



Brain Injuries in Infants and Toddlers

March is Brain Injury Awareness month and a great time to think about not only the causes of brain injuries but also the best ways to prevent them.

What is a brain injury?

A brain injury is damage that disturbs the function of the brain. It may occur when the head:

- Is violently shaken by an external force (e.g., severe whiplash or shaken baby syndrome)
- Hits a stationary object (e.g., fall or hits a windshield in a car accident)
- Is hit (e.g., by impact from a ball)

Brain injuries in infants and toddlers can also be caused from medical conditions such as a stroke, meningitis, or complications at birth.

What does a brain injury look like in infants and toddlers?

Children with a brain injury can have similar signs and symptoms as adults, but it is often harder for them to let others know how they feel. A doctor should be contacted if a child has experienced a blow to the head and has any of the symptoms below:

- Tiredness
- Irritability (will not stop crying or cannot be consoled)
- Changes in eating, sleeping, or playing

- Lack of interest in favorite toys or activities
- Loss of new skills, such as toilet training
- Loss of balance or unsteady walking
- Vomiting

What is the effect of a brain injury on an infant and toddler?

There are many factors to consider in regard to the effects a brain injury may have on an infant or toddler. Some of which may even continue to adulthood. The severity of the injury and how much rehabilitation is provided can impact the results of a brain injury. Some effects include:

- Interruption in learning new skills since the child is still developing
- Sensation, language, or emotion changes
- Loss of parts of muscle, speech, vision, hearing, or taste function depending on the area of brain damage
- Long- or short-term changes in personality or behavior
- Epilepsy
- Increased risk for Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and other brain disorders that become more prevalent with age

How can brain injuries in child care centers and family day homes be prevented?

- Always use car seats when transporting infants and toddlers
- Use gates at the top and bottom of stairs until children can go up and down safely
- Stay with young infants on high places such as sofas and changing tables
- Strap infants in high chairs with the safety harness
- Make sure playgrounds are safe and soft enough to absorb the shock of the falls
- Open windows from the top or use window guards
- Supervise young children at all times

References (or Resources):

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov

Johns Hopkins Medicine www.hopkinsmedicine.org

KidsHealth from Nemours www.kidshealth.org

New York State Department of Health www.health.ny.gov

Stanford Children's Health www.stanfordchildrens.org

The Children's Trust for Children with Brain Injury www.braininjuryhub.co.uk

Resource Spotlight



From birth to 5 years, children should reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act and move. Track children's development and act early if you have a concern.

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

Celebrating
BABIES & TOTS HAND-IN-HAND
2025



These exciting professional development institutes will empower early childhood educators and site leaders to explore and integrate the concept of community; fostering a sense of belonging and connection in the classroom setting for Virginia's infants and toddlers.

March 8 - Richmond

March 22 - Roanoke

April 26 - Virginia Beach

May 17 - Wytheville

Register Now!

The Virginia Infant and Toddler Specialist Network is supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$5,350,000 with 100% funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by the Virginia Department of Education, ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



Enhancing Emergent Literacy for Infants and Toddlers

1-2-3 READ! early literacy training is an interactive, practical training designed for teachers, caregivers, and directors who work with infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months, in a group setting.

March 8, 2025 – Fairfax

March 15, 2025 – Norfolk

Registration fee waived for VQB5 participants

Non-VQB5 participant fee is \$25.00

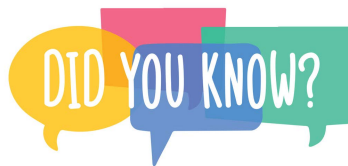
(includes all training and materials)

Click [here](#) to register online now!



This conference is your opportunity to join a group of educators who are dedicated to making a profound difference in the lives of our youngest learners. You'll leave with fresh ideas, a renewed sense of purpose, and a network of colleagues who share your passion.

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- [Join STREAMin3 Office Hours](#)
- Weekly on Tuesdays, 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

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