Reading to children regularly, from an early age, helps children learn new words, grasp language, have a larger vocabulary, and do better in school.

**Baby Steps to my development**

- *When I am ready to play*
- *Let me explore in a safe space. I need to have a chance to play on my own.*
- *Sing, hum, and dance with me. I like the interaction, and the rhythm, and music is good for my brain.*
- *Narrate your life to me. Tell me about what we are doing together. You may feel silly, but it teaches me new vocabulary and makes me feel included.*
- *Read to me; it helps my language and social development.*
- *Help me to kick my legs and arms by pushing off of you so that I can practice using my muscles and understanding how they work.*
- *Make silly faces at me. Stick your tongue out. Imitate my sounds. This teaches me how to read facial expressions, and learn social cues, and expands my vocabulary.*
- *Have me practice “tummy time.” Even though I may not like it, it is important for me to practice so that I can gain core strength to crawl and walk.*
- *Give me a mobile to look at when I am on my back. I particularly like bright colors and black and white.*
- *Keep me in the middle of things. I like to be where the action is so that I can learn about the world.*
Baby Steps
to my development
When I am sleepy

Remember, preemies develop along the same path as full term infants but at a slower rate. Even after leaving the NICU they may continue to be more sensitive to overstimulation.