

A BOOKLET FOR PARENTS

Learning to Play and Playing to Learn: What Families Can Do



best start
meilleur départ
Resource Centre/Centre de ressources

by/par health **nexus** santé

What is this booklet about?

Learning to Play and Playing to Learn is a parent resource. It is based on the research of what, how, and when your child learns. This booklet is filled with:

- Up-to-date information
- Helpful tips
- Checklists
- Links to other resources

These tools will help you to support your child's individual growth and development. This will help your child be prepared for learning at school.

Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for everyone who cares for children.

- ✓ Parents*
- ✓ Guardians
- ✓ Child care providers
- ✓ Health care providers
- ✓ Family members
- ✓ Friends

* We use the term parent to represent all significant caregivers (grandparents, aunts, legal guardian, etc.) in your child's life.

Note: The glossary at the end of this booklet explains many words and concepts that you may not be familiar with.



What does this booklet help parents to learn?

The information and examples in this booklet show you how you can help your child's brain and body grow and thrive. It will also help you feel more confident that your child is prepared for kindergarten and beyond.

Children all learn in different ways and at their own pace. Consider the unique strengths and needs of your own child. The tips, activities and links in this booklet can help you to decide the best way to support your child.

Did you know?

You are your child's greatest educator and role model.

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The journey to school and lifelong learning



Through play, children learn many skills, such as how to interact with others, solve problems, and accept different ways of thinking, long before they start school, or even kindergarten. These skills help children do well in school and in life. Children, who feel good about learning and are eager, curious, and confident when starting school are more likely to:

- Do well in school
- Finish school
- Continue on a journey of lifelong learning

Starting school is a big milestone for you and your child. Kindergarten is the first step in your child's academic development skills. It is optional and free for all children in Ontario.

With the support of teachers and early childhood educators, kindergarten offers a play-based program. Your child learns through play that:

- Is built on your child's interest and curiosity
- Includes learning experiences directed by teacher and early childhood educator team
- Includes activities where your child can take the lead
- Provides opportunities for your child to explore the world around him with the connections to real life experiences

For more information about full-day kindergarten, go to the Ministry of Education website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/kindergarten



In this booklet we refer to the **teacher and early childhood educator team**. During the regular school day they will be working together with your child to support his learning.



What does a full day of kindergarten look, sound and feel like?

Your child will:



Solve problems and tell others about their learning

Have quiet time as needed



Make friends



Be involved in play-based learning



Eat healthy meals and snacks



Listen to stories



Use their senses to explore and discover

Learn to get along with other children and adults



Develop and learn skills and concepts, both indoors and outdoors

How do children learn?

Children learn by playing in places where they feel safe, respected, and loved. Children's early development, health, and learning is shaped by the day-to-day experiences within their family and community.

From the day they are born, children learn and develop by:

- Touching
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Smelling
- Tasting
- Moving
- Doing (for example, playing).

Children's play is children's work. Remember, you are your child's greatest role model!

To learn, children need:

- A secure attachment
- Self-regulation
- Play

Let's find out why these concepts are so important.



Why is a secure attachment important for learning?

A secure attachment is a powerful, emotional bond where a child feels protected by his parents.



A secure attachment is important to learning because it helps a child to:

- Be more confident to explore the world around him.
- Calm himself as he knows that his parents will return promptly.
- Develop resilience.

The key ingredient to develop a secure attachment is to respond your child's distress. You are encouraged to:

- Intervene when your child is in distress.
- Comfort your child when he is distress.
- React to your child's distress before it gets out of control.
- Respond consistently and warmly to your child's distress.

How can I help my child develop a secure attachment?

Here are some things you can do to:

- Let your child know that you are there when she needs you.
- Guide your child to find the solution to the situation by providing her with options.
- Support your child's learning by playing with her when she is learning a new skill and/or practicing skills she already has.
- Get down to the floor to be at your child's level. This helps you to understand how the world is seen from her view.
- Show and tell your child that you are delighted to see her each time you pick her up from school or child care, when she wakes up in the morning, or at every other opportunity.
- Know your child and respond in the way she enjoys. The most important thing is to know your child is unique.
- Be engaged in your child's day to day activities by following her lead and responding to her needs and cues.
- Spend time with your child observing, playing and learning what your child likes or dislikes.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings by listening what she says. Use the phrases like:
"I see."
"Tell me more."

Feeling safe and secure helps your child:

- Grow and develop in a healthy way.
- Feel safe to explore the world around her through play.
- Think and feel more positively about herself.
- Develop into a confident and curious learner.
- Get along well with others.
- Feel empathy for others.
- Have a good self-image, self-confidence, and good self-regulation.



Why is self-regulation important for learning?

Self-regulation is important for your child to:

- Stay calm, focus and alert when needed.
- Organize feelings and control impulses.
- Develop the ability to tolerate frustration and resist doing something tempting (e.g., taking someone's toy).
- Learn how to behave in different situations (e.g., screaming with joy while running outside, then sitting quietly to listen to a story).

Examples for 0 – 1 year-olds:

You help your baby develop self-regulation by responding to his cues. Cues are signals your baby or child gives through facial expressions, body language, sounds, and crying. When you read these signals and respond to them consistently, your child will begin to learn to regulate his emotions, attention, and behaviour. Be mindful about your non-verbal language. Your baby recognizes your facial expressions.

- The baby pulls his hands to his face or tries to suck on things that touch his cheeks. This shows that he is hungry. You respond by feeding him.



- The baby is smiling at the parent playing with her. This shows that she is still interested in the game. You continue the game as long as your baby smiles and looks at you. If your baby is cooing or gurgling, smile or talk to her to let her know you are there. Your baby likes to hear your voice.

Examples for 1 – 2 year-olds:

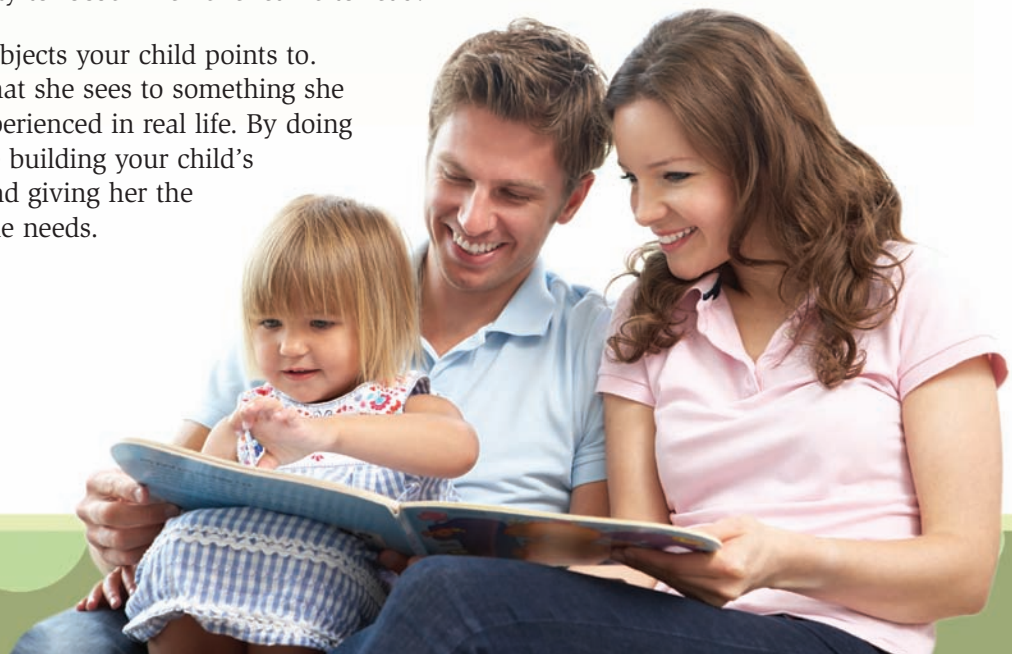
Toddlers still need a lot of help to regulate emotions, attention, and behaviour. Toddlers begin to read the cues from parents and respond to them.

- You may help your toddler who has to wait in line for his turn, by giving an explanation ahead of time, such as, “Your turn comes after Jake’s. Everyone gets a turn.”



- You may provide your toddler with space and learning experiences to develop his independence. Interfere only when necessary. Allow your toddler to learn, by practicing tasks over and over.

- A toddler shows a toy or book to her parents. When you show interest and look at the book with her, you encourage your toddler’s attention. In fact, looking at the same page at the same time and shifting attention from page to page is an important experience for later development. It supports your child’s ability to focus when she learns to read.
- Name the objects your child points to. Connect what she sees to something she has just experienced in real life. By doing this you are building your child’s language and giving her the attention she needs.



Examples for 2 – 5 year-olds:

Preschoolers begin to self-regulate their emotions, behaviour, and attention. They still need help from adults, but will begin to read the cues given by others who tell them to take turns, share, wait, be friendly, calm down, focus, complete tasks, and work hard at play.



- A preschooler is showing signs of frustration because the puzzle he is working on is hard. You encourage him with a few words such as, “See if this piece fits if you turn it the other way.” He will feel happy and proud when the puzzle is finished and will stay focused on what he is doing the next time.
- A preschooler is telling a story about his day at preschool. Even though you are busy, you ask him questions about his day and listen carefully to what he has to share.



Here are some tips to help your child develop self-regulation.

- Allow your child to make choices (e.g., set out two healthy snacks and let your child choose which one he wants).
- Help your child to identify and label emotions. Do this by talking about emotions when playing games, reading books or doing other daily activities.
- Provide a routine so your child knows what happens next.
- Give your child advance notice when you are changing your routine e.g.:
 - “Today after school we are going grocery shopping.”
 - “In five minutes we are going outside.”
- Give your child reminders before the transition will occur.
- Give directions in a calm voice to help your child with transitions. For example:
 - “First you will put your shoes on and then we will go to the playground.”
 - “First we will go to grandma’s house and then we will play in the park.”
- Model self-control and self-regulation and talk to your child about them, e.g.:
 - “I am upset right now because you spilled your drink, but I am not getting angry. I am counting to ten to help myself stay calm.”
- Talk about feelings. Label the emotions for your child so he learns how to express himself when the situation arises. For example when you see your child crying because he just got hurt you can say: “I saw you got hurt and you are sad now. What can we do to make you feel better?” You may offer a hug.

A child with good self-regulation is able to:

- Communicate his needs more appropriately.
- Solve problems and complete tasks more easily.
- Use information from previous experiences to make better choices in a new situation.
- Get along well with others.
- Follow directions more easily.

These skills will help your child when he starts school.

How does a child develop self-regulation?

He learns through your loving and consistent responses and plenty of practice through play!



Why is play important for learning?

Play is the true work of a child. When children play, they learn. For example, when children are lifting, dropping, looking, pouring, bouncing, hiding, building, knocking down, climbing, running, and role playing they are learning.

Through play your child is learning important skills and concepts. Here are some examples:

- She observes when objects are put in water (for example, putting ice cubes in warm water). She talks about what she sees and what happens e.g., cause and effect (science concepts).
- She learns how to sort objects by colour, shapes, size, and use (mathematical and pattern concepts).
- She learns how to find familiar words in signs, retelling stories or printing a list (literacy skills).
- She figures out how to get along with others, making friends, and being respectful (social and emotional skills and concepts).
- She has opportunities to develop thinking skills such as how to recognize and solve problems (inquiry skills).
- She is encouraged to walk, run, hop, throw and catch, and to practice her balance (large and small muscle development, eye-hand coordination skills).

Role playing is really important for your child. When your child role plays, she practices real life situations. Role play helps your child to build:

- Language skills.
- Social skills.
- Imagination.
- Empathy (be more likely to be kind to others).
- Higher levels of thinking and problem solving skills.
- Skills for self-regulation.

Role play is an activity that you and your child can do together. For example, you can:

- Act out a story you have read together.
- Have a tea party with dolls and teddy bears.
- Pretend to be a horse and rider.
- Pretend to go camping, shopping or any other real life experiences.



A younger child plays better side-by-side than together. As a preschooler, your child will begin to play with other children, but they will not always cooperate. When your child is playing with other children, provide support and guidance. Help her learn the skills she needs to play well with others. Children often want exactly what the other child is playing with. For example if your child wants a toy another child has she can:

- Offer another toy in exchange. If the other child does not want to exchange she can let him know that she would like it after she is done playing with it. For example she can say “Let me know when you are done playing with the toy so I can have a turn.” This way your child learns how to share and take turns.
- You may model to how they can play together.

Physically active play – outdoor and indoor

Healthy habits start earlier than you think. Begin introducing your baby to outdoor time right away. There is no specific temperature that is too high or too cold for a baby to go outdoors. Physical outdoor and indoor activity is part of healthy active living.

Encourage access to active play in nature, outdoors, at home, school, childcare and in the community. Playing outside gives your child the freedom to explore, to get dirty and to tumble. When outside he moves more and he has the chance to experiment. He learns to take risks and manage risks.

Being physically active is fun. Being physically active helps children:

- Build strong muscles and bones.
- Develop and grow in a healthy way (e.g., helps prevent obesity and improves mental health).
- Develop self-esteem and respect for others.

While being physically active, your child learns many skills such as:

- Eye-hand coordination (e.g., climbing a play structure).
- Large muscle skills (e.g., running).
- Small muscle skills (e.g., picking up a small ball or doing up shoes).



Children aged 2 to 5 years should engage in physically active outdoor and indoor play for at least three hours every day. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines suggest a progression toward at least 60 minutes of energetic play per day by 5 years of age. For more information go to www.csep.ca/guidelines/guidelines-for-other-age-groups

Physically active play can happen any time during the day as part of play, games, transportation (e.g., walking), or a family activity such as swimming or skating. Your child learns by looking at you and by following your example. Remember you are her greatest teacher and role model. If you are active, she will also be active.

Some examples of how you can include physical active play:

- Put on some music and dance or move around.
- Create an obstacle course with obstacles to crawl under, climb over and run/walk around.
- Go for a walk around your neighbourhood (this helps your child become familiar with nearby parks and schools).
- Roll, throw, catch, and kick balls and other objects of different sizes.
- Go skating or swimming.
- Go to the park, playground or walk in the forest.

So, let your child play! Send him outside in various weather conditions such as snow and rain.

Go play with your child! There is nothing in the world your child would rather do than play with you!



How can I play with my child?

Different adults play differently with their children. Parents, family members, and other caregivers all provide different opportunities for your child to play, explore, and learn. You may prefer to play active games or to take your child for a walk to explore the outside so he can touch, smell the natural materials. Your partner may prefer to play games with rules. You may like to read to your child while your partner tells stories and acts them out. That is okay. Children need more than one adult in their lives.

Encourage other family members and care providers to play with your child. Just set some clear safety rules for everyone. It also helps, if everyone knows the developmental stage of your child and can play with him according to his age and ability (check out the *ndds checklists* on pages 16 to 23).

Tips that help you play with your child:

- Engage in your child's play by listening, observing, communicating (label, ask questions, explain, praise your child's accomplishment).
- Try to respond when your child initiates play.
- Actively listen to your child while he is playing.
- Respect your child's interests.
- Get to your child's level (sit with him on the floor).
- Observe what your child is doing before joining his play. This will allow you to engage in his play by following his lead. Talk with him in the language you are most comfortable with. Below are a few examples to develop your child's critical thinking process.
 - “I noticed that you built a garage for your cars. Tell me more about it.”
 - “Where do I find the plates for dinner?”
 - “I see that you wrote the names of different foods on your menu. You are a writer!”
 - “Who takes care of the pets when your store is closed?”
 - “I wonder what is going to happen when you place this big block on top of your tower.”
- Decide with your child what should be in his play area. For example:
 - Materials that encourage pretend play, such as a variety of items for costumes, stuffed animals and dolls, toy cash register, a variety of toy vehicles, empty food boxes and add plastic jars, play money, etc.
 - Paper, pencils and crayons to help your child develop communication skills.
 - A variety of containers and measuring tools, such as rulers, measuring tapes and simple timers to stimulate his interest in mathematical and scientific concepts.



Photo credit: Simon Blackley (CC)

Talk about the things you have seen together



- Read stories with your child, then re-tell them or act them out.
- Use music to move and dance with your child, or to help him become quiet and calm.
- Respect your child's attention limit according to his age and his development.
- Know when it is time to stop.
- Take your child out for a walk around your neighbourhood or a hike through the park.
- Talk about the things you have seen together, e.g.:
 - “I noticed the birds have built a nest in that tree. I wonder what is inside?”
- Pretend play what you have done together (e.g., going to the grocery store).
- Develop a routine so your child has times for active play and times for quiet play.
- Let your child help you with simple chores and talk about them. For example when grocery shopping, let your child pick fruits and vegetables and place them in the bag. To enhance his mathematic skills you can count them together.
- Plan, cook, and prepare food with your child. Let your child try simple tasks in the kitchen (e.g. add ingredients to a bowl).

Provide opportunities for your child to use all his developing skills:

- Large muscle skills – e.g., running, climbing, pulling, pushing
- Small muscle skills – e.g., drawing, painting, catching
- Social skills – e.g., turn-taking, sharing, cooperating, negotiating, initiating interactions
- Emotional skills – e.g., showing feelings, caring
- Language skills – e.g., listening, talking, asking using words, rhyming, singing, telling stories, reading recipes
- Thinking skills – e.g., exploring, investigating, planning, matching, problem-solving.

How can I help my child be prepared for learning at school

Seven very important ingredients for learning are:

1. Plenty of love

Providing your child with plenty of love and responding warmly to her cues.

2. Talking and listening

Your child learns when you talk with her. Singing, rhyming and reading also build her skills. Even before she can speak, she can tell you things through signals or cues. Respond to her and listen to her when she speaks and she will learn how to communicate with you and others. Check your child's speech and language development using the growth and development checklists on pages 16 to 23, or you can access the checklists at www.ndds.ca.

3. Play, play, and more play

Different types of play help your child grow and develop. Spend time playing with your child. That is what she likes best. You can also take her to play groups and programs for families to help your child get used to playing with other children. Read more about play on page 10. To find programs for families visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/FamilyPrograms.html.

4. Daily physical activity

Provide opportunities for physically active play to help your child develop skills, strong bones and muscles, and improve mental health. Read more on page 11.

5. Good nutrition starts in the home

Healthy eating gives your child the building blocks for proper growth and development as well as providing the energy to learn, play, and stay healthy. To learn more about your child's nutrition and school, see pages 24 and 30.

6. Daily routines

Routines make your child feel secure and avoid difficult behaviour. Have daily routines for waking up, eating meals and snacks, going to bed and playing (actively and quietly). Sometimes, the classroom or the school routines need to be adjusted to accommodate a child who has a special need. In daily routines don't forget to include special events, such as birthday parties, outings, or cultural celebrations. To find out more about routines for starting school, go to the routines and self-help quiz on page 28.

7. Regular health and development check-ups

Your child learns best when she feels well, can hear and see well, and is eating healthy food. Health checks and immunizations help keep your child healthy. Any health problem your child may have, should be addressed early, so that she can do well in school. To find out more about your child's health, go to the checklists, quizzes, and information on pages 16 to 29 or you can access the checklists at www.ndds.ca. Also refer to resources for families on pages 30 and 31.

You also help your child learn when you talk with her about school and communicate with her teacher and early childhood education team.



How can I know how my child is doing?

All parents want their children to do the best they can in school and in life. The ndds checklist is an easy to use method of recording the development and progress of your child within certain age groupings. The checklists are not meant to be a substitute for the advice and/or treatment of health care and child care professionals trained to professionally assess the development and progress of your child. There are several checklists for various ages. The checklist asks if your child can do certain things at a certain age in the areas of:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Speech and language
- Large muscles
- Small muscles
- Thinking and learning
- Social
- Emotional
- Self-help



You can find the checklists for children 2 to 5 years old from page 16 to 23.

Note: ndds® have been blurred in the online PDF of the booklet to protect the ndds copyright.

To access the endds® visit www.ndds.ca or www.endds.com

Checklists, quizzes & more information

Here are a number of checklists & quizzes that can help you track how your child is doing:

- ndds® checklist for 2, 3, 4, and 5 year-olds
- School related nutrition information
- Vision checklist
- Your child's smile – A dental checklist
- Immunization information
- Routines and self-help checklist
- Parent quiz

If you have concerns or questions about your child's progress contact:

- Your health care provider
- Your local public health unit
- Your community health centre
- Your child's teacher and early childhood educator team
- Your local infant and child development services. For information about infant and child development services and to find a centre near you, go to www.oaicd.ca.

Age 2 – ndds®

Child's Name: _____

Birth Date: _____ Today's Date: _____

The ndds® is a checklist designed to help monitor your child's development.

Yes	No	By TWO YEARS of age, does your child...
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1. Understand one and two step directions? ("Close the door", "go find your book and show it to grandma?")
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2. Ask for help using words?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	3. Learn and use one or more new words a week? (may only be understood by family)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4. Join two words together? ("more milk", "no go", "no hat?")
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	5. Eat most foods without coughing and choking?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	6. Eat with a spoon with little spilling?*
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	7. Take off own shoes, socks, or hat?*
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	8. Sit on toilet?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	9. Play in a squat position?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	10. Walk backwards or sideways pulling a toy?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	11. Make scribbles and dots on paper or in sand?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12. Put objects into a small container?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	13. Like to watch and play with other children?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	14. Say "no", and like to do some things without help?*
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	15. Use toys for pretend play? (give doll a drink?*)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	16. Use skills already learned and develop new ones? (no loss of skills)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	17. Copy your actions? (one step your hands and feet, do steps hands?*)



If you answer "no" to any question or have any concerns about your child's development, follow-up with your health care and/or child care professional.

* Examples provided are only suggestions. You may use similar examples from your family experience. ** Item may not be common to all cultures.

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Age 2 – Activities for your child...

 Emotional	 Fine Motor	 Gross Motor	 Social	 Self-Help	 Communication	 Learning/Thinking
---	--	---	--	---	--	---

The following activities for your child will help you play your part in your child's development.



I am learning about my feelings. Give me words for my feelings and show that you understand.



Let me open and close plastic containers by twisting and turning the lids. Help me find the right lid to put on each container.

I love to pour water from containers during my bath. I enjoy wringing heads or buttons on a shirtless, string, or pipe cleaner. Talk to me about the color and count the heads as I use them. Remember, I may still put things in my mouth, so watch me.



Provide me with toys that allow me to push or pedal with my feet. This will help me learn to climb on and off and to pedal. Make sure I have lots of room. Praise my efforts.

Let's practice climbing and jumping. I love to get in and out of a box or jump from a bottom step. We can have fun together.

Let's sing Old MacDonald and move our bodies like the animals: hop like a frog or hoot, repeat or waddle like a duck, or jump up and down like a kangaroo.



I love sharing storybooks with you. Cuddle me while we read together.



Let's play a game. Use two shakers and two toys. We each get a box and a toy. Let's take turns putting our toy in, over, under, behind, and on the box. Talk to me about what we are doing.



I want to become independent. Encourage me to get dressed and undressed, do household tasks, turn lights on and off, and open and close doors.



Sing songs with me throughout the day and repeat them often. This helps me learn to sing them on my own. Label me parts of the song or theme for me to finish.

Help me learn new words. Talk to me during bathing, feeding, dressing, and doing daily chores. Name my clothing and body parts. Let me help set the table, sort the laundry, and put groceries away.



I like to play sorting games with you. We can sort objects by shape, touch, color, and size. Use spoons, blocks, toys, and clothing.

I am learning to make decisions, offer my choices throughout the day.

I may get sick infections. Talk to my doctor about signs and symptoms.

If you answer “no” to any question or have any concerns about your child's development, follow-up with your health care and/or child care professional.

Age 3 – ndds®

Child's Name: _____

Birth Date: _____ Today's Date: _____

The ndds® is a checklist designed to help monitor your child's development.

Yes	No	By THREE YEARS of age, does your child...
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1. Speak clearly enough to be understood all of the time by family?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2. Understand two and three step directions? (<i>"pick up your hat and shoes and put them in the closet"</i>)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	3. Speak in sentences of five or more words? (<i>"I go home and play"</i>)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4. Understand and use some describing words? (eg. dirty, wet, hot)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	5. Walk up the stairs using the handrail?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	6. Stand on one foot briefly?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	7. Throw a ball forward at least one meter (three feet)?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	8. Take take off pants or tops briefly?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	9. Turn the pages of a book one at a time?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	10. Play make believe games with action and words? (<i>pretend to cook a meal, fix a car?</i>)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	11. Draw or write with help?*
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12. Show some of the time? (eg. books?)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	13. Show affection with words and actions?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	14. Play with others occasionally?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	15. Co-operate with parent's request half of the time?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	16. Listen to music or stories for 5-10 minutes with you?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	17. Greet friends and familiar adults when welcomed?



If you answer "no" to any question or have any concerns about your child's development, follow-up with your health care and/or child care professional.

* Examples provided are only suggestions. You may use similar examples from your family experience. ** Item may not be common to all cultures.

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Age 3 – Activities for your child...

 Emotional	 Fine Motor	 Gross Motor	 Social	 Self-Help	 Communication	 Learning/Thinking
---	--	---	--	---	--	---

The following activities for your child will help you play your part in your child's development.



I may be afraid of things that didn't bother me before. My brain are used to me so help me to feel safe.



Encourage me to create with pencils, play dough, modeling clay, peg boards, beads, and building blocks.

I like activities that let me practice cutting, gluing, painting, and drawing.



We can play by making a line on the floor with a rope or marking tape. We can lie, crawl, walk, run, gallop on, or jump over the line.

Let's play ball! Encourage me to throw and catch a ball, hit a ball with a bat or racket, or kick a ball at a target. We can hold a beach ball between us using different parts of our bodies (elbows, legs, hands, knees, feet).



I like to play with other children, but sometimes I need help to take turns, share, and cooperate.

We can be whatever we want or do what ever we want when we play under believe. Let's pretend to go camping, play pretend, sing/dance, or dance.



Encourage me to do things by myself to help me become independent. It is important for me to be able to get dressed and undressed, wash myself, and help to clean up. I'm learning about responsibility.



Books are some of my favorite things. Read to me often throughout the day. Make it part of our daily routine by setting aside a special time. Choose books that are colorful and interesting to me.

I enjoy gaming games. Place some familiar objects on the table, and we can take turns describing them. For example "Show me something we use to break our fast". Sometimes make it silly so we can laugh.



Like games make me laugh. Make cards using simple negative pictures. Add something that does not belong like a girl with a mustache or a fish with legs. Laugh with me as we talk about what's funny.

I like sorting objects. Give me an empty egg carton where I can put different objects into the cups. Things like buttons, different colored objects, shapes, and socks are fun to sort.

I enjoy surprises. Let's hide different objects in a box or bag for a game of touch and tell. We can take turns feeling the objects and describing what's in the bag. Pull them out to see if we were right.

I have lots of energy and need space to run, climb, pull a wagon, and ride a trike.

All children my age should have a vision, hearing, and dental checkup. Ask our family doctor or public health unit where these services are available in our community.

If you answer "no" to any question or have any concerns about your child's development, follow-up with your health care and/or child care professional.

Age 4 – ndds®

Child's Name: _____

Birth Date: _____ Today's Date: _____

The ndds® is a checklist designed to help monitor your child's development.

Yes	No	By FOUR YEARS of age, does your child...
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1. Understand three-part related directions and longer sentences ("put your toy away and wash your hands before lunch")
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2. Say rhymes (a-b-c-hat) or sing children's songs?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	3. Ask and answer a lot of questions ("why?", "what are you doing?")
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4. Speak clearly enough to be understood most of the time without repeating or stuttering on words or words
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	5. Tell stories with a clear beginning, middle, and end?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	6. Show you find colours when asked? ("show me the red crayon")
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	7. Tell what is happening in a picture when you ask?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	8. Go up and down stairs alternating feet? (with one foot on each step)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	9. Stand on one foot for one to three seconds without support?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	10. Try to hop on one foot?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	11. Catch a large ball with outstretched arms?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12. Tug paper with scissors?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	13. Draw a person with three or more body parts?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	14. Hold a crayon or pencil correctly?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	15. Slide buttons and zippers?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	16. Use the roller/pencil during the day? (older manual)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	17. Take turns and share with other children in small group activities?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	18. Try to coordinate someone who is upset?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	19. Play near and talk to other children while continuing with own activity?
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	20. Look for adult approval? ("watch me" or "look what I did")



If you answer "no" to any question or have any concerns about your child's development, follow-up with your health care and/or child care professional.

* Examples provided are only suggestions. You may use similar examples from your family experience. ** Item may not be common to all cultures.

Format adapted with permission by:

ndds.ca

Age 4 – Activities for your child...

 Emotional	 Fine Motor	 Gross Motor	 Social	 Self-Help	 Communication	 Learning/Thinking
---	--	---	--	---	---	---

The following activities for your child will help you play your part in your child's development.



I need to be loved to know that I am special. Listen when I talk to you.
I'm never too old or big to be hugged or please do it often.



I need opportunities to play with other children. If I'm not in school, I need to be involved in group activities on a regular basis.



I like activities that let me practice cutting, gluing, painting, drawing, dot-to-dot, simple mazes, and puzzles. Soon I may be able to print letters, numbers, and my name.

I want to practice my lacing skills. Encourage me to thread a shoelace through the holes in my shoes or laces punched around a picture. I am getting better at doing buttons and zippers, but I still need practice.



I can now tell longer stories. Show me a series of pictures and tell me a story about them. After I know it well, have me put the pictures in order. I can recall the story or make up one of my own.

I am learning about words and sounds. Play rhyming games and laugh at the silly words we can make together. Put on the sounds and letters in my world.



I want to show you what I can do. Set up an obstacle course so I can practice new skills: walking, running, crawling, balancing, climbing, jumping over things, and hopping (on one foot or both feet).

I enjoy ball games. I want to learn to use a bat, racket, hockey stick, golf club, ball glove. I like to play with you or a friend.



Let's play a memory game. We can take turns giving each other directions ("Put your hands on your head, then turn around, then touch the ground").

It's important for me to know my full name, address, and telephone number.



I like it when you read to me. Storybooks are more exciting for me when you change your voice for different parts. Take me to the library.

I can play group games with simple rules. Check Check Game, Ring Around the Rosie, London Bridge is Falling Down and The Farmer in the Dell.

I learn best by playing and using my imagination. Please limit and monitor my video game, computer, and TV time.

All children my age should have a vision, hearing, and dental checkup. Ask our family doctor or public health unit where these services are available in our community.

If you answer "no" to any question or have any concerns about your child's development, follow-up with your health care and/or child care professional.

Age 5 – ndds®

Child's Name: _____

Birth Date: _____ Today's Date: _____

The ndds® is a checklist designed to help monitor your child's development.

Yes	No	By FIVE YEARS of age, does your child...
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	1. Count out loud on his fingers to answer "How many are there?"
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	2. Name common shapes and most of the letters of the alphabet
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	3. Speak clearly in whole like sentences most of the time!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	4. Tell long stories about own past experiences!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	5. Use sentences to describe objects and events!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	6. Walk on a straight line only stepping off once or twice!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	7. Stop, start, and change direction smoothly when running!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	8. Throw and catch a ball successfully most of the time!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	9. Climb playground equipment without difficulty!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	10. Hop on one foot several times!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	11. Hold a crayon or pencil correctly!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	12. Draw lines, simple shapes, and a few letters! **
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	13. Use scissors to cut along a thick line drawn on a piece of paper!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	14. Draw and undress with little help! **
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	15. Usually play well in groups!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	16. Cooperate with adult requests most of the time!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	17. Talk about having a best friend!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	18. Share willingly with others!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	19. Work alone at an activity for 20-30 minutes!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	20. Separate easily from you!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	21. Play make-believe games with others!
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	22. Respond verbally to "Hi" and "How are you?"



If you answer "no" to any question or have any concerns about your child's development, follow-up with your health care and/or child care professional.

* Examples provided are only suggestions. You may use similar examples from your family experience. ** Item may not be common to all cultures.

Format adapted with permission by:

nnds.ca

Age 5 – Activities for your child...

 Emotional	 Fine Motor	 Gross Motor	 Social	 Self-Help	 Communication	 Learning/Thinking
---	--	---	--	---	--	---

The following activities for your child will help you play your part in your child's development.



I like to answer the phone and talk to people I know. I feel proud to take a message for you.

Notice me doing something good and tell me how proud you are of me. This will make me feel good about myself, and I will want to do it again.

Help me learn about the feelings of others through stories. Characters in books have feelings and experiences, are afraid, or have problems to overcome. You can probably find a book about someone who is just like me.



I will need lots of practice with pencils, markers, and chalk. Activities like coloring, drawing, dot-to-dot, mazes, as well as tracing and copying letters, shapes, and numbers will help me at school.

I like to experiment using different materials. Fill up a craft box so I can be creative using glue, clay, wood, yarn, tape, scissors, paper, pencils, markers, crayons, or white and red.



I like to play games such as hide and seek, tag, dodge the ball, and roll over. This helps me learn rules of games and helps me to take turns.

I love to ride my bicycle and I want even be ready to let go of my training wheels. Make sure I am wearing my helmet.



We friends and I enjoy going to the park or playground with you. We love to climb, swing, slide, and explore the equipment so we can try new things.

Board games are fun. I learn about rules, counting, taking turns, winning, and losing. Don't always let me win. It's all right for me to lose.



I feel important when I have a few simple jobs.



I like a mystery. You think of something, and I will guess what it is by asking you questions ("Is it food?" "Is it an animal?" "Does it have four legs?" "Is it a dog?").

I have a lot to say. Talk with me often throughout the day about things that interest me. When you listen to me, I learn how to tell a story from beginning to end. Ask questions so that I can remember the details of my day.



I'm learning so much. Let's play using letters, numbers and colors ("I spy with my little eye three things that are red" or "I spy something blue that starts with B").

Sign me up. I want to be part of a team.

All children my age should have a vision, hearing, and dental checkup. Ask our family doctor or public health unit where these services are available in our community.

If you answer "no" to any question or have any concerns about your child's development, follow-up with your health care and/or child care professional.

School related nutrition information

Find out if your child is a healthy eater and take action to improve eating habits by completing a quick nutrition questionnaire at www.nutritionscreen.ca.

The following information will help you provide good nutrition for your child once she starts school.

- Provide your child with a healthy breakfast every morning. It offers your child energy and nutrients that her body needs to grow and her brain to learn.
- Your child will likely have to bring two snacks to school and a lunch. School snacks and lunches should include healthy foods based on Canada's Food Guide. Visit EatRight Ontario for healthy food ideas and sample lunches at www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/School-Health/Articles/Packing-Healthy-School-Lunches-and-Snacks-FAQs#.V8gVOyMm7mQ.
- Find out about the food allergy policy at your child's school to ensure your child's lunches are allergy-safe. Make sure your child knows not to share food with other children at school.
- Think about the containers and packaging for your child's lunches and snacks. Many schools ask parents to send reusable containers to reduce waste. Make sure your child can open and close the containers in her lunch box. Help your child learn how to open and close her backpack, lunch-box and containers.
- Choose healthy drinks for your child, such as water, milk or fortified soy beverage. On hot days or school outings, send extra water for your child to drink. Offer water between meals and snacks. Limit (125-175 mL or 4-6 oz per day for children 4-6 years old) or avoid juice.
- Make sure your child's food is safe to eat. Cut foods into small pieces to ensure they are not choking hazards. Teach your child to wash her hands before eating.
- When your child returns from school she may need a snack, especially if dinner is still some time away. Offer meals and snacks 2 ½ to 3 hours apart. Encourage your child to listen to her hunger and fullness cues. Set a good example, eat with your child and choose healthy foods.
- Include a variety of different foods in the meals and snacks you send to school with your child. For example, include 2 food groups for snacks and 3-4 food groups for meals. Go for healthy choices, such as vegetables, fruits or cheese.
- Be a leader for your child's school to improve the school nutrition environment. Talk to the school principal about BrightBites at <http://brightbites.ca>.

For more information check the nutrition resources at the end of this booklet. If you have any questions about your child's nutrition, eating habits or the food textures she prefers:

- Talk to a dietitian at *EatRight Ontario* 1-877-510-510-2 or www.ontario.ca/eatright
- Check out *Canada's Food Guide* at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php
- Ask your health care provider for a referral to a Registered Dietitian (R.D.). The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) covers the cost of an R.D. in a hospital, family health teams and community health centres.



Vision checklist and information



Children may not know that they have a vision problem. They can't always tell you what they see. One out of 4 children has a significant eye or vision problem that can interfere with learning and development. The Ontario Association of Optometrists recommends that every young child has complete eye examinations at ages 6 months, 3 years and every year thereafter or as recommended by your optometrist.

Does your child have an unusual eye appearance?

- One eye that looks turned in or out?
- Bumps, styes, redness, swelling or crusting of eyelids?
- Drooping eyelid?
- Haziness or whitish appearance inside the pupil?
- Frequently watery eyes?

Does your child behave in a way that could suggest a vision problem?

- Does not watch or follow an object?
- Touches things to help recognize them?
- Does not make eye contact?
- Closes or covers one eye?
- Squints or frowns when looking far or near?
- Rubs or touches the eyes a lot?
- Blinks more than usual?
- Reacts strongly to light?
- Turns or tilts head when viewing objects?
- Holds objects very close to face?
- Dislikes near tasks?
- Loses interest quickly or becomes irritable with visual activities?
- Has poor depth perception or trouble seeing 3D?
- Trips or bumps into things often?
- Is uncoordinated in activities and sports?

Does your child have any difficulties with learning?

- Has poor posture when reading/writing?
- Has poor handwriting?
- Moves head, loses place, skips lines when reading?
- Uses more effort than normal to complete school work?
- Works hard but is not achieving the expected level at school?

Is your child at risk for vision problems?

- Does a family member have a turned or lazy or blind eye?
- Does a family member have glasses?
- Has any family member had early childhood cataracts or glaucoma?
- Were there problems with the pregnancy or delivery?
- Was your child premature at birth?
- Does your child have a hearing loss?
- Does your child have a health condition that can affect eyes, such as:
 - Cerebral palsy
 - Juvenile arthritis
 - Down syndrome
 - Autism
 - Attention deficit disorder (ADHD)
 - Developmental delay

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) covers the cost of an annual eye exam for children aged 0-19 years. To find an optometrist, you can call the Ontario Association of Optometrists at (800) 540-3837 or visit www.optom.on.ca for a list of doctors in your area.

Adapted with permission from the Ontario Association of Optometrists

Learn more about free program for junior kindergarten students at www.EyeSeeEyeLearn.ca.



Dental checklist and information

Teach your child healthy dental habits early. Below are helpful oral health tips:



- **Help or supervise your child to brush his teeth twice a day**
 - For your child less than 3 years of age, brush his teeth.
 - For your child from 3 to 6 years of age, you should help him brush his teeth.
 - Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist about the best way to brush your child's teeth.
- **Floss your child's teeth at least once a day**
 - Many cavities start between teeth.
 - Start cleaning between your child's teeth when the teeth are touching.
 - Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist about the best way to floss your child's teeth.
- **Use a pea-sized drop of fluoridated toothpaste for your child age 3 to 6 year of age**
 - Fluoride helps to strengthen the tooth enamel.
 - Make sure your child does not swallow the toothpaste.
 - Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist about the use of toothpaste.
- **Check your child's teeth**
 - Look for dull white spots or lines on the teeth. These may be on the necks of the teeth next to the gums.
 - Dark teeth are also a sign of tooth decay.
 - Make an appointment with a dentist right away if you see these signs.
- **See a dentist to treat your cavities**
 - Bacteria that cause cavities can be passed on to your child.
 - Anything that has been in your mouth should not be put in your baby's mouth.
- **Take your child to see a dentist by 12 months of age or within 6 months of getting his first teeth**
 - Cavities found early can be fixed more easily and cheaply.
 - Only a dentist can perform a complete dental exam, make a diagnosis of tooth decay or other dental disease and prescribe treatment options.
- **Offer healthy beverages**
 - Offer only water between meals and snacks.
 - Milk or fortified soy beverage can be offered with meals or snacks. Offer small servings (125 mL or 4 oz) in an open cup. Children only need 500 mL or 16 oz per day.
 - Avoid or limit juice (125-175 mL or 4-6 oz per day for 4-6 year old). If offering juice, only offer it in an open cup when they are having a snack or a meal.
 - Fruit punch, pop and sport drinks are not recommended as they contribute to erosion of the enamel.
- **Offer healthy snacks**
 - Give your child snacks with different flavours and textures.
 - Healthy snacks include 2 of the 4 food groups such as cheese, apples, carrot sticks, whole grain pita bread triangles and bean dip.
 - Snacking often on sugary, sticky, and starchy snacks will contribute to erosion of the enamel.
 - Keep snacks and meals 2½-3 hours apart.
 - Avoid constant snacking throughout the day.

Immunization information

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect your child's health. Visit www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines for more information on vaccines.

In Ontario, children have several vaccinations before they are 2 years old. Children are due for more vaccines between the ages of 4 and 6 years. When your child starts school, all his shots (immunizations) must be up to date. To check which shots your child should have visit www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization/static/immunization_tool.html

Keep a record of your child's immunizations. Your school or public health unit may ask to see your child's updated immunization records.

If you have questions about your child's immunizations, please call your family doctor or your local public health unit.



Routines and self-help checklist

Use this checklist to establish a healthy daily routine to help your child be prepared for school. Some questions about your child's self-help skills and safety practices are also included.

My child gets up around the same time each morning.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child has a bedtime routine and usually falls asleep easily at night.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child sleeps at least 10 hours most nights.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child has a healthy breakfast each morning.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child is physically active for at least three hours per day.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child has a time during the day to play quietly or to have a nap.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child has no more than one hour of screen time (TV, computer, or video games) per day.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child can ask an adult for help.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child knows how to dress herself (except for some buttons, zippers, and ties). <i>Note: This is more likely for 4 or 5 year olds.</i>	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child can go to the bathroom without or with little help.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child knows how to wash her hands.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child can tell others her full name and her address.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child knows how to cross the street safely with an adult.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child knows how she will get to and from school.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child is familiar with the school, the yard, and the neighbourhood.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child can open and close lunch and snack containers.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
My child can tell others about her activities, outings, or events.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>

If you answered "no" to any of these questions that does not mean your child is not prepared for school. Just take some time to set routines and practice self-help and safety skills. Try some of the activities listed in this booklet. To help your child get to know other places and people before she starts school you can:

1. Go to programs for parents and young children.
2. Go to your local library, recreation centre, or friendship centre.
3. Take your child to the park, a museum, the grocery store, or for a bus ride.
4. Check with your local school to see if they offer a school readiness program.
Ask if they offer a Kindergarten visit before your child goes to school.

For tips to establish a healthy routine for a child aged 25-30 months go to www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/tips_brain_dev/HBHB_did_you_know_ENG_Tip14.pdf.

Parent quiz

Now, that we are almost at the end of the booklet, let's review what we have talked about.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Children start to learn from the day they are born. | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Good nutrition is important for learning. | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. A secure attachment develops when parents respond warmly to their child's needs and cues. | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Self-regulation is a skill that is developed throughout childhood. | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Children learn through play. | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Active outdoor and indoor play develops children's large and small muscle skills. | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Parents can use the <i>ndds checklists</i> to see if their child is developing according to his/her age. | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Young children prefer to play with other children. | True <input type="radio"/> | False <input type="radio"/> |

Answers:

1. **True.** From the day they are born, children learn and develop by: touching, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and doing (e.g., playing).
2. **True.** Seven very important ingredients for learning are: lots of love; talking and listening; play, play, and more play – with you; active play; good nutrition; daily routines including lots of sleep, and regular health check-ups. Refer to *How to Build a Healthy Preschooler* on page 30.
3. **False.** A secure attachment develops when parents respond to their child's distress.
4. **True.** Self-regulation is a skill that is developed from infancy through the loving and consistent responses from parents and lots of practice through play!
5. **True.** Children learning when they play.
6. **True.** Being physically active has many benefits. First of all, it is fun. At the same time, children learn a lot of skills such as eye hand coordination, large muscle skills (e.g., running), and small muscle skills (e.g., doing up shoes).
7. **True.** The *ndds checklists* are easy to use checklists to help you track if your child is developing according to his age.
8. **False.** You are your child's favorite toy. There is nothing in the world your child would rather do than play with you!

Resources for families

There are many online and community resources for parents. If you do not have Internet or a computer, visit your local library or your local health unit or call the toll free numbers found throughout this booklet.

Growth and Development

Building Resilience in Young Children – Booklet for parents of children from birth to six years A booklet to help parents and caregivers to boost a child's ability to bounce back from life's challenges and thrive: www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/pdf/BSRC_Resilience_English_fnl.pdf

Children See, Children Learn
Tips to parent without punishment
www.childrenseechildrenlearn.ca

Child Discipline – Mini Poster Offers tips to parents to integrate positive discipline in the interactions they have with their children
http://en.beststart.org/for_parents/do-you-have-youngchild-or-children-1-6-years

Comfort, Play and Teach (CPT) Developmental Milestones Information by age on developmental milestones for the domains of social, emotional, language, intellectual and gross and fine motor skills www.imhpromotion.ca/Resources/CPT-DevelopmentalMilestones.aspx

Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development
The most up-to-date scientific knowledge on early childhood development, from conception to age five. www.child-encyclopedia.com

Healthy Baby Healthy Brain Information to help support your child's early brain development: www.healthybabyhealthybrain.ca

Is My Child Growing Well? Fact sheets and information about your child's growth: www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/is_my_child_growing_well

ndds® An innovative developmental checklist for infants and children up to 6 years of age: www.ndds.ca or www.endds.com

When Children Speak More Than One Language
As a parent of a child who will learn two or more languages, this guide shares helpful information: www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/BSRC_When_Families_Speak_fnl.pdf

Health

A Parent's Guide to Vaccination Learn about vaccination and why it is important to your child's health: http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/publications/healthy-living-vie-saine/parent-guide-vaccination/index-eng.php?_ga=1.164719673.722229588.1462381007

Dental Care for Children Find important information on how to properly care for your child's teeth. www.cda-adc.ca/en/oral_health/cfy/dental_care_children/

Immunizations for School Attendance
Information regarding the need for children to be immunized according to Ontario's Immunization Schedule: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/immunization/static/immunization_tool.html

The Eye See... Eye Learn A site developed to raise awareness about the importance of having children's eyes checked before starting school: www.eyeseeeyelearn.ca

Nutrition

Canada's Food Guide
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php

EatRight Ontario To answer your questions about your child's nutrition: www.eatrightontario.ca or talk for free with a registered dietitian 1-877-510-510-2

How to Build a Healthy Preschooler (3-5 years)
An educational resource part of the NutriSTEP® Program: www.nutristep.ca/en/pdfs/How-to-Build-a-Healthy-Preschooler-ENG-2015.pdf

How to Feed Your Growing Child Information on feeding your child from age two to five: www.beststart.org/resources/nutrition/pdf/HTFC-ENG.pdf

Parents' Support

Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada) Provides information and support for parents: www.parentsmatter.ca

Canadian Child Care Federation Resources for parents with practical tips on how to manage the early years: www.cccf-fcsge.ca/parents or call 1-800-858-1412

Canadian Paediatric Society Information about your child's growth and development, health, safety, and more: www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Child and Family Programs Find information about child development and specialized services as needed and the centres located near you: www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/FamilyPrograms.html

ConnectABILITY A website and virtual community dedicated to lifelong learning and support for people who have an intellectual disability, their families and support networks. The site is organized by age group. <http://connectability.ca/category/kids/>

Dad Central A website with useful tips, resources, information to learn more about fathers' roles in the lives of their children: www.dadcentral.ca & www.newdadmanual.ca

Government of Ontario A website with programs and services including information on early childhood: www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/index.aspx or call 1-866-821-7770

Ontario Federation of Friendship Centres Find centres that offer programs and support for Indigenous children and their parents: www.ofifc.org

Your Local Public Health Units Find your local public health unit: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx

Play

9 Healthy Schools Initiatives Every Parent Should Know About Offers you a summary of key initiatives from the Ministry of Education that impact your children at school and beyond: www.ophea.net/schoolandhome

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines View Canadian Guidelines on physical activity and ways to be more active: www.scpe.ca/en/guidelines/24-hour-movement-guidelines

Daddy and Me On the Move: Aimed at fathers of children aged 0 to 6, fathers will find activities they can do with their children: www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/BSRC_Daddy_and_Me_EN.pdf

Have a Ball Together! Helps you find all the tools you need to promote and encourage physical activity for children 0-6: <http://haveaballtogether.ca>

Is Your Child Safe? Play Time Health Canada has produced this guide to provide you with information to create a safer play experience and to make safer choices when selecting toys for children: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/child-enfant/play-jeu-eng.php

ParticipACTION Offers information to sit less and move more: www.participaction.ca

Why Play? A series of brochures offering information to parents and caregivers on play and child development: www.welcomehere.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=939

Preparing for School

Ontario Ministry of Education Information on full-day kindergarten and the many things that you can do at home to prepare and support your child for school:

Full-Day Kindergarten
www.edu.gov.on.ca/kindergarten/index.html

How can I prepare my child? www.edu.gov.on.ca/kindergarten/howcanipreparemychild.html

School readiness Offers you information on appropriate transition and success for school for your child: www.child-encyclopedia.com/school-readiness/introduction

Glossary

Word(s)	Definition
Attachment	Attachment is a powerful, emotional relationship that develops between children and the important caregivers in their lives. Children can develop secure or insecure attachments with their caregivers.
Child-lead play	Play is led by the child when he explores the world around him with the active presence of his parents or caregiver.
Cue	A cue is a signal to indicate what the child wants or needs at that moment. Cues are not words, but other ways of communicating, such as behaviour (e.g., fidgeting), body language (e.g., yawning), facial expressions (e.g., smiling), and sounds (e.g., crying).
Immunization	Immunizations help a person's immune system fight a disease such as measles or the flu that can be caught from others. From the age of two months, children in Ontario receive a number of immunizations to prevent them from getting diseases that can make them sick or cause long-term problems.
Large muscle skills	The ability to use the large muscles of the body in order to stand up, walk, run, pull, push, and balance.
Language skills	These skills include speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
Literacy skills	These skills enable a child to read and write. Scribbling, drawing, looking at books, and pretend reading are also called pre-literacy skills.
Quiet time	Time that children spend each day in quiet play, usually at the same time each day. They may not need a nap, just some quiet time to play with quiet toys or look at books.
Resilience	Resilience is the ability to steer through serious life challenges and find ways to bounce back and to thrive.
Self-regulation	Self-regulation is how we adjust our feelings, actions, attention, thoughts and bodies so that we can handle different situations without getting overwhelmed. Children learn to self-regulate through their daily interactions with caring adults.
Self-help skills	There are five major types of self-help skills: eating, dressing, grooming, toileting, and household skills (e.g., putting toys away or opening and closing a door).
Small muscle skills	These are skills that involve the use of the small muscles of the hand, fingers, and thumb, usually in coordination with the eyes (e.g., grasp a rattle, hold a pencil, or pick up objects).
Social skills	These are skills which enable children to interact and communicate with other people. Social skills consist of behaviours that people learn in order to get along with others.

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