

Thinking about How Children Grow

Facilitator's input – Child development

1st year

In the first year, babies learn

- to focus their vision,
- reach out,
- explore,
- and learn about the things that are around them including language development (sounds, names, faces, listening, understanding etc.)

During this stage, babies also are developing bonds of love and trust with their parents and others as part of social and emotional development.

The way parents cuddle, hold, and play with their baby will set the basis for how they will interact with them and others.

Milestones

- Smiling, sitting, standing, crawling, waving good-by, walking, jumping.

Things that you might do to help your Baby – 1st year

- Feed your baby slowly and patiently, encourage your baby to try new tastes but without force, and watch closely to see if he's still hungry.
- Talk to your baby. She/he will find your voice calming.
- Answer when your baby makes sounds by repeating the sounds and adding words. This will help him learn to use language.
- Read to your baby. This will help her develop and understand language and sounds.
- Sing to your baby and play music.
- Praise your baby and give her lots of loving attention.
- Spend time cuddling and holding your baby. This will help him feel cared for and secure.
- Play with your baby when she's alert and relaxed. Watch your baby closely for signs of being tired or fussy so that she can take a break from playing.
- Distract your baby with toys and move him to safe areas when he starts moving and touching things that he shouldn't touch.

- Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. Parenting can be hard work! It is easier to enjoy your new baby and be a positive, loving parent when you are feeling good yourself.

Child Safety First

- Do NOT leave your child near or around water (for example, bathtubs, pools, ponds, lakes, whirlpools, or the ocean) without someone watching her.
- Keep kitchen appliances, irons, and heaters out of reach of your toddler. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Keep sharp objects such as scissors, knives, and pens in a safe place.
- Lock up medicines, household cleaners, and poisons.

Healthy Bodies

- Give your child water and plain milk instead of sugary drinks.
- Your child might become a very picky and erratic eater. At this point in their development, they need less food because they don't grow as fast. Don't fight with him/her over this. Keep trying new foods; it might take time for him/her to learn to like them.
- Limit screen time. For children younger than 2 years of age – they really don't need any media
- Children at this stage are constantly on the move - running, kicking, climbing, or jumping. That is normal, they are just developing coordination – better psychomotor functions – they are becoming strong.

2nd Year

Toddlers are moving around more, and are aware of themselves and their surroundings.

Their desire to explore new objects and people also is increasing

They

- will show greater independence
- begin to show defiant behaviour
- recognize themselves in pictures or a mirror
- imitate the behavior of others, especially adults and older children.
- Should be able to follow simple instructions and directions.

Things you might do to help your baby – 2nd year

- Read to her/him
- Send her/him for little things like diapers, shoes etc.
- Ask her/him to name body parts and objects.
- Ask him/her to do simple puzzles.
- Encourage him/her to explore and try new things – they are curious so support this
- Help to develop her/his language by talking with her/him and adding to words she starts. For example, if your toddler says “baba”, you can respond, “Yes, you are right—that is a *bottle*.”
- Encourage her/his growing independence by letting him/her dress himself/herself
- Respond to wanted/pro-behaviors more than you punish unwanted behaviors (use only very brief time outs). Always tell or show your child what she should do instead.

Toddlers (2-3 years of age) – the ‘Terrible Twos’

Toddlers are moving around more, and are aware of themselves and their surroundings.

Their desire to explore new objects and people also is increasing

They

- will show greater independence
- begin to show defiant behaviour
- recognize themselves in pictures or a mirror
- imitate the behavior of others, especially adults and older children.
- Should be able to follow simple instructions and directions.

At this age, children have a growing desire to be independent

They experience huge thinking, learning, social and emotional changes – hence try to explore their new world and make sense of it.

During this stage, toddlers should be able to

- follow two- or three-step directions,
- sort objects by shape and color,
- imitate the actions of adults and playmates,
- and express a wide range of emotions.

Some things you, as a parent, can do to help your toddler during this time:

- Encourage your child to take part in pretend play.
- Help your child to explore things around her/him
- Encourage your child to tell you her/his name and age.
- Teach your child simple songs
- Give your child attention and praise when she/he follows instructions and shows positive behavior
- limit attention for defiant behavior like tantrums.
- Teach your child acceptable ways to show that she's upset.

Child Safety First

- Do NOT leave your toddler near or around water without someone watching her.
- Encourage your toddler to sit when eating and to chew his food thoroughly to prevent choking.
- Check toys often for loose or broken parts.
- Encourage your toddler not to put pencils or crayons in her mouth when coloring or drawing.
- Do NOT hold hot drinks while your child is sitting on your lap. Sudden movements can cause a spill and might result in your child's being burned.

Healthy Bodies

- Talk with staff at your child care provider to see if they serve healthier foods and drinks, and if they limit television and other screen time.
- Your toddler might change what food she likes from day to day. It's normal behavior, and it's best not to make an issue of it. Encourage her to try new foods by offering her small bites to taste.
- Keep television sets out of your child's bedroom. Limit screen time, including video and electronic games, to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day.
- Encourage free play as much as possible. It helps your toddler stay active and strong and helps him develop motor skills.

Preschoolers (3-5 years of age) – growing into early childhood

The world begins to open up

- They become more independent
- They begin to focus more on adults and children outside of the family.
- They continue explore and ask about the things around them even more
- Their interactions with family and those around them - helps to shape their personality and their own ways of thinking and moving.

Developmental Milestones

They learn Skills such as

- riding a tricycle
- use of safety scissors
- noticing the difference between girls and boys
- helping to dress and undress themselves
- playing with other children,
- recalling part of a story,
- Singing simple songs/rymes.
- naming colours,
- showing affection,
- hopping on one foot

Middle Childhood (6-8 years of age)

Many changes in your child's life.

The child is in school – so greater and regular contact with the larger world (*This is a critical time for children to develop confidence in all areas of life, such as through friends, schoolwork, and sports*)

Having independence from family becomes more important now.

Friendships become more and more important.

Physical, social, and mental skills develop quickly at this time

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.

At this point a child can

- can dress themselves,
- catch a ball more easily using only their hands
- tie their shoes

Middle Childhood (9-11 years of age)

Children at this stage show greater independence from the family and greater interest in friends (important for children to gain a sense of responsibility alongside growing independence)

Peer pressure can become strong during this time (so you need your child to be confident and make choices for themselves)

Physical changes of puberty might be showing by now, especially for girls.

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.

Young Teens (12-14 years of age)

A time of many physical, mental, emotional, and social changes.

Hormones change as puberty begins.

Most boys grow facial and pubic hair and their voices deepen.

Most girls grow pubic hair and breasts and start their period.

They might be worried about these changes and how they are looked at by others (need reassurance).

Body image is important (eating disorders can be an issue)

More peer pressure (drinking, smoking etc)

Teens make more of their own choices about friends, sports, studying, and school.

They become more independent, with their own personality and interests (parents are still very important).

Emotional/Social Changes

Children in this age group might:

- Show more concern about body image, looks, and clothes.
- Focus on themselves; going back and forth between high expectations and lack of confidence.
- Experience more moodiness.
- Show more interest in and influence by peer group.
- Express less affection toward parents; sometimes might seem rude or short-tempered.
- Feel stress from more challenging school work.
- Develop eating problems.

- Feel a lot of sadness or depression, which can lead to poor grades at school, alcohol or drug use, unsafe sex, and other problems.

Thinking and Learning

Children in this age group might:

- Have more ability for complex thought.
- Be better able to express feelings through talking.
- Develop a stronger sense of right and wrong (sense of morality, ethics)

Teenagers (15-17 years of age)

Changes for how teenagers

- think,
- feel,
- interact with others,
- and how their bodies grow.
- Most girls will be physically mature by now, and most will have completed puberty.
- Boys might still be maturing physically during this time.
- They might have concerns about her/his body size, shape, or weight (Eating disorders can be an issue)
- At this age they develop unique personality and opinions.
- Relationships with friends are still important, but at this stage they have other interests as they develop a clearer sense of who they are.
- They are well able to cope with more independence and responsibility

Emotional/Social Changes

Children in this age group might:

- Have more interest in romantic relationships and sexuality.
- Go through more conflict with parents.
- Show more independence from parents.
- Have a deeper capacity for caring and sharing and for developing more intimate relationships.
- Spend less time with parents and more time with friends.
- Feel a lot of sadness or depression, which can lead to poor grades at school, alcohol or drug use, unsafe sex, and other problems.

Thinking and Learning

Children in this age group might:

- Learn more defined work habits.
- Show more concern about future school and work plans.
- Be better able to give reasons for their own choices, including about what is right or wrong.