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# Your Child's Development

## Early Childhood Development

- The early years, from birth to age 6, are vital to a child's future health and well being
- Children grow, develop and learn throughout their lives starting at birth.
- A child's development is seen in how s/he plays, learns, speaks and behaves.
- Learning to crawl, smiling for the first time or waving "bye bye" are examples of developmental milestones.
- "Typical" behaviour is determined by reaching certain milestones by certain ages.
- For examples of guidelines for developmental milestones, go to [www.communitiesforkids.ca](http://www.communitiesforkids.ca), click on the "Families" tab and then on "Ages and Stages".
- Each child is unique and each child develops at his or her own rate. It's important that your child is making progress in his or her achievements, regardless of when s/he reaches milestones.
- If you have concerns about your child's development, contact your local Health Unit and ask about developmental screening.

Sources: "First Steps and Beyond" published by the Mission ECD Committee; [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

## Developmental Screening

### What is developmental screening?

Developmental screening is checking your child's achievements against developmental milestones.

### Why is developmental screening important?

Because it:

- allows for optimal development
- gives each child the opportunity to reach their full potential
- identifies developmental concerns early
- provides services early to meet the individual needs of the child

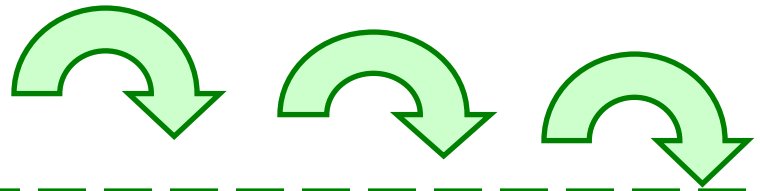
As a parent/caregiver, you know your child best and can observe and identify possible developmental concerns. The earlier a concern is identified, the more you can do to help your child thrive.

### What do I do if I'm concerned about my child's development?

Contact your local Health Unit.

**Communities for Kids**, in partnership with Success by 6®, engages families and communities in children's healthy early development.

# 10 Things a Child Needs for Healthy Development



In the early years, our role as parents and caregivers is to provide the kind of nurturing and attention that will have a lasting and positive impact on our children's lives.

Web sites with further information on children's development:

- [www.bestchance.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bestchance.gov.bc.ca)
- [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)
- [www.missionecdcom.shawbiz.ca/Library.html](http://www.missionecdcom.shawbiz.ca/Library.html) (Updated Development and Resource Guide *First Steps and Beyond*)

Visit our web site

[www.communitiesforkids.ca](http://www.communitiesforkids.ca)

for more great information

**1. Interaction.** Babies see and hear from birth and are ready to start communicating and learning. Cuddle, rock, talk, sing to your child every day.

**2. Touch.** Gentle touch literally tells the brain to grow (to make connections and develop). Touch is a source of comfort and love. Being comforted immediately helps a child to calm more quickly.

**3. Stable relationships.** A loving, trusting adult in a child's life is necessary for survival. Children with secure care have lower stress levels and are able to learn in a productive way. It is important to take care of yourself so you can care for your child's needs. Ask for help when you need it.

**4. Safe, healthy environments free of hazards** allow a child freedom to explore, play and thrive.

**5. Self Esteem** allows a child to balance and succeed in social interactions and feel pride in accomplishments. When a child needs disciplining, use it as an opportunity to teach, to provide limits and constant loving supervision.

**6. Quality Care** in a home or daycare setting. This provides a place and time to learn about self and others.

**7. Communication.** The more words a child hears, the more connections are made in the brain. By 6 months, a child can duplicate the sounds s/he hears. Listen, talk, read and sing with your child every day.

**8. Play.** Everything a child learns is through play. It is the experience NOT the toys that aids development.

**9. Music** can calm and soothe a child, as well as teach.

**10. Reading.** Literacy starts with sharing the experience of reading. Hearing the rhythm and rhyme of words, interacting, touching - are all positive benefits of snuggling up with a book.