



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **Creating a home learning environment (LOVE)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

Creating a home learning environment

Objectives

- Build understanding of the importance of the home in learning and later school success
- Encourage parents to create caring supportive environments at home that encourage learning and development
- Generate understanding of toxic stress and how to avoid.

Introduction

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child's life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent. All it takes is your love, play and talk.

Learning starts at home – this is a fact that is easy to underestimate. A good learning environment at home supports your child's development and is essential for later school success. Our children have to be ready to learn **more** by the time they reach school and **not** start to learn when they reach school.

Play is essential and beneficial for children – both for their development and learning. Stressful uncaring environments create what is called toxic stress and are bad for children's development. Loving, caring home environments are one of the best ways for your child to achieve success later in their lives.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>In a recent show we discussed how parents are their child's first teacher. I guess if this is the case, the home is also the first classroom. Can you tell me a bit about the home as a learning environment?</i></p> <p>2. <i>Why is the environment a child grows up in so important?</i></p>	<p>Our homes are where we spend the most time, and are therefore the place where we have the opportunity to learn the most. There is the mistaken belief that learning happens at school, but research now points to the fact that homes (and the learning or lack of learning that happens there) have the most effect on children's ultimate learning outcomes. The better our homes are at encouraging learning, the better our children will do. Additionally recent research has shown that stressful environments, also have a negative impact on children's development.</p> <p>New research also suggests that exceptionally stressful experiences early in life may have long-term negative</p>

consequences for a child's learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health. Some types of “positive stress” in a child's life—overcoming the challenges and frustrations of learning a new, difficult task, for instance—can be beneficial. Severe, uncontrollable, chronic adversity—what can be defined as toxic stress—on the other hand, can produce detrimental effects on developing brain architecture as well as on the chemical and physiological systems that help an individual adapt to stressful events.

3. *What is Toxic Stress?*

Toxic stress response can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support.

4. *Is all stress damaging?*

No. The prolonged activation of the body's stress response systems can be damaging, but some stress is a normal part of life. Learning how to cope with stress is an important part of development. We do not need to worry about positive stress, which is short-lived, or tolerable stress, which is more serious but is buffered by supportive relationships. However, the constant activation of the body's stress response systems due to chronic or traumatic experiences in the absence of caring, stable relationships with adults, especially

<p>7. <i>How does this change when they get older?</i></p>	<p>need to make sure your house is safe for him to do so by childproofing your house (removing dangerous objects). If you need to take things away from your baby – make sure you explain why!</p> <p>As babies grow they start to explore more and become able to be involved in more of the home activity. Even from as young as two, you can get your child to help you with basic chores and cooking. Obviously you will need to supervise this, and sometimes it can feel like more work than just saying no, but toddlers want to be involved – they feel useful and it provides many opportunities for learning. For example talking to your child while cooking, showing different colours and textures, counting items, letting them group things like laundry, are all essential ways for them to learn. Fine motor skills can also be developed by getting children to help with basic tasks such as sewing and cutting. All of this can become a lot of fun by making the ordinary, extraordinary!</p>
<p>8. <i>Should we organize our homes in a different way to encourage learning?</i></p>	<p>Children need to feel that they also have a place and are important in the home. Try and have a place for your child's toys - a basket can work well, or a whole shelf if you have more space. Make sure these are always accessible to them so that they can play when they want to. This does not have to be expensive – children can play and pretend with anything, and even old clothes, old phones, balls and things that make a noise, all make good toys. It is also</p>

<p>9. <i>What about creativity? Isn't learning also about this?</i></p> <p>10. <i>Are rules part of the learning environment?</i></p> <p>11. <i>What about outdoors?</i></p>	<p>important to encourage reading by having printed material in your house, and reading with children whenever you can. If you have children's books, also put them in a place where your child can get them themselves.</p> <p>Yes definitely. Have paper and drawing materials also available for your child – even if it is just a pen and some recycled paper. Let them know that these are theirs and put it in a place where they can get it when they would like. You will of course need to make sure there are some rules about where they are allowed to draw and where not!</p> <p>Yes children need simple rules to help them learn what they can and cannot do. For example that they may not damage things or hurt each other. Make sure you explain to your child why you are saying no, and remember to praise and thank them when they follow the rules too.</p> <p>Children learn a lot from spending time outside and playing in nature. There are so many opportunities for children to learn from nature, so if you have a garden, grow something with your child there. They also provide lots of opportunity for water play and sand play which also provide important spaces for learning. Make a sand pit and use basic utensils for digging and pouring. Recycled clean plastic containers and bottles (and spray bottles too) make excellent water</p>
--	---

<p>12. <i>I guess that it is important for school-going children too that their home is conducive to learning?</i></p> <p>13. <i>Anything else?</i></p>	<p>play tools and will keep children entertained and learning for hours. Make sure that the environment is clean and safe and always supervise small children as accidents happen easily. Stay close so you can hear if someone gets hurt.</p> <p>Yes especially with the pressure on children nowadays with so much homework. Creating a space for your child to do their work is important, and also equally for young and old children, having a routine and structure to the day (e.g. do homework before supper) helps make space for learning.</p> <p>IT is important when we focus on learning, is not to forget to give time for play. Parents should never underestimate the power of play in learning. Children learn best by exploring with their senses, and this is usually done through play. Plus, it's a great way to make learning fun! Whether it be playing games or moving to songs or spending time outdoors, playing heightens senses and gives new information for them to understand. In the end, the most important thing to remember in making the home conducive for learning is to let the love be felt. A loving and supportive environment is what makes the home the best place to learn. It's not so much the abundance of materials or the activities done that make learning effective at home; rather, it is the quality of the time spent with the child, as well as the</p>
---	---

	encouraging words and tight hugs that make all of it much more meaningful to the child. A child can learn best at home, if the home environment allows him to do so.
--	--

Conclusion
Remember to make space in your home for your child and their learning. Encourage creativity and enable this by providing materials/ activities to stimulate this. A loving, caring home is one of the best predictor of later success

Learning outcomes
After listening to this show the audience should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand that learning starts at home and are able to create a good learning environment at home supports and is essential for later school success• Know that playful homes and parents are encouraged• Endeavor to prevent Stressful uncaring environments (toxic Stress) that are bad for children’s development• Know that homes must include space for play, creativity and learning