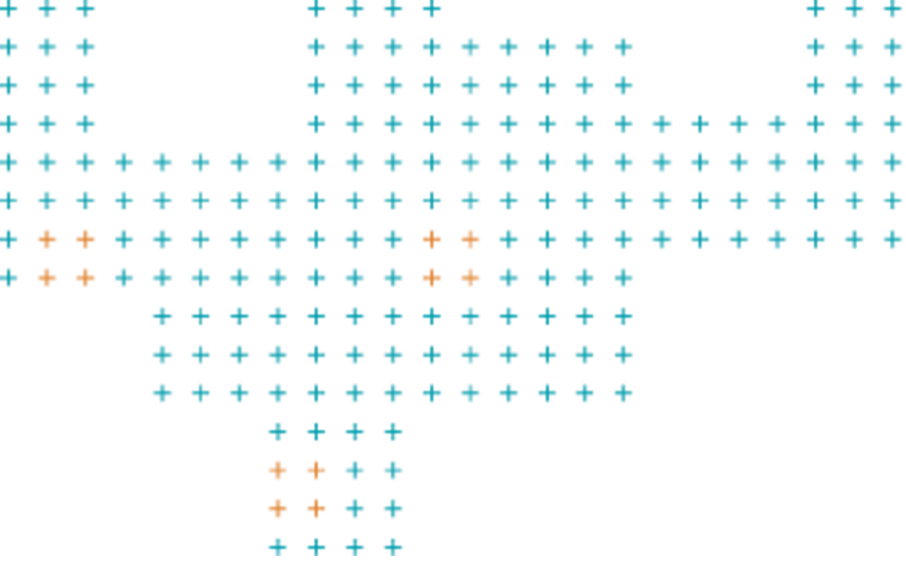
With my fingers I'll point at the objects I name  
And I'll count them in groups to compare.  
With my feet I will take you outdoors to explore  
While we play and enjoy the fresh air.

With my eyes I will read as I show you the world  
Through bright pictures and stories in books.  
These are ways to make sure that your brain is prepared  
For successes wherever you look.

This my promise I make from the day of your birth  
That these basics I'll faithfully do.  
For my job is to help you grow happy and smart  
Starting now when your life is brand new.

You will learn that your life is an artwork.  
And that you are the artist in charge.  
But before you decide what to do with your life  
Listen now  
To the beat  
Of my heart.





**The  
Basics™**

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