

Caring for Children, Families and Yourself

Small Group Conversation

- Read through the **Milestone Moments or School Age** handouts for the ages of children you are caring for
- In small groups talk about:
 - What is important for us to know about children in this age group?
 - What are some ideas for activities to do with the children?
 - What are some things you'd like to share with parents/guardians?



Handouts

Milestone Moments

*Positive Parenting Tips for Healthy
Child Development*

Your Baby at 2 Months



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by 2 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Babies Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Begins to smile at people
- ☐ Can briefly calm himself (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand)
- ☐ Tries to look at parent

Language/Communication

- ☐ Coos, makes gurgling sounds
- ☐ Turns head toward sounds

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Pays attention to faces
- ☐ Begins to follow things with eyes and recognize people at a distance
- ☐ Begins to act bored (cries, fussy) if activity doesn't change

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy
- ☐ Makes smoother movements with arms and legs

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Doesn't respond to loud sounds
- ☐ Doesn't watch things as they move
- ☐ Doesn't smile at people
- ☐ Doesn't bring hands to mouth
- ☐ Can't hold head up when pushing up when on tummy

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON'T WAIT.
Acting early can make a real difference!



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Download CDC's
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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Help Your Baby Learn and Grow



You can help your baby learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 2-month-old baby today.

What You Can Do for Your 2-Month-Old:

- ☐ Cuddle, talk, and play with your baby during feeding, dressing, and bathing.
- ☐ Help your baby learn to calm herself. It's okay for her to suck on her fingers.
- ☐ Begin to help your baby get into a routine, such as sleeping at night more than in the day, and have regular schedules.
- ☐ Getting in tune with your baby's likes and dislikes can help you feel more comfortable and confident.
- ☐ Act excited and smile when your baby makes sounds.
- ☐ Copy your baby's sounds sometimes, but also use clear language.
- ☐ Pay attention to your baby's different cries so that you learn to know what he wants.
- ☐ Talk, read, and sing to your baby.
- ☐ Play peek-a-boo. Help your baby play peek-a-boo, too.
- ☐ Place a baby-safe mirror in your baby's crib so she can look at herself.
- ☐ Look at pictures with your baby and talk about them.
- ☐ Lay your baby on his tummy when he is awake and put toys near him.
- ☐ Encourage your baby to lift his head by holding toys at eye level in front of him.
- ☐ Hold a toy or rattle above your baby's head and encourage her to reach for it.
- ☐ Hold your baby upright with his feet on the floor. Sing or talk to your baby as he is upright.

Milestones adapted from CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD: BIRTH TO AGE 5, Fifth Edition, edited by Steven Shelov and Tanya Remer Altmann © 1991, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and BRIGHT FUTURES: GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH SUPERVISION OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Hagan, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Duncan, 2008, Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Baby at 4 Months



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by 4 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Babies Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Smiles spontaneously, especially at people
- ☐ Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops
- ☐ Copies some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning

Language/Communication

- ☐ Begins to babble
- ☐ Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears
- ☐ Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Lets you know if she is happy or sad
- ☐ Responds to affection
- ☐ Reaches for toy with one hand
- ☐ Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it
- ☐ Follows moving things with eyes from side to side
- ☐ Watches faces closely
- ☐ Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Holds head steady, unsupported
- ☐ Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface
- ☐ May be able to roll over from tummy to back
- ☐ Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys
- ☐ Brings hands to mouth
- ☐ When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Doesn't watch things as they move
- ☐ Doesn't smile at people
- ☐ Can't hold head steady
- ☐ Doesn't coo or make sounds
- ☐ Doesn't bring things to mouth
- ☐ Doesn't push down with legs when feet are placed on a hard surface
- ☐ Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

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Help Your Baby Learn and Grow



You can help your baby learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 4-month-old baby today.

What You Can Do for Your 4-Month-Old:

- ☐ Hold and talk to your baby; smile and be cheerful while you do.
- ☐ Set steady routines for sleeping and feeding.
- ☐ Pay close attention to what your baby likes and doesn't like; you will know how best to meet his needs and what you can do to make your baby happy.
- ☐ Copy your baby's sounds.
- ☐ Act excited and smile when your baby makes sounds.
- ☐ Have quiet play times when you read or sing to your baby.
- ☐ Give age-appropriate toys to play with, such as rattles or colorful pictures.
- ☐ Play games such as peek-a-boo.
- ☐ Provide safe opportunities for your baby to reach for toys and explore his surroundings.
- ☐ Put toys near your baby so that she can reach for them or kick her feet.
- ☐ Put toys or rattles in your baby's hand and help him to hold them.
- ☐ Hold your baby upright with feet on the floor, and sing or talk to your baby as she "stands" with support.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Baby at 6 Months



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by 6 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Babies Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger
- ☐ Likes to play with others, especially parents
- ☐ Responds to other people's emotions and often seems happy
- ☐ Likes to look at self in a mirror

Language/Communication

- ☐ Responds to sounds by making sounds
- ☐ Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah," "eh," "oh") and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds
- ☐ Responds to own name
- ☐ Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure
- ☐ Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m," "b")

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Looks around at things nearby
- ☐ Brings things to mouth
- ☐ Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach
- ☐ Begins to pass things from one hand to the other

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)
- ☐ Begins to sit without support
- ☐ When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce
- ☐ Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Doesn't try to get things that are in reach
- ☐ Shows no affection for caregivers
- ☐ Doesn't respond to sounds around him
- ☐ Has difficulty getting things to mouth
- ☐ Doesn't make vowel sounds ("ah", "eh", "oh")
- ☐ Doesn't roll over in either direction
- ☐ Doesn't laugh or make squealing sounds
- ☐ Seems very stiff, with tight muscles
- ☐ Seems very floppy, like a rag doll

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

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Help Your Baby Learn and Grow



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What You Can Do for Your 6-Month-Old:

- ☐ Play on the floor with your baby every day.
- ☐ Learn to read your baby's moods. If he's happy, keep doing what you are doing. If he's upset, take a break and comfort your baby.
- ☐ Show your baby how to comfort herself when she's upset. She may suck on her fingers to self soothe.
- ☐ Use "reciprocal" play—when he smiles, you smile; when he makes sounds, you copy them.
- ☐ Repeat your child's sounds and say simple words with those sounds. For example, if your child says "bah," say "bottle" or "book."
- ☐ Read books to your child every day. Praise her when she babbles and "reads" too.
- ☐ When your baby looks at something, point to it and talk about it.
- ☐ When he drops a toy on the floor, pick it up and give it back. This game helps him learn cause and effect.
- ☐ Read colorful picture books to your baby.
- ☐ Point out new things to your baby and name them.
- ☐ Show your baby bright pictures in a magazine and name them.
- ☐ Hold your baby up while she sits or support her with pillows. Let her look around and give her toys to look at while she balances.
- ☐ Put your baby on his tummy or back and put toys just out of reach. Encourage him to roll over to reach the toys.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Baby at 9 Months★



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by 9 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Babies Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ May be afraid of strangers
- ☐ May be clingy with familiar adults
- ☐ Has favorite toys

Language/Communication

- ☐ Understands "no"
- ☐ Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa"
- ☐ Copies sounds and gestures of others
- ☐ Uses fingers to point at things

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Watches the path of something as it falls
- ☐ Looks for things he sees you hide
- ☐ Plays peek-a-boo
- ☐ Puts things in her mouth
- ☐ Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other
- ☐ Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Stands, holding on
- ☐ Can get into sitting position
- ☐ Sits without support
- ☐ Pulls to stand
- ☐ Crawls

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Doesn't bear weight on legs with support
- ☐ Doesn't sit with help
- ☐ Doesn't babble ("mama", "baba", "dada")
- ☐ Doesn't play any games involving back-and-forth play
- ☐ Doesn't respond to own name
- ☐ Doesn't seem to recognize familiar people
- ☐ Doesn't look where you point
- ☐ Doesn't transfer toys from one hand to the other

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

DON'T WAIT.

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★ It's time for developmental screening!

At 9 months, your child is due for general developmental screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your child's developmental screening.



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Help Your Baby Learn and Grow



You can help your baby learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 9-month-old baby today.

What You Can Do for Your 9-Month-Old:

- ☐ Pay attention to the way he reacts to new situations and people; try to continue to do things that make your baby happy and comfortable.
- ☐ As she moves around more, stay close so she knows that you are near.
- ☐ Continue with routines; they are especially important now.
- ☐ Play games with “my turn, your turn.”
- ☐ Say what you think your baby is feeling. For example, say, “You are so sad, let’s see if we can make you feel better.”
- ☐ Describe what your baby is looking at; for example, “red, round ball.”
- ☐ Talk about what your baby wants when he points at something.
- ☐ Copy your baby’s sounds and words.
- ☐ Ask for behaviors that you want. For example, instead of saying “don’t stand,” say “time to sit.”
- ☐ Teach cause-and-effect by rolling balls back and forth, pushing toy cars and trucks, and putting blocks in and out of a container.
- ☐ Play peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek.
- ☐ Read and talk to your baby.
- ☐ Provide lots of room for your baby to move and explore in a safe area.
- ☐ Put your baby close to things that she can pull up on safely.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child at 1 Year



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 1. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Is shy or nervous with strangers
- ☐ Cries when mom or dad leaves
- ☐ Has favorite things and people
- ☐ Shows fear in some situations
- ☐ Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story
- ☐ Repeats sounds or actions to get attention
- ☐ Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing
- ☐ Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"

Language/Communication

- ☐ Responds to simple spoken requests
- ☐ Uses simple gestures, like shaking head "no" or waving "bye-bye"
- ☐ Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)
- ☐ Says "mama" and "dada" and exclamations like "uh-oh!"
- ☐ Tries to say words you say

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing
- ☐ Finds hidden things easily
- ☐ Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named
- ☐ Copies gestures
- ☐ Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair
- ☐ Bangs two things together
- ☐ Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container
- ☐ Lets things go without help
- ☐ Pokes with index (pointer) finger
- ☐ Follows simple directions like "pick up the toy"

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Gets to a sitting position without help
- ☐ Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture ("cruising")
- ☐ May take a few steps without holding on
- ☐ May stand alone

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Doesn't crawl
- ☐ Can't stand when supported
- ☐ Doesn't search for things that she sees you hide.
- ☐ Doesn't say single words like "mama" or "dada"
- ☐ Doesn't learn gestures like waving or shaking head
- ☐ Doesn't point to things
- ☐ Loses skills he once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at cdc.gov/FindEI.

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Help Your Child Learn and Grow



You can help your child learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 1-year-old child today.

What You Can Do for Your 1-Year-Old:

- ☐ Give your child time to get to know a new caregiver. Bring a favorite toy, stuffed animal, or blanket to help comfort your child.
- ☐ In response to unwanted behaviors, say “no” firmly. Do not yell, spank, or give long explanations. A time out for 30 seconds to 1 minute might help redirect your child.
- ☐ Give your child lots of hugs, kisses, and praise for good behavior.
- ☐ Spend a lot more time encouraging wanted behaviors than punishing unwanted behaviors (4 times as much encouragement for wanted behaviors as redirection for unwanted behaviors).
- ☐ Talk to your child about what you’re doing. For example, “Mommy is washing your hands with a washcloth.”
- ☐ Read with your child every day. Have your child turn the pages. Take turns labeling pictures with your child.
- ☐ Build on what your child says or tries to say, or what he points to. If he points to a truck and says “t” or “truck,” say, “Yes, that’s a big, blue truck.”
- ☐ Give your child crayons and paper, and let your child draw freely. Show your child how to draw lines up and down and across the page. Praise your child when she tries to copy them.
- ☐ Play with blocks, shape sorters, and other toys that encourage your child to use his hands.
- ☐ Hide small toys and other things and have your child find them.
- ☐ Ask your child to label body parts or things you see while driving in the car.
- ☐ Sing songs with actions, like “The Itsy Bitsy Spider” and “Wheels on the Bus.” Help your child do the actions with you.
- ☐ Give your child pots and pans or a small musical instrument like a drum or cymbals. Encourage your child to make noise.
- ☐ Provide lots of safe places for your toddler to explore. (Toddler-proof your home. Lock away products for cleaning, laundry, lawn care, and car care. Use a safety gate and lock doors to the outside and the basement.)
- ☐ Give your child push toys like a wagon or “kiddie push car.”

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child at 18 Months (1½ Yrs)★



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by 18 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Likes to hand things to others as play
- ☐ May have temper tantrums
- ☐ May be afraid of strangers
- ☐ Shows affection to familiar people
- ☐ Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll
- ☐ May cling to caregivers in new situations
- ☐ Points to show others something interesting
- ☐ Explores alone but with parent close by

Language/Communication

- ☐ Says several single words
- ☐ Says and shakes head "no"
- ☐ Points to show someone what he wants

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon
- ☐ Points to get the attention of others
- ☐ Shows interest in a doll or stuffed animal by pretending to feed
- ☐ Points to one body part
- ☐ Scribbles on his own
- ☐ Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say "sit down"

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Walks alone
- ☐ May walk up steps and run
- ☐ Pulls toys while walking
- ☐ Can help undress herself
- ☐ Drinks from a cup
- ☐ Eats with a spoon

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Doesn't point to show things to others
- ☐ Can't walk
- ☐ Doesn't know what familiar things are for
- ☐ Doesn't copy others
- ☐ Doesn't gain new words
- ☐ Doesn't have at least 6 words
- ☐ Doesn't notice or mind when a caregiver leaves or returns
- ☐ Loses skills he once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at **cdc.gov/FindEI**.

For more information, go to **cdc.gov/Concerned**.

DON'T WAIT.

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★ It's time for developmental screening!

At 18 months, your child is due for general developmental screening and an autism screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your child's developmental screening.



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What You Can Do for Your 18-Month-Old:

- ☐ Provide a safe, loving environment. It's important to be consistent and predictable.
- ☐ Praise good behaviors more than you punish bad behaviors (use only very brief time outs).
- ☐ Describe her emotions. For example, say, "You are happy when we read this book."
- ☐ Encourage pretend play.
- ☐ Encourage empathy. For example, when he sees a child who is sad, encourage him to hug or pat the other child.
- ☐ Read books and talk about the pictures using simple words.
- ☐ Copy your child's words.
- ☐ Use words that describe feelings and emotions.
- ☐ Use simple, clear phrases.
- ☐ Ask simple questions.
- ☐ Hide things under blankets and pillows and encourage him to find them.
- ☐ Play with blocks, balls, puzzles, books, and toys that teach cause and effect and problem solving.
- ☐ Name pictures in books and body parts.
- ☐ Provide toys that encourage pretend play; for example, dolls, play telephones.
- ☐ Provide safe areas for your child to walk and move around in.
- ☐ Provide toys that she can push or pull safely.
- ☐ Provide balls for her to kick, roll, and throw.
- ☐ Encourage him to drink from his cup and use a spoon, no matter how messy.
- ☐ Blow bubbles and let your child pop them.

Milestones adapted from CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD: BIRTH TO AGE 5, Fifth Edition, edited by Steven Shelov and Tanya Remer Altmann © 1991, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and BRIGHT FUTURES: GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH SUPERVISION OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Hagan, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Duncan, 2008, Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child at 2 Years★



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 2. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Copies others, especially adults and older children
- ☐ Gets excited when with other children
- ☐ Shows more and more independence
- ☐ Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)
- ☐ Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games

Language/Communication

- ☐ Points to things or pictures when they are named
- ☐ Knows names of familiar people and body parts
- ☐ Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- ☐ Follows simple instructions
- ☐ Repeats words overheard in conversation
- ☐ Points to things in a book

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers
- ☐ Begins to sort shapes and colors
- ☐ Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books
- ☐ Plays simple make-believe games
- ☐ Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- ☐ Might use one hand more than the other
- ☐ Follows two-step instructions such as "Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet."
- ☐ Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Stands on tiptoe
- ☐ Kicks a ball
- ☐ Begins to run
- ☐ Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- ☐ Walks up and down stairs holding on

- ☐ Throws ball overhand
- ☐ Makes or copies straight lines and circles

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Doesn't use 2-word phrases (for example, "drink milk")
- ☐ Doesn't know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- ☐ Doesn't copy actions and words
- ☐ Doesn't follow simple instructions
- ☐ Doesn't walk steadily
- ☐ Loses skills she once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at **cdc.gov/FindEI**.

For more information, go to **cdc.gov/Concerned**.

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★ It's time for developmental screening!

At 2 years, your child is due for general developmental screening and an autism screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your child's developmental screening.



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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Help Your Child Learn and Grow



You can help your child learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 2-year-old child today.

What You Can Do for Your 2-Year-Old:

- ☐ Encourage your child to help with simple chores at home, like sweeping and making dinner. Praise your child for being a good helper.
- ☐ At this age, children still play next to (not with) each other and don't share well. For play dates, give the children lots of toys to play with. Watch the children closely and step in if they fight or argue.
- ☐ Give your child attention and praise when he follows instructions. Limit attention for defiant behavior. Spend a lot more time praising good behaviors than punishing bad ones.
- ☐ Teach your child to identify and say body parts, animals, and other common things.
- ☐ Do not correct your child when he says words incorrectly. Rather, say it correctly. For example, "That is a ball."
- ☐ Encourage your child to say a word instead of pointing. If your child can't say the whole word ("milk"), give her the first sound ("m") to help. Over time, you can prompt your child to say the whole sentence — "I want milk."
- ☐ Hide your child's toys around the room and let him find them.
- ☐ Help your child do puzzles with shapes, colors, or farm animals. Name each piece when your child puts it in place.
- ☐ Encourage your child to play with blocks. Take turns building towers and knocking them down.
- ☐ Do art projects with your child using crayons, paint, and paper. Describe what your child makes and hang it on the wall or refrigerator.
- ☐ Ask your child to help you open doors and drawers and turn pages in a book or magazine.
- ☐ Once your child walks well, ask her to carry small things for you.
- ☐ Kick a ball back and forth with your child. When your child is good at that, encourage him to run and kick.
- ☐ Take your child to the park to run and climb on equipment or walk on nature trails. Watch your child closely.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child at 3 Years



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 3. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Copies adults and friends
- ☐ Shows affection for friends without prompting
- ☐ Takes turns in games
- ☐ Shows concern for a crying friend
- ☐ Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers"
- ☐ Shows a wide range of emotions
- ☐ Separates easily from mom and dad
- ☐ May get upset with major changes in routine
- ☐ Dresses and undresses self

Language/Communication

- ☐ Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- ☐ Can name most familiar things
- ☐ Understands words like "in," "on," and "under"
- ☐ Says first name, age, and sex
- ☐ Names a friend
- ☐ Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- ☐ Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- ☐ Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- ☐ Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- ☐ Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- ☐ Understands what "two" means
- ☐ Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- ☐ Turns book pages one at a time
- ☐ Builds towers of more than 6 blocks
- ☐ Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Climbs well
- ☐ Runs easily
- ☐ Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike)
- ☐ Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Falls down a lot or has trouble with stairs
- ☐ Drools or has very unclear speech
- ☐ Can't work simple toys (such as peg boards, simple puzzles, turning handle)
- ☐ Doesn't speak in sentences
- ☐ Doesn't understand simple instructions
- ☐ Doesn't play pretend or make-believe
- ☐ Doesn't want to play with other children or with toys
- ☐ Doesn't make eye contact
- ☐ Loses skills he once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call any local public elementary school for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get services to help.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Help Your Child Learn and Grow

You can help your child learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 3-year-old child today.



What You Can Do for Your 3-Year-Old:

- ☐ Go to play groups with your child or other places where there are other children, to encourage getting along with others.
- ☐ Work with your child to solve the problem when he is upset.
- ☐ Talk about your child's emotions. For example, say, "I can tell you feel mad because you threw the puzzle piece." Encourage your child to identify feelings in books.
- ☐ Set rules and limits for your child, and stick to them. If your child breaks a rule, give him a time out for 30 seconds to 1 minute in a chair or in his room. Praise your child for following the rules.
- ☐ Give your child instructions with 2 or 3 steps. For example, "Go to your room and get your shoes and coat."
- ☐ Read to your child every day. Ask your child to point to things in the pictures and repeat words after you.
- ☐ Give your child an "activity box" with paper, crayons, and coloring books. Color and draw lines and shapes with your child.
- ☐ Play matching games. Ask your child to find objects in books or around the house that are the same.
- ☐ Play counting games. Count body parts, stairs, and other things you use or see every day.
- ☐ Hold your child's hand going up and down stairs. When she can go up and down easily, encourage her to use the railing.
- ☐ Play outside with your child. Go to the park or hiking trail. Allow your child to play freely and without structured activities.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child at 4 Years



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 4. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Enjoys doing new things
- ☐ Plays "Mom" and "Dad"
- ☐ Is more and more creative with make-believe play
- ☐ Would rather play with other children than by himself
- ☐ Cooperates with other children
- ☐ Often can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- ☐ Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in

Language/Communication

- ☐ Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using "he" and "she"
- ☐ Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or the "Wheels on the Bus"
- ☐ Tells stories
- ☐ Can say first and last name

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Names some colors and some numbers
- ☐ Understands the idea of counting
- ☐ Starts to understand time
- ☐ Remembers parts of a story
- ☐ Understands the idea of "same" and "different"
- ☐ Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts
- ☐ Uses scissors
- ☐ Starts to copy some capital letters
- ☐ Plays board or card games
- ☐ Tells you what he thinks is going to happen next in a book

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds

- ☐ Catches a bounced ball most of the time
- ☐ Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Can't jump in place
- ☐ Has trouble scribbling
- ☐ Shows no interest in interactive games or make-believe
- ☐ Ignores other children or doesn't respond to people outside the family
- ☐ Resists dressing, sleeping, and using the toilet
- ☐ Can't retell a favorite story
- ☐ Doesn't follow 3-part commands
- ☐ Doesn't understand "same" and "different"
- ☐ Doesn't use "me" and "you" correctly
- ☐ Speaks unclearly
- ☐ Loses skills he once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call any local public elementary school for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get services to help.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Help Your Child Learn and Grow



You can help your child learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 4-year-old child today.

What You Can Do for Your 4-Year-Old:

- ☐ Play make-believe with your child. Let her be the leader and copy what she is doing.
- ☐ Suggest your child pretend play an upcoming event that might make him nervous, like going to preschool or staying overnight at a grandparent's house.
- ☐ Give your child simple choices whenever you can. Let your child choose what to wear, play, or eat for a snack. Limit choices to 2 or 3.
- ☐ During play dates, let your child solve her own problems with friends, but be nearby to help out if needed.
- ☐ Encourage your child to use words, share toys, and take turns playing games of one another's choice.
- ☐ Give your child toys to build imagination, like dress-up clothes, kitchen sets, and blocks.
- ☐ Use good grammar when speaking to your child. Instead of "Mommy wants you to come here," say, "I want you to come here."
- ☐ Use words like "first," "second," and "finally" when talking about everyday activities. This will help your child learn about sequence of events.
- ☐ Take time to answer your child's "why" questions. If you don't know the answer, say "I don't know," or help your child find the answer in a book, on the Internet, or from another adult.
- ☐ When you read with your child, ask him to tell you what happened in the story as you go.
- ☐ Say colors in books, pictures, and things at home. Count common items, like the number of snack crackers, stairs, or toy trains.
- ☐ Teach your child to play outdoor games like tag, follow the leader, and duck, duck, goose.
- ☐ Play your child's favorite music and dance with your child. Take turns copying each other's moves.

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Your Child at 5 Years



Child's Name _____

Child's Age _____

Today's Date _____

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 5. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by this Age:

Social/Emotional

- ☐ Wants to please friends
- ☐ Wants to be like friends
- ☐ More likely to agree with rules
- ☐ Likes to sing, dance, and act
- ☐ Is aware of gender
- ☐ Can tell what's real and what's make-believe
- ☐ Shows more independence (for example, may visit a next-door neighbor by himself [adult supervision is still needed])
- ☐ Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative

Language/Communication

- ☐ Speaks very clearly
- ☐ Tells a simple story using full sentences
- ☐ Uses future tense; for example, "Grandma will be here."
- ☐ Says name and address

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- ☐ Counts 10 or more things
- ☐ Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts
- ☐ Can print some letters or numbers
- ☐ Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes
- ☐ Knows about things used every day, like money and food

Movement/Physical Development

- ☐ Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer
- ☐ Hops; may be able to skip
- ☐ Can do a somersault
- ☐ Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife
- ☐ Can use the toilet on her own
- ☐ Swings and climbs

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- ☐ Is missing milestones
- ☐ Doesn't show a wide range of emotions
- ☐ Shows extreme behavior (unusually fearful, aggressive, shy or sad)
- ☐ Unusually withdrawn and not active
- ☐ Is easily distracted, has trouble focusing on one activity for more than 5 minutes
- ☐ Doesn't respond to people, or responds only superficially
- ☐ Can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- ☐ Doesn't play a variety of games and activities
- ☐ Can't give first and last name
- ☐ Doesn't use plurals or past tense properly
- ☐ Doesn't talk about daily activities or experiences
- ☐ Doesn't draw pictures
- ☐ Can't brush teeth, wash and dry hands, or get undressed without help
- ☐ Loses skills he once had

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call any local public elementary school for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get services to help.

For more information, go to cdc.gov/Concerned.

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Help Your Child Learn and Grow



You can help your child learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 5-year-old child today.

What You Can Do for Your 5-Year-Old:

- ☐ Continue to arrange play dates, trips to the park, or play groups. Give your child more freedom to choose activities to play with friends, and let your child work out problems on her own.
- ☐ Your child might start to talk back or use profanity (swear words) as a way to feel independent. Do not give a lot of attention to this talk, other than a brief time out. Instead, praise your child when he asks for things nicely and calmly takes “no” for an answer.
- ☐ This is a good time to talk to your child about safe touch. No one should touch “private parts” except doctors or nurses during an exam or parents when they are trying to keep the child clean.
- ☐ Teach your child her address and phone number.
- ☐ When reading to your child, ask him to predict what will happen next in the story.
- ☐ Encourage your child to “read” by looking at the pictures and telling the story.
- ☐ Teach your child time concepts like morning, afternoon, evening, today, tomorrow, and yesterday. Start teaching the days of the week.
- ☐ Explore your child’s interests in your community. For example, if your child loves animals, visit the zoo or petting farm. Go to the library or look on the Internet to learn about these topics.
- ☐ Keep a handy box of crayons, paper, paint, child scissors, and paste. Encourage your child to draw and make art projects with different supplies.
- ☐ Play with toys that encourage your child to put things together.
- ☐ Teach your child how to pump her legs back and forth on a swing.
- ☐ Help your child climb on the monkey bars.
- ☐ Go on walks with your child, do a scavenger hunt in your neighborhood or park, help him ride a bike with training wheels (wearing a helmet).

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Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Positive Parenting Tips for Healthy Child Development

Middle Childhood (6-8 years of age)

Developmental Milestones

Middle childhood brings many changes in a child's life. By this time, children can dress themselves, catch a ball more easily using only their hands, and tie their shoes. Having independence from family becomes more important now. Events such as starting school bring children this age into regular contact with the larger world. Friendships become more and more important. Physical, social, and mental skills develop quickly at this time. This is a critical time for children to develop confidence in all areas of life, such as through friends, schoolwork, and sports.

Here is some information on how children develop during middle childhood:

Emotional/Social Changes

Children in this age group might:

- Show more independence from parents and family.
- Start to think about the future.
- Understand more about his or her place in the world.
- Pay more attention to friendships and teamwork.
- Want to be liked and accepted by friends.

Thinking and Learning

Children in this age group might:

- Show rapid development of mental skills.
- Learn better ways to describe experiences and talk about thoughts and feelings.
- Have less focus on one's self and more concern for others.

Positive Parenting Tips

Following are some things you, as a parent, can do to help your child during this time:

- Show affection for your child. Recognize her accomplishments.
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility—ask him to help with household tasks, such as setting the table.
- Talk with your child about school, friends, and things she looks forward to in the future.
- Talk with your child about respecting others. Encourage him to help people in need.
- Help your child set her own achievable goals—she'll learn to take pride in herself and rely less on approval or reward from others.
- Help your child learn patience by letting others go first or by finishing a task before going out to play. Encourage him to think about possible consequences before acting.
- Make clear rules and stick to them, such as how long your child can watch TV or when she has to go to bed. Be clear about what behavior is okay and what is not okay.
- Do fun things together as a family, such as playing games, reading, and going to events in your community.



- Get involved with your child's school. Meet the teachers and staff and get to understand their learning goals and how you and the school can work together to help your child do well.
- Continue reading to your child. As your child learns to read, take turns reading to each other.
- Use discipline to guide and protect your child, rather than punishment to make him feel bad about himself. Follow up any discussion about what *not* to do with a discussion of what *to* do instead.
- Praise your child for good behavior. It's best to focus praise more on what your child does ("you worked hard to figure this out") than on traits she can't change ("you are smart").
- Support your child in taking on new challenges. Encourage her to solve problems, such as a disagreement with another child, on her own.
- Encourage your child to join school and community groups, such as a team sports, or to take advantage of volunteer opportunities.

Child Safety First

More physical ability and more independence can put children at risk for injuries from falls and other accidents. Motor vehicle crashes are the most common cause of death from unintentional injury among children this age.

- Protect your child properly in the car. For detailed information, see the American Academy of Pediatrics' Car Safety Seats: A Guide for Families.
- Teach your child to watch out for traffic and how to be safe when walking to school, riding a bike, and playing outside.
- Make sure your child understands water safety, and always supervise her when she's swimming or playing near water.
- Supervise your child when he's engaged in risky activities, such as climbing.
- Talk with your child about how to ask for help when she needs it.
- Keep potentially harmful household products, tools, equipment, and firearms out of your child's reach.

Healthy Bodies

- Parents can help make schools healthier. Work with your child's school to limit access to foods and drinks with added sugar, solid fat, and salt that can be purchased outside the school lunch program.
- Make sure your child has 1 hour or more of physical activity each day.
- Limit screen time for your child to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day of quality programming, at home, school, or afterschool care.
- Practice healthy eating habits and physical activity early. Encourage active play, and be a role model by eating healthy at family mealtimes and having an active lifestyle.

A pdf of this document for reprinting is available free of charge from

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/middle.html>

Additional Information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/childdevelopment>

1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) <http://www.cdc.gov/info>

Positive Parenting Tips for Healthy Child Development

Middle Childhood (9-11 years of age)

Developmental Milestones

Your child's growing independence from the family and interest in friends might be obvious by now. Healthy friendships are very important to your child's development, but peer pressure can become strong during this time. Children who feel good about themselves are more able to resist negative peer pressure and make better choices for themselves. This is an important time for children to gain a sense of responsibility along with their growing independence. Also, physical changes of puberty might be showing by now, especially for girls. Another big change children need to prepare for during this time is starting middle or junior high school.

Here is some information on how children develop during middle childhood:

Emotional/Social Changes

Children in this age group might:

- Start to form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships. It becomes more emotionally important to have friends, especially of the same sex.
- Experience more peer pressure.
- Become more aware of his or her body as puberty approaches. Body image and eating problems sometimes start around this age.

Thinking and Learning

Children in this age group might:

- Face more academic challenges at school.
- Become more independent from the family.
- Begin to see the point of view of others more clearly.
- Have an increased attention span.

Positive Parenting Tips

Following are some things you, as a parent, can do to help your child during this time:

- Spend time with your child. Talk with her about her friends, her accomplishments, and what challenges she will face.
- Be involved with your child's school. Go to school events; meet your child's teachers.
- Encourage your child to join school and community groups, such as a sports team, or to be a volunteer for a charity.
- Help your child develop his own sense of right and wrong. Talk with him about risky things friends might pressure him to do, like smoking or dangerous physical dares.
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility—involve your child in household tasks like cleaning and cooking. Talk with your child about saving and spending money wisely.
- Meet the families of your child's friends.
- Talk with your child about respecting others. Encourage her to help people in need. Talk with her about what to do when others are not kind or are disrespectful.



- Help your child set his own goals. Encourage him to think about skills and abilities he would like to have and about how to develop them.
- Make clear rules and stick to them. Talk with your child about what you expect from her (behavior) when no adults are present. If you provide reasons for rules, it will help her to know what to do in most situations.
- Use discipline to guide and protect your child, instead of punishment to make him feel badly about himself.
- When using praise, help your child think about her own accomplishments. Saying "you must be proud of yourself" rather than simply "I'm proud of you" can encourage your child to make good choices when nobody is around to praise her.
- Talk with your child about the normal physical and emotional changes of puberty.
- Encourage your child to read every day. Talk with him about his homework.
- Be affectionate and honest with your child, and do things together as a family.

Child Safety First

More independence and less adult supervision can put children at risk for injuries from falls and other accidents. Here are a few tips to help protect your child:

- Protect your child in the car. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that you keep your child in a booster seat until he is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. Remember: your child should still ride in the back seat until he or she is 12 years of age because it's safer there. Motor vehicle crashes are the most common cause of death from unintentional injury among children of this age.
- Know where your child is and whether a responsible adult is present. Make plans with your child for when he will call you, where you can find him, and what time you expect him home.
- Make sure your child wears a helmet when riding a bike or a skateboard or using inline skates; riding on a motorcycle, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle; or playing contact sports.
- Many children get home from school before their parents get home from work. It is important to have clear rules and plans for your child when she is home alone.

Healthy Bodies

- Provide plenty of fruits and vegetables; limit foods high in solid fats, added sugars, or salt, and prepare healthier foods for family meals.
- Keep television sets out of your child's bedroom. Limit screen time, including computers and video games, to no more than 1 to 2 hours.
- Encourage your child to participate in an hour a day of physical activities that are age appropriate and enjoyable and that offer variety! Just make sure your child is doing three types of activity: aerobic activity like running, muscle strengthening like climbing, and bone strengthening – like jumping rope – at least three days per week.

A pdf of this document for reprinting is available free of charge from

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/middle2.html>

Additional Information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/childdevelopment>

1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) <http://www.cdc.gov/info>

Serve & Return Supports Brain-Building



Video/Handout Credit: Center on the Developing
Child Harvard
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu>

Video Credit: [facebook.com/ShaniekePryor](https://www.facebook.com/ShaniekePryor) and
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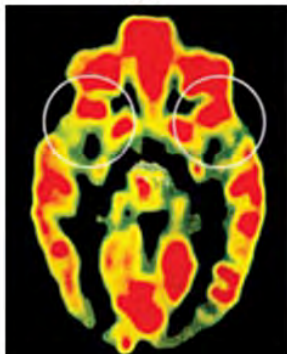
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Handouts

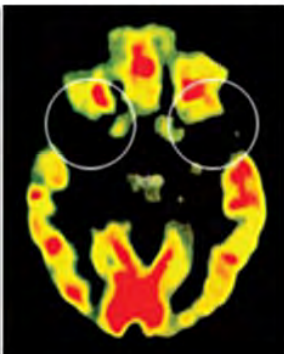
5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return

Brain Development

Healthy, emotionally developed
brain



Result of abuse and neglect



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5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return

from *Filming Interactions
to Nurture Development*
(FIND)

Child-adult relationships that are responsive and attentive—with lots of back and forth interactions—build a strong foundation in a child’s brain for all future learning and development. This is called “serve and return,” and it takes two to play! Follow these 5 steps to practice serve and return with your child.



Serve and return interactions make everyday moments fun and become second nature with practice.

By taking small moments during the day to do serve and return, you build up the foundation for children’s lifelong learning, behavior, and health—and their skills for facing life’s challenges.

For more on serve and return:
tinyurl.com/serve-return

Filming Interactions to Nurture Development (FIND) is a video coaching program that aims to strengthen positive interactions between caregivers and children. FIND was developed by Dr. Phil Fisher and colleagues in Eugene, Oregon.

For more about FIND:
tinyurl.com/find-program



1

Notice the serve and share the child’s focus of attention.

Is the child looking or pointing at something? Making a sound or facial expression? Moving those little arms and legs? That’s a serve. The key is to pay attention to what the child is focused on. You can’t spend all your time doing this, so look for small opportunities throughout the day—like while you’re getting them dressed or waiting in line at the store.

WHY? By noticing serves, you’ll learn a lot about children’s abilities, interests, and needs. You’ll encourage them to explore and you’ll strengthen the bond between you.



2

Return the serve by supporting and encouraging.

You can offer children comfort with a hug and gentle words, help them, play with them, or acknowledge them. You can make a sound or facial expression—like saying, “I see!” or smiling and nodding to let a child know you’re noticing the same thing. Or you can pick up an object a child is pointing to and bring it closer.

WHY? Supporting and encouraging rewards a child’s interests and curiosity. Never getting a return can actually be stressful for a child. When you return a serve, children know that their thoughts and feelings are heard and understood.

5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return

from Filming Interactions
to Nurture Development
(FIND)

Did you know that building a child's developing brain can be as simple as playing a game of peek-a-boo?



3

Give it
a name!

When you return a serve by naming what a child is seeing, doing, or feeling, you make important language connections in their brain, even before the child can talk or understand your words. You can name anything—a person, a thing, an action, a feeling, or a combination. If a child points to their feet, you can also point to them and say, “Yes, those are your feet!”

WHY? When you name what children are focused on, you help them understand the world around them and know what to expect. Naming also gives children words to use and lets them know you care.



4

Take turns...and wait.
Keep the interaction
going back and forth.

Every time you return a serve, give the child a chance to respond. Taking turns can be quick (from the child to you and back again) or go on for many turns. Waiting is crucial. Children need time to form their responses, especially when they're learning so many things at once. Waiting helps keep the turns going.

WHY? Taking turns helps children learn self-control and how to get along with others. By waiting, you give children time to develop their own ideas and build their confidence and independence. Waiting also helps you understand their needs.



5

Practice
endings and
beginnings.

Children signal when they're done or ready to move on to a new activity. They might let go of a toy, pick up a new one, or turn to look at something else. Or they may walk away, start to fuss, or say, “All done!” When you share a child's focus, you'll notice when they're ready to end the activity and begin something new.

WHY? When you can find moments for children to take the lead, you support them in exploring their world—and make more serve and return interactions possible.

Activity to Support Brain Building!

- Talking and reading
- Having meals together
- Play games together
- Going grocery shopping together
- Going to the park together or playing outside
- Go along with the children's ideas during play
- Cooking or cleaning together



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Concerned about Development

- Talk with the child's parent/guardian
- Encourage parent/guardian to contact the child's doctor or health care provider
- Share the resources (located in binder) with the child's parent/guardian



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Handouts

Developmental Screening

How to Help your Child

Tips for Talking with Parents

Early On Flyer

Build Up Michigan Flyer

Developmental Screening

FACT SHEET

What is child development?

A child's growth is more than just physical. Children grow, develop, and learn throughout their lives, starting at birth. A child's development can be followed by how they play, learn, speak, and behave.

What is a developmental delay? Will my child just grow out of it?

Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving "bye bye" are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in playing, learning, speaking, behaving, and moving (crawling, walking, etc.). A developmental delay is when your child does not reach these milestones at the same time as other children the same age. If your child is not developing properly, there are things you can do that may help. Most of the time, a developmental problem is not something your child will "grow out of" on his or her own. But with help, your child could reach his or her full potential!

What is developmental screening?

Doctors and nurses use developmental screening to tell if children are learning basic skills when they should, or if they might have problems. Your child's doctor may ask you questions or talk and play with your child during an exam to see how he or she learns, speaks, behaves, and moves. Since there is no lab or blood test to tell if your child may have a delay, the developmental screening will help tell if your child needs to see a specialist.

Why is developmental screening important?

When a developmental delay is not recognized early, children must wait to get the help they need. This can make it hard for them to learn when they start school. In the United States, 17 percent of children have a developmental or behavioral disability such as autism, intellectual disability (also known as mental retardation), or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

www.cdc.gov/actearly

In addition, many children have delays in language or other areas. But, less than half of children with problems are identified before starting school. During this time, the child could have received help for these problems and may even have entered school more ready to learn.

I have concerns that my child could have a developmental delay. Whom can I contact in my state to get a developmental assessment for my child?

Talk to your child's doctor or nurse if you have concerns about how your child is developing. If you or your doctor think there could be a problem, you can take your child to see a developmental pediatrician or other specialist, and you can contact your local early intervention agency (for children under 3) or public school (for children 3 and older) for help. To find out who to speak to in your area, you can contact the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities by logging on to www.nichcy.org/states.htm. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has links to information for families at (www.cdc.gov/actearly). If there is a problem, it is very important to get your child help as soon as possible.

How can I help my child's development?

Proper nutrition, exercise, and rest are very important for children's health and development. Providing a safe and loving home and spending time with your child – playing, singing, reading, and even just talking – can also make a big difference in his or her development.

For other ideas of activities to do with your child, and for child safety information, go to www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/ and look in the "developmental milestones" section.



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Concerned about Development?

How to Help Your Child



If you're concerned about your child's development, don't wait.
Acting early can make a big difference!

Talk with your child's doctor.

You know your child best. If you think your child is not meeting the milestones for his or her age, or if you, your child's teacher, or another care provider is concerned about how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts or moves, talk with your child's doctor and share your concerns. Don't wait.

■ Use a milestone checklist

Visit www.cdc.gov/milestones to find the milestone checklist for your child's age. Use it to track your child's development. When it's time to talk with the doctor, write down the questions you have and show the doctor the milestones your child has reached and the ones that concern you.

■ Ask the doctor about developmental screening

Developmental screening happens when the doctor asks you to complete a formal checklist or questionnaire about how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves. It gives the doctor more information to figure out how best to help your child. Developmental screening is recommended for all children at certain ages or whenever there is a concern. Ask the doctor about your child's developmental screening.

If you or the doctor is still concerned about your child's development, here's how you can help your child:

Ask the doctor how to contact your state's early childhood system to request an evaluation to find out if your child qualifies for services that might help his or her development.

If your doctor doesn't know the phone number, go to www.cdc.gov/findEI or call **1-800-CDC-INFO** (1-800-232-4636). Ask for the phone number for the early intervention provider in your area.

If your child is 3 years or older, call your local elementary school and ask to speak with someone who can help you have your child evaluated—even if your child does not go to that school.

AND

Ask the doctor if you need to take your child to a specialist who can take a closer look at your child's development. If you do, ask the doctor for a referral and contact the specialist right away. If your appointment with the specialist is many weeks away, remember you can call back every week to see if an earlier appointment has opened up. Getting early help for your child often means being persistent.

Find more information, including what to say when you make these important calls, what to do while you wait to have your child seen, and how to get support for your family, at www.cdc.gov/concerned.

www.cdc.gov/actearly | 1-800-CDC-INFO



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Tips for Talking with Parents

If you suspect a child has a developmental delay and believe a parent is unaware of it, this sample conversation can give you ideas of how to talk with the child's parent.

Good afternoon, Ms. Jones. We love having Taylor in class. He really enjoys story time and follows directions well. He is working hard on coloring but is having a difficult time and gets frustrated. I have also noticed a few things about Taylor's social skills that I would like to discuss with you. Do you have a few minutes? *[Cite specific behaviors and when they occurred.]*

Have you noticed any of these at home?

Ms. Jones, here is some information that shows the developmental milestones for a child Taylor's age. Let's plan to meet again next week *[set a time]* after you've had time to read it and think it over. *[Provide information such as the fact sheets.]*

Ms. Jones, I know this is hard to talk about, and I may be over-reacting, but I think it would also be a good idea to talk to Taylor's doctor about this in the next few weeks. You can take this information with you when you go. The doctor can give Taylor a "developmental screening" which can answer some questions about his progress and whether you need to do anything else. Maybe there is no problem, but getting help early can make a big difference if there is, so it's really important to find out for sure. Let me know if you need anything from me for that doctor's appointment!

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. We'll all do our best to help Taylor. He is a great kid!

If a parent approaches you with concerns about his or her child, this might help you respond.

Mrs. Smith, you wanted to speak with me privately about Taylor?

[Listen to her concerns. See if she has noticed the same behaviors you have, and share examples that are the same as or different from hers.]

I am glad to know we are both on the same page. I have some information that might help you when you're watching Taylor at home this week. This fact sheet shows the developmental milestones for his age. Each child develops at his or her own pace, so Taylor might not have met all these milestones; it's worth taking a closer look. Let's meet again next *[set a date]* after you've had time to read this and think about it.

I also think it would be a good idea to talk to Taylor's doctor about this in the next few weeks. You can take this information with when you go. The doctor can give Taylor a "developmental screening" which can answer some questions about his progress and whether you need to do anything else. Let me know if you need anything from me for that doctor's appointment. Thank you for talking with me today. We'll all do our best to help Taylor. He is a great kid!

Tips for these conversations with parents:

- Highlight some of the child's strengths, letting the parent know what the child does well.
- Use materials like the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." fact sheets. This will help the parent know that you are basing your comments on facts and not just feelings.
- Talk about specific behaviors that you have observed in caring for the child. Use the milestones fact sheets as a guide. Example: If you are telling the parent "I have noticed that Taylor does not play pretend games with the other children," you could show the parent the line on the milestones fact sheet for a four-year-old that says that a child that age "engages in fantasy play."
- Try to make it a discussion. Pause a lot, giving the parent time to think and to respond.
- Expect that if the child is the oldest in the family, the parent might not have experience to know the milestones the child should be reaching.
- Listen to and watch the parent to decide on how to proceed. Pay attention to tone of voice and body language.
- This might be the first time the parent has become aware that the child might have a delay. Give the parent time to think about this and even speak with the child's other caregivers.
- Let the parent know that he or she should talk with the child's health care professional (doctor or nurse) soon if there are any concerns or more information is needed.
- Remind the parent that you do your job because you love and care for children, and that you want to make sure that the child does his or her very best. It is also okay to say that you "may be overly concerned," but that it is best to check with the child's doctor or nurse to be sure since early action is so important if there is a real delay.

www.cdc.gov/actearly



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Early On[®] Michigan

Helping Babies Learn and Grow

The first years of your baby's life are very important, and children learn and grow at different rates. If you have any questions about how your baby is developing or if you think that he or she might need extra help,

Don't worry. But don't wait.

Visit 1800EarlyOn.org for information or to place a referral for an infant or toddler.

1-800-EARLYON (327-5966)



[/earlyonmichigan.org](https://www.facebook.com/earlyonmichigan.org)



[@ChildFindMich](https://twitter.com/ChildFindMich)



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[@earlyonmichigan](https://www.instagram.com/earlyonmichigan)



Don't worry. But don't wait.



Build Up Michigan

Michigan Kids. Kindergarten Ready.

As a parent, you want to prepare your child for everything. If you notice that he or she may have a developmental delay or suspected disability, contact Build Up today. We offer free special educational supports for children ages 3 through 5 years, through your public school district.

Visit BuildUpMi.org or dial the Michigan Special Education Line at 1-888-320-8384.



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Getting on the Same Page with Parents/Guardians

To avoid children being confused about different rules or expectations AND to prevent misunderstandings or disagreements, it is important to talk about:

- What to do if child is ill and/or has allergies
- Immunizations – are they up to date?
- Safe sleep practices based on ages of children
- Behavior expectations and consequences
- TV, phone or computer screen time
- Meals and snacks
- Hours of care and payment
- Transporting children
- What else?

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Developmentally Appropriate Guidance & Expectations

In the State of Michigan manual for child care providers, it says that hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, restricting movement, and inflicting emotional or mental harm is not acceptable ways of discipline or punishing children. The reasons for this is that children deserve to be treated respectfully and appropriately in a positive manner. Also, research has linked mental and emotional stress and corporal punishment with negative effects such as learning issues and later criminal behavior.” (the language listed here is copied from the State of Michigan Child Care Center Rules – Technical Assistance and Consultation Manual)

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Developmentally Appropriate Guidance & Expectations

- Redirecting child to a positive choice
- Ignoring when appropriate
- Removing the child from the situation
- Making sure the space is ready



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Handouts

Best Practices for Guiding Children's Behaviors

What Children Can't Do...Yet

How Did WE Do?

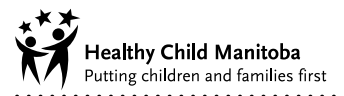
- Be a Brain Builder!
- Prevent, plan for and respond to common health and safety issues.
- Deal with the common stresses and frustrations of caring for children.
- Access more training so you can learn new things and also increase your payment.

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EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

Best Practices

for Guiding
Children's Behaviour



Best Practices for Guiding Children's Behaviour

Who will benefit?

This guide is for early learning and child care staff and family child care providers. It provides effective ways to guide behaviours and enhance the social and emotional well-being of all children in your care. The strategies described here are research-based. They can help all children, not just those experiencing difficulties.

Where do I begin?

You set the tone for experiences that children have while in your care. Therefore, it is important to develop a respectful, caring relationship with every child, right from the start. This allows children to build trust in you.

Get to know each child and what may be affecting her behaviour. Observe children carefully and pay attention to the environment where specific behaviours are happening. For example: Do children have to wait for the whole group before leaving the lunch table or using the washroom?

Are they expected to stop playing without notice and change activities often? Do children and adults have to shout to hear each other over background music?

These observations will help you adapt your approach and increase positive behaviours. Listen carefully, look at each situation from a child's perspective and determine what changes you need to make.

When we are uncomfortable with a child's behaviour, it can be difficult to respond appropriately and effectively. It is important to know when we are losing control; recognize our own discomfort; and discuss it with supportive team members. Because every situation is different, behaviour guidance requires ongoing decision making. We need to remember to be patient, even if a strategy does not work in a particular situation. We need to be flexible and try other strategies that may fit the situation better. Sometimes we need to use a strategy for a longer period of time, before we see improvement.

What can I do to encourage positive social interactions?

Strategy	Practice
Seek many opportunities to interact with each child and give individual attention .	Snuggle up and read a book together; ask questions and begin a conversation with a quiet child; join in active play with an energetic child.
Role play examples of appropriate behaviours to teach children how to succeed in social interactions.	Give children scenarios such as “What if you want a toy that someone else is using?” Discuss possibilities and help children try out their ideas. For example: “Can I use that puzzle when you’re done?”
Read books about feelings and discuss them with children.	“Look at her face in this picture, she seems happy. Do you remember feeling this way? What happened to make you feel this way?”
Use words you want the children to use to model appropriate social behaviours.	Ask: “Can I play with you?” before you join children in their play.
Watch closely for positive behaviours and tell children when their language and behaviour is appropriate. Make positive comments more often than negative ones.	“I noticed you zip up your friend’s jacket. That helped her get ready for outdoor play sooner. Thank you.”
Be specific with feedback when giving attention, so children understand what behaviour is appropriate.	Try: “The two of you were so helpful working together to bring chairs to the table.” instead of “Good job.”
Help children develop a short list of basic rules to follow during daily interactions and activities.	Ask: “How should we care for ourselves, our friends and our toys?”
Post the list of rules with pictures to illustrate them, where children can see them easily.	Include photos of the children showing respect for themselves, for others and for toys.

What can I do to discourage inappropriate behaviours?

Strategy	Practice
Recognize that inappropriate behaviours present opportunities for children to develop language and social skills.	Give a cue or phrase, so children can communicate their needs and wants more appropriately.
Have realistic expectations for each child. Ensure that expectations are appropriate for the development and abilities of each child and that they respect individual social and cultural backgrounds.	Remind younger children to use “gentle touches” instead of hitting. Help older children understand the perspective of others by asking: “How do you think hitting made him feel? How can you make him feel better?”
Break tasks into smaller steps that the children can manage.	During cleanup time, ask children: “Please put three toys on the shelf.” rather than “Put your toys away.”
Offer help if a child seems frustrated with a task.	Ask: “Can I help you with your zipper?”
Use positive language that focuses on the expected behaviour.	Provide a reminder: “Please walk.” instead of “Don’t run!”

Ignore minor incidents when there is no concern for safety, to avoid attention on inappropriate behaviour.	For example, do not acknowledge that a child throws a blanket if the child settles for a nap afterwards. Do not acknowledge that a child slams a game piece on the table when frustrated, but continues to play the game calmly.
Provide logical reasons when stating limits.	Try: "Please use a quieter voice so I can hear what you are saying" instead of "Stop shouting!"
Re-state the message differently, if the child does not seem to understand what is expected.	First try: "Take your things to your locker." Then try: "Hang your snow pants and coat on your hook."
Use a calm, encouraging tone of voice that expresses your confidence in the child's ability to stay calm and solve a problem.	Show a positive attitude: "I know you can do it!"
Use positive body language and facial expressions to convey support.	Keep arms relaxed, rather than on hips. Smile instead of frowning.
Respond consistently so children have many opportunities to practise what is expected of them.	If children are expected to mop up spills at the water table, remind them each time, if needed. Avoid doing it for them, even when it may be faster.
Model techniques to help children learn to calm themselves when they are upset.	Allow children to see you express and deal with different emotions. "I'm feeling frustrated. I'm going to take the time to calm down by counting to 10."
Wait until children are calm before speaking with them.	Quiet, relaxing time in a cozy area can be comforting until they are ready to communicate and solve the problem.
Ensure strategies are consistent among all staff members. Review and discuss program philosophy and the behaviour guidance policy regularly.	Review policies and add discussion about guiding behaviours to the staff meeting agenda, at least twice a year.

What should I consider when planning the schedule, transition times and daily experiences?

Strategy	Practice
Provide large blocks of time each day for uninterrupted free play. This allows children to become fully involved in meaningful experiences.	Children have at least 45 to 60 minutes of self-chosen free play indoors and outdoors throughout the day, to initiate and sustain their play.
Offer children play choices , based on their individual interests.	Try: "I know how much you like to explore. Would you like to hunt for treasures in the sand table?" rather than "Find a place to play."
Get to know each child and her interests, so you can redirect them to an appealing alternative activity, if needed.	A child who enjoys sensory experiences is more likely to be successful, if offered activities such as play dough, textured art materials or sand and water play.
Use visuals to communicate expectations to children.	Label toy bins with pictures or photos of items that belong there.

Minimize the number of transitions during the day to reduce the amount of times children must change activities.	Provide an optional staff-led activity during free play and allow children to come when ready and to leave when finished.
Give notice before there is a change in activity. Avoid abrupt interruptions so children can prepare for the transition.	Try: "When we are finished singing, it will be time to play outside." Then try: "After this song, we will put on our sun hats for outdoor time."
Give jobs to older children to help with the transition.	Have older children set the snack table or help younger children put on their shoes.
Make transitions consistent and fun so children know what to expect and stay interested.	Use songs, rhymes and finger plays to signal a change in activity.
Reduce the amount of time children are waiting with nothing to do.	Provide a bin of books or toys for children to use while waiting for others to finish getting dressed for outdoor play.
Avoid having children participate in activities as one large group. Stagger routines and transitions.	Provide lunch for a group of young children first. Have them settle for a nap or quiet play, while older children begin their lunch.
Provide short, teacher-led group experiences for older, preschool and school age children.	Make group time a come-and-go activity. Keep length under 10 minutes for preschool children. Lengthen only for those who are engaged. Avoid teacher-led whole group times with infants and toddlers.
Encourage children to seek help from peers who can model useful skills and appropriate behaviours.	Provide a partner for a child who has difficulty with transitions.
Have a consistent schedule that is predictable but flexible.	The sequence of events should be the same each day, but expect to adjust the timing to meet children's needs.
Prepare materials and experiences before children arrive.	Offer attention and help during children's experiences, rather than searching for needed items.
Allow flexibility during planned experiences.	A child wanting extra time to finish a painting can listen to story time at the art easel, rather than joining the group on the carpet.
Provide opportunities for children to help by giving them real work to do.	Provide child-sized brooms and dust pans so children can sweep the floor after messy activities.
Use co-operative games to encourage positive interactions rather than competition.	Play musical chairs, with a chair for each child throughout the game.
Review your schedule each year to determine if it fits the group of children currently enrolled.	Place this item on your October staff meeting agenda each year.

What should I consider when preparing the play space and materials?

Strategy	Practice
Provide enough toys and materials for the number of children that may use each area. Don't overwhelm the space with too many items.	Place four sets of dishes in the daily living area with a table and four chairs; three shovels in the sand table.
Have duplicates of popular toys available to reduce waiting time, particularly for infants and toddlers who are not developmentally ready to share.	Provide two or three fire trucks in the block area; three or four riding toys in the active play area.
Display toys and materials so children can see and use them independently.	Place items on open shelves at the children's level.
Offer many open-ended materials that have a variety of uses, to reduce children's frustration.	Provide wood boxes, cardboard boxes, tubes, fabric, clay, etc. so children can play and experiment with them.
Allow children to use toys and materials in more than one area to deepen and sustain their play.	Children making play dough cookies in the art area can be encouraged to bake them in the toy oven in the daily living area.
Create enough space in each area for children to move around easily.	Rearrange shelving to expand the play area if children seem crowded.
Encourage small group interaction by allowing children to form natural groups	A small group size that is flexible and based on children's interests, promotes positive, genuine social relationships.
Place furniture to define short walkways throughout the room.	Avoid large, open spaces or long, straight pathways that encourage running.
Tone down visuals so the surroundings are calm and relaxing.	Turn down the lights; reduce vibrant colours; and clear clutter from floors, shelves and walls.
Adjust noise levels to create a peaceful atmosphere.	Occasionally, have soft music playing during quiet times (ex: lunch or end of the day).

How can I help children develop the skills to solve conflicts?

Children must be involved in resolving their own conflicts, rather than having adults do it for them. Together, children and caring adults are active partners in the learning process. This balanced approach is critical in helping children develop the skills to begin resolving conflicts on their own. When children are aware of how their own actions affect others, they are better able to make appropriate and effective choices to overcome difficulties. Knowing how to react during conflict will help children gain independence, confidence and the inner control to handle their own emotions. Try the following strategy in the steps below.

Approach quickly and calmly to stop hurtful or unsafe behaviour right away.	Stay nearby so children know that you are ready to offer help and support.
Acknowledge each child's feelings with a simple description.	"You seem angry."
Gather information from each child involved.	"Let's talk about what happened. Janelle, you tell me first and then it will be Luke's turn to talk."
Identify and state the problem to the children.	"You both want to sit in the same spot at the table."
Brainstorm solutions with the children.	"What ideas do you have to solve this problem? What else can you do?"
Allow the children to develop a solution and use it.	"What idea do you choose?"
Follow up by checking back and offering assistance if needed.	"How is your idea working?"

Positive, supportive guidance strategies create a sense of belonging and increase children's ability to make friends and resolve conflicts. They contribute to children's development and learning and provide the foundation for success in your program, school and beyond.

If you continue to have difficulty guiding behaviours after using these strategies, contact your child care co-ordinator. Your child care co-ordinator can assist with these situations and, as necessary, identify supports and other professionals that may be available to help.

References

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**For more information, contact:
Child Care Information Services
In Winnipeg: 204-945-0776
Toll-free: 1-888-213-4754**

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WHAT CHILDREN CAN'T DO...YET BY DAN HODGINS

September 06, 2017 by DSS in Early Childhood Education, Preschool (3-5), School Age (5+), Social and Emotional

When working with children keep in mind what they are ready for and what they are not; what they can do and what they are unable to do...yet.

I can't share.

Children use possession of objects as a device to understand autonomy. Just as babbling comes before talking, so owning comes before sharing. To share fully, a child must first fully possess.

I can't say, "I'm sorry," and mean it.

Saying "I'm sorry" has little meaning to the young child. To say, "I'm sorry" and understand what you are saying, you must also be able to understand how the other person feels.

I can't remember what you told me.

Most children remember only what is important to them. A child may not remember that you just told them to walk, and not run, while indoors. Adults often forget that children have trouble remembering.

I can't focus on more than one task at a time.

"Pick up your toys, put on your shoes, and wash your face; we are going out to play." This command has three more tasks than a young child is able to focus on. Most young children will remember the last

task or the task most important to them. With the above command, all the child may focus on is that he or she is going out to play.

I can't understand negative commands.

If a child reaches to put his or her finger in an electric wall outlet and you say, "don't," the child is confused because he or she doesn't know how to reverse their action. Saying, "Pull your hand back, that's dangerous" gives the child a positive action to take.

I can't measure.

When you want a child to pour a glass of milk or juice and you hand him or her a full pitcher, expect the child to pour all the milk into the glass, even if it pours all over the floor or table. Young children do not understand that all of the milk will not fit into the glass and so keep pouring until it's too late.

I can't tell you the truth when you set me up.

If you see a child do something inappropriate, and you ask if he or she has done it, the child will probably deny it. Don't ask the child if you know what happened. That only sets them up for failure.

I can't sit still for very long.

Young children are often told to sit still, while their bodies are telling them to move. When the large muscles in a preschooler's arms and legs are growing rapidly, they cry out for exercise. As a result, preschoolers feel a need to move about.

I can't play with other children until I am ready.

Children go through different stages of social interaction. If allowed to

grow at their own pace, they will begin to interact with other children when they are ready.

I can't tell the difference between reality and fantasy.

When a child has a bad dream, it is very real to him or her. Telling a child not to be a "baby" does not help. Playing fantasy is real for the child and very important for control and development.

I can't express myself in words very well.

Children resort to physical means of communication because they often don't have the verbal skills to express frustration and other feelings. You can help by giving the child words to use.

I can't wait.

Try not to put children in situations where they have to wait for long periods of time. Waiting often makes taking turns difficult.

I don't understand right and wrong.

Because young children don't understand cause and effect relationships, they can't fully understand right and wrong. A young child does not understand intentional versus unintentional actions, can only see issues from his or her own perspective, and views issues as black and white.

I can't be ready until I'm ready.

Children all grow and develop at different rates. Don't compare children or force them to do things before they are ready.

Dan Hodgins writes from Flint, Michigan where he is coordinator of the child development program at Mott Community College.

