Children are already learning at birth, and they develop and learn at a rapid pace in their early years. This provides a critical foundation for lifelong progress, and the adults who provide for the care and education of children from birth through age 8 bear a great responsibility for their health, development, and learning. Young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationships with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their development and learning. The science of child development and early learning makes clear the importance and complexity of working with young children from infancy through the early elementary years. Research during the past decade has revealed much about how children learn and develop.