

From Cradle to Classroom

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English version

Direction de la production en langue anglaise

Secteur des services à la communauté anglophone, des affaires autochtones et du Plan Nord — Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

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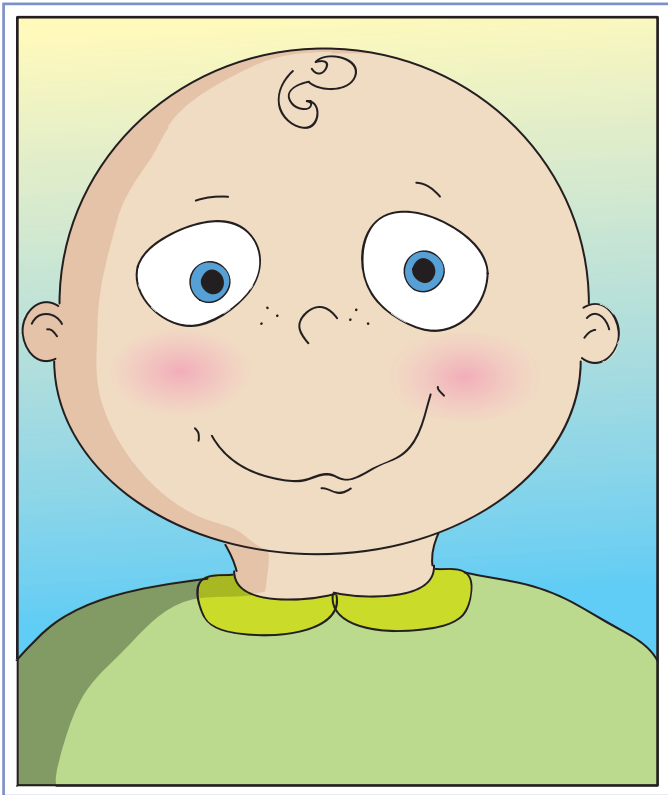
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Portrait of a future reader



Child's photo

First name

Family name

Date of birth: _____

Mom

Dad

A record of your child's "firsts"

First tooth: _____

Age

First word: _____

Age

First steps: _____

Age

First book: _____

Age

First scribbles: _____

Age

Introduction

This book is for you and your child

The birth of a baby marks the beginning of a very special adventure. From the day he is born he starts learning things that will be useful all his life. First, he crawls. Later, he learns to walk and then to run. He hears words. He starts to repeat them and gradually learns to talk. He looks at pictures in a book. Then he listens to stories and takes part at storytime. Eventually, he learns to read.

Children all around the world develop in much the same way. They are all different, though, moving to their own beat, with their own personality and preferences. What they know and what they're good at may also vary with the habits and customs of their family and the country they live in.

Your child needs you in order to learn. She learns by imitating you and by watching and taking part in family activities. You are her teacher. Here are some things you can do to help her:

- Show her what you know.
- Ask her questions.
- Give her clear answers.
- Help her to use what she has learned.
- Encourage her to try new things.
- Encourage her to find solutions to her problems.
- Praise her.

Parents have the greatest impact on their child's development, especially in the first few years of life. You will feel confident about the job you are doing when you see your child grow and develop. And remember that fathers can bond just as closely with their kids as mothers do when they take care of them and participate in their upbringing. Growing up in a single-parent family does not harm a child's development, but it is best to have both male and female role models in a child's life.

Parents are not the only ones who play an important role in their children's development. Other adults in their life, as well as school and daycare staff, can have a positive effect. For example, make it a habit to take your child to your local library. Go to story hour together. Sign up for parent-child activities in your community.

By doing reading and writing activities together, you prepare your child to learn to read and write. This will increase her chances of doing well at school. In fact, reading and writing will help your child in all areas of classroom learning: math, geography, etc.

The activities you do together will help your child learn that reading and writing are useful and lots of fun!

What will you find in this book?

This book will tell you what you can expect as your child grows. For each different age it gives the following guidelines:

- a general description of your child’s behaviour
- information about what your child is able to do
- suggestions for activities you can do with your child to help her develop
- tips to help your child:
 - develop language skills
 - get ready to learn to read and write
 - develop a love of reading
 - enjoy stories
- details about the next stage in your child’s development

Use the “Does your baby...?” or “Does your child...?” section to record what your child is already doing. If you have questions about anything, write a note under “Your comments” so you can ask a CSSS worker, doctor or other resource person.¹

Have fun!

¹ CSSS = Centre de santé et de services sociaux (health and social services centre). Your CLSC is part of the CSSS.

Your child and other children...²

Remember, just like other children, your child:

- needs to feel loved and to be cuddled and held
- needs to eat healthy foods
- needs to feel accepted
- needs to be listened to and shown respect
- has the right to make mistakes
- needs to learn at his own pace
- needs to explore his surroundings in safety
- has the right to grow up without being judged
- has the right to freedom from physical, psychological, verbal and sexual abuse
- needs to live in peace and dignity, surrounded by love

All these needs and rights can be fulfilled and respected by Mom and Dad.

You and other parents...

Remember that, as moms and dads, you too:

- need to feel loved
- need your privacy
- have the right to feel tired
- need respect
- have the right to make mistakes
- have the right to get help if you are tired or having a hard time
- need rest

Let's get started!

² Based on the *Charte des droits des enfants* (Longueuil: Carrefour Mousseau, 1990).

What to expect

Your baby reacts to the sound of your voice. Don't be afraid to talk to her and take her in your arms often.

She expresses her needs through different types of crying. You can tell if she's hungry or thirsty, tired or afraid.

It's best to feed her and put her to bed at regular times. She needs to have a routine.

Your baby needs to feel secure and loved. Your baby is getting to know you and you are getting to know her. You are learning to love each other.

Does your baby:

	✓	Age
• cry		
– when she's hungry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– when she's tired?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– when she wants to be held?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– when her diaper needs changing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– for other reasons?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• lift her head when she's lying on her stomach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• hold on to your fingers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• move more than when she was just born?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• turn her head toward you when you talk to her?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Remember, no two babies are the same. Yours may do things a little earlier or later than indicated in these guidelines.

Things you can do with your baby

- Talk to your baby often and in a soft voice while nursing her or giving her a bottle, giving her a bath or changing her diaper. Tell her what you are doing and name the parts of her body.
- As often as you can, give your baby her bath at the same time of day. Sing to her afterward.
- Introduce your baby to the members of her family.
- Hold out your finger to your baby so that she can grasp it.
- Hold your baby in your arms. Take her on a tour of the house every now and then.
- Go for a walk with your baby outside.
- Let your other children share in the experience of getting to know the new baby.

Don't forget that moms and dads may take a different approach to parenting. Each parent has his or her own way of doing things. It is important to trust yourself.

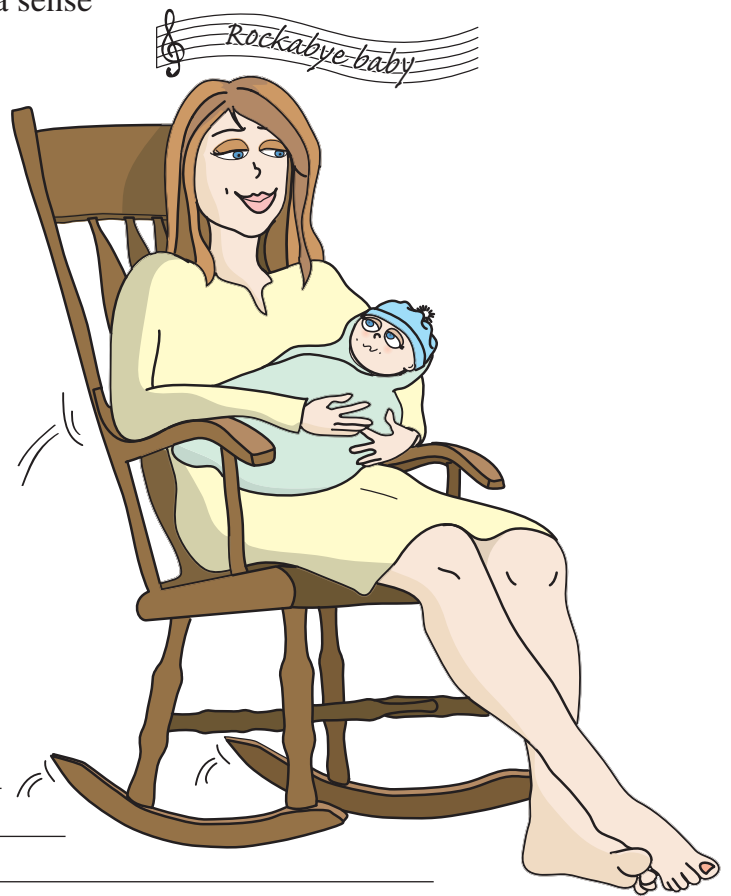
Things to keep in mind

- Your baby can hear you and see you. She has a sense of smell and taste. She recognizes you. Observe your baby closely.
- Your baby likes to hear your voice. Call things by their proper name when you talk to her. For example, say "train," not "choo-choo."

Soon

- Your baby will respond to pictures in a book.
- Your baby will make sounds more clearly.
- Your baby will explore objects by putting them in her mouth.
- Your baby will show interest in the things and people around her (toys, visitors).
- Your baby will show you that she loves you.

Your comments



What to expect

Your baby responds to pictures in a book.

He can hold a bath book.

He vocalizes sounds. He likes to hear your voice.

Your baby sleeps less. He moves more. He recognizes his family.

Your baby tries to roll onto his back. He turns his head away when he's had enough milk.

Your baby is finding his place. He has his habits and likes routine.

Does your baby:

	✓	Age
• respond to pictures in a book?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• vocalize sounds		
– in his bed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– when you talk to him?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• roll over		
– onto his back?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– onto his stomach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• want to sit up (with help)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• recognize the members of his family and smile at them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• calm down		
– when you talk to him softly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– when you touch him gently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• like		
– certain toys?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– certain places in the house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– certain songs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• play with a rattle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• look at the things he touches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• put things in his mouth?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• follow an object with his eyes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Remember, no two babies are the same. Yours may do things a little earlier or later than indicated in these guidelines.

Things you can do with your baby

- Look at picture books together. Pick sturdy books.
- Talk softly and often to your baby — when you are cooking or doing housework. It's best to call things by their proper name.
- Play with your baby by repeating the sounds he vocalizes.
- Encourage your baby to vocalize other sounds.
- Play “peekaboo” with your baby.
- Every day, lay your baby on his stomach on a blanket or put him in a baby seat and play with him.
- Hand him a rattle, plastic toy, etc.
- Take your baby for a walk outdoors.

Don't forget that moms and dads may take a different approach to parenting. Each parent has his or her own way of doing things. It is important to trust yourself.

Things to keep in mind

- Your baby needs you in order to learn how to talk. He needs you, your love, your gentle care, your attention, your encouragement and your praise in order to develop. You are everything to him.

Soon

- Your baby will respond to the nursery rhymes you sing.
- Your baby will imitate sounds.
- Your baby will express himself by crying and gesturing (e.g. reaching for something he wants).
- Your baby will produce sounds resembling syllables (e.g. “ma,” “ba,” “pa”) or babble (e.g. “gagaga”).
- Your baby will be more curious.



Your comments

What to expect

Your baby likes to look at books with you and to touch them.

She babbles or produces syllables (e.g. “ma,” “ba,” “pa”).

Your baby is more active and is on the move. She laughs. She needs encouragement.

Your baby is sometimes afraid of strangers. She needs you to reassure her.

Your baby is sensitive. She can tell whether you are happy or sad. She loves you very much.

Does your baby:

	✓	Age
• hold a small book in her hands by herself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• babble or produce syllables (e.g. “ma,” “ba,” “pa”)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• react when she hears her name?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• hold objects in her hands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• move around by		
– dragging herself on her stomach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– crawling on all fours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• like to lie on her stomach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• sit up on her own?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• react to strangers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• hold out her arms when she sees you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Remember, no two babies are the same. Yours may do things a little earlier or later than indicated in these guidelines.

Things you can do with your baby

- Show your baby pictures in a book, magazine or catalogue. Describe the pictures: “brown bear,” “the duck goes quack quack.”
- Imitate the sounds and gestures your baby makes and give her time to respond.
- Let your baby explore the room you are in. Tell her the names of everyday objects.
- Let your baby pick up small pieces of food.
- Go outside with your baby and describe your surroundings: noises, objects, colours, animals that attract your attention.

Don't forget that moms and dads may take a different approach to parenting. Each parent has his or her own way of doing things. It is important to trust yourself.

Things to keep in mind

- It's important to say “good girl!” or “again!” and to have fun with her and laugh at the funny things she does. Encourage her to try new things.
- Your baby likes the sound of your voice. Talk to her at mealtime, during her bath or when you play with her. It's best to call things by their proper name.
- You will need to babyproof your home to make it safe. Your baby can get around fast.
- Your baby has talents. Help her to develop them. Encourage her to try new things.

Soon

- Your baby will enjoy touching paper and crumpling it.
- Your baby will recognize the pictures in her favourite book.
- Your baby will be able to say “Mama” and “Dada.”
- Your baby will need to understand that there are limits, that some things are not allowed. You will have to remind her over and over again and try to distract her with other activities that are allowed.



Your comments

What to expect

Your baby recognizes pictures in books and catalogues.

Your baby imitates you. He gives kisses. He waves “bye-bye.”

Your baby still expresses himself by squealing, crying and making gestures.

Your baby may understand a few familiar words from the gestures you make and the tone of your voice.

Your baby may say his first word (e.g. “Mama,” “Dada”).

Does your baby:

	✓	Age
• recognize pictures in books?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• crumple paper with his hands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• tear paper with his hands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• say “Mama” or “Dada”?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• hand you objects when asked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• grasp an object firmly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• shake his head “no”?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• crawl on all fours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• stand, with help?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• clap his hands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• like to be hugged and kissed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• fill and empty containers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• stack large objects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• make googoo eyes at you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Some children have more energy than others and just never seem to stay still. This is perfectly normal. **It is in their nature** to keep moving. It doesn't necessarily mean they will be hyperactive later on. Under the age of 4, it is hard to tell whether a child is hyperactive or simply lively and full of energy. It takes an assessment by a qualified professional to determine whether a child is hyperactive.

Things you can do with your baby

- Look at books and catalogues with your baby. Point to objects and name them.
- Name the objects that your baby sees, points at or touches.
- Repeat the sounds and words your baby says.
- Name the different parts of the face as you point to them.
- Play children’s music for your baby.
- Encourage your baby to wave “hello” and “bye-bye” and to clap his hands.
- Let your baby eat with his fingers while sitting in his highchair.
- Roll a ball toward your baby.
- Give him blocks to play with and containers to fill and empty.

Things to keep in mind

- It’s good to talk to your baby often, to listen to him and to imitate the sounds he makes.
- Your baby understands certain rules. Tell him what he is not allowed to do. You will have to be patient and repeat the same things over and over.
- It is important to keep an eye on your baby. He can get around fast. You must babyproof his environment.

Soon

- Your baby will enjoy bedtime stories.
- Your baby will be able to turn the pages of a book or catalogue.
- Your baby will point at people and familiar objects.
- Your baby will hold a crayon.
- Your baby will take his first steps.

Your comments



What to expect

Your baby is becoming more coordinated. She can hold a crayon, stack blocks, turn the pages of a board book, etc. She understands what you say and is starting to talk.

Your baby is changing a lot. She is beginning to walk and moves around fast. She explores the house and is discovering the world.

Lots of things attract your baby, but she quickly loses interest. She likes to touch, smell, hear and see new things. This is normal.

Starting at 12 months, a child's attention span is usually around five times her age. Thus a 1-year-old can focus on a single task for about 5 minutes (1 year x 5 = 5 minutes).

Does your baby:

- name familiar people and objects in pictures (e.g. "Dada," "bird," "cat")?
- scribble on paper?
- point to parts of the face when asked?
- understand "yes" and "no"?
- imitate animal sounds (e.g. cat, dog)?
- imitate other sounds (e.g. a siren)?
- say "bye-bye"?
- put things in a box?
- open drawers and cupboard doors?
- do simple jigsaw puzzles?
- find an object that is hidden nearby?
- like certain objects?
- give kisses?



Age

Things you can do with your baby

- Give your baby books, magazines and catalogues.
- Name the pictures that your baby looks at or points to. Ask your baby to show you certain objects.
- Do simple jigsaw puzzles with your baby. Play with blocks and bowls.
- Draw with crayons.
- At the grocery store, have your baby sit facing you and describe everything you do. Name the objects that are near you.
- Play children’s songs for your baby.
- Sing nursery rhymes to your baby.
- Teach your baby to say her age. Teach her to show how old she is with her fingers.
- Say “good girl!” and “again!” often to your baby. Clap your hands to encourage her.

Don’t forget that moms and dads may take a different approach to parenting. Each parent has his or her own way of doing things. It is important to trust yourself.

Things to keep in mind

- Your baby learns a lot from you. It’s best to call things by their proper name (e.g. “bottle” not “baba”). Let her imitate you if she wants to.
- Parents are their child’s best teachers. A child who is well cared for learns fast. A child who is loved and who is offered stimulation and support is a confident child.
- Your baby will grow attached to certain objects (e.g. a blanket, teddy bear, toy). She needs this. It’s all right to let her have it.
- It’s a good idea to find a safe spot where your baby can play alone. This will give you a few minutes to get things done without having to worry about her.

Soon

- Your baby will imitate what you say and do.
- Your baby will become even more interested in books.
- Your baby will correctly use words and expressions that she hears often.

Your comments



What to expect

With effort, your child can turn the pages of a book and point at the pictures.

He can point out an object when you ask him to. He likes to hum. He can follow simple instructions like, "Give me the ball."

Your child is developing. He adores you and needs to spend time doing things with you. He also needs to experience things on his own, though. He is eager for challenges that he can handle and wants to practise what he knows. He learns by repeating the same actions over and over.

He is very curious and energetic. He is attracted by objects. He likes to touch them, look at them, hide them and then find them again. He is eager to learn.

Your child understands that there are limits and that some things aren't allowed. He understands "no," but you have to repeat it often.

Generally, a child between the ages of 1 and 2 can focus on a single task for about 5 minutes.

Does your child:

	✓	Age
• look at pictures in a book by himself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• name the pictures he sees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• tell his age		
– by showing the right number of fingers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– by saying it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• point to parts of his face or body when asked to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• repeat the words he hears?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• understand short sentences?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• throw a ball and go get it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• open boxes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• make a tower by stacking big blocks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• do jigsaw puzzles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• help you		
– dress him?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– undress him?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Remember, no two children are the same. Yours may do things a little earlier or later than indicated in these guidelines.

Things you can do with your child

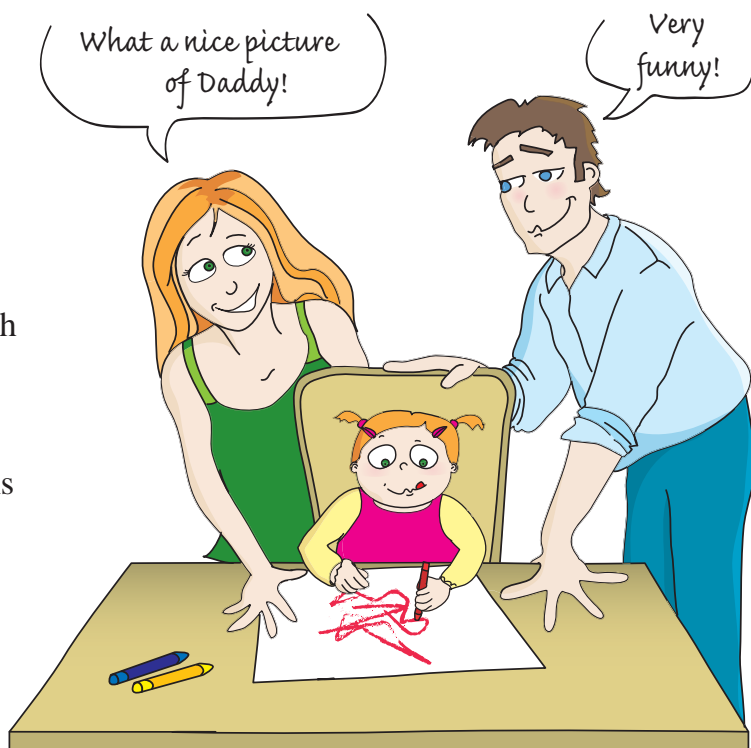
- Do simple drawings with your child: the sun, smiley faces, pussycats. Encourage him to draw by himself. Give him crayons and paper.
- Read to your child from the same picture book every night at bedtime. He will learn new words this way and will also have a chance to show you what he knows.
- Ask your child questions about the pictures in books. Name the colours, animals and objects that you see.
- Ask your child to hold the book and to turn the pages.
- Name the things your child points at. It is best to call things by their proper name. Do this activity often.
- Play with your child at dropping small objects in a bottle.
- Play hide-and-seek with your child.

Things to keep in mind

- Your child needs you. He likes to play and talk with you, and this gives him a chance to learn the things he needs to know.
- It's normal for your child to show anger and frustration. He still loves you—he is just trying out his independence. Explain to him, in simple words, why certain things like hitting, biting and throwing things are not allowed, even though he may not get it right away.

Soon

- Your child will ask for his favourite story at bedtime.
- Your child will scribble more and more.
- Your child will imitate you when you write.
- Your child will start to say “no” a lot.
- Your child will have short conversations with you.
- Your child will ask you for things you can't possibly agree to. You will have to say “no” sometimes. Don't worry. That's how he learns that there are limits, and this is an important lesson.



Your comments

What to expect

Your child can get her favourite book from her reading corner.

Your child likes discovering the books at the library.

Your child is more independent. She says “no” a lot. This is normal, so be prepared to be patient. Your child isn’t being bad: she’s just asserting herself.

Your child is learning the importance and the power of words.

Does your child:

	✓	Age
• turn the pages of a book easily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• use crayons?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• scribble, draw straight lines and circles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• use one hand more often		
– her right hand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– her left hand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know how to amuse herself for longer than five minutes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• get her toys to talk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• imitate sounds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• sing to herself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• pretend to talk on the telephone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• call people she knows by their first name?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• push or pull objects along?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• sit down on her own on a child-sized chair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• stack four blocks on her own?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• have a favourite book or toy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Some children have more energy than others and just never seem to stay still. This is perfectly normal. **It is in their nature** to keep moving. It doesn’t necessarily mean they will be hyperactive later on. Under the age of 4, it is hard to tell whether a child is hyperactive or simply lively and full of energy. It takes an assessment by a qualified professional to determine whether a child is hyperactive.

Things you can do with your child

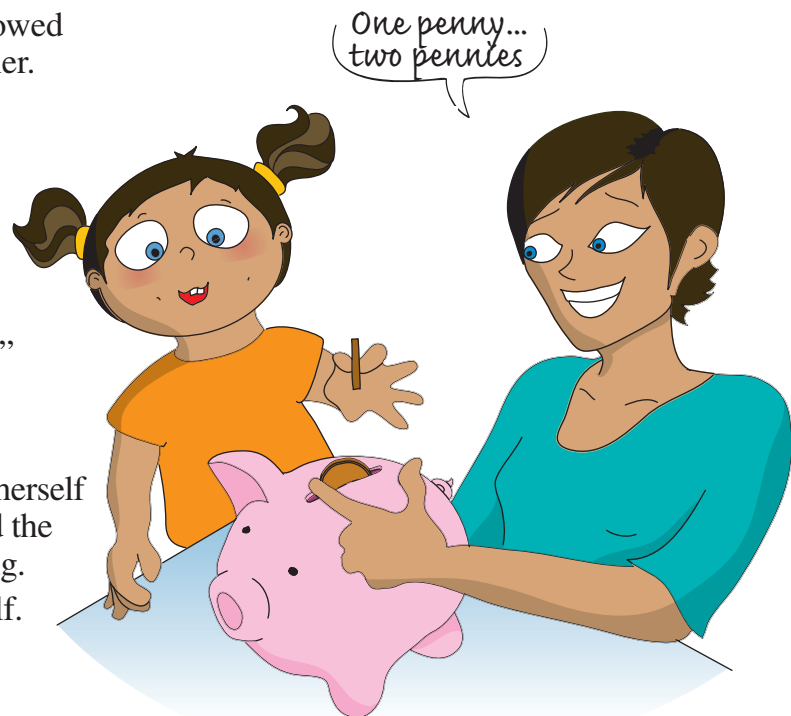
- Read simple stories to your child. Ask her to turn the pages. Give her a chance to say the words she knows (“Where’s the duck? In the bathtub!”) Ask her to match a picture with a word.
- Take your child to the library. Choose books for yourself and let her pick out a book too.
- Draw and colour with your child.
- Write your child’s name on her bedroom door in big letters.
- Play with your child at putting pennies in a piggy bank. This will help her learn to handle small objects.
- Talk with your child at mealtime. Name the foods on her plate. Give her a chance to ask for what she wants and fill in any missing words. (If she says “Want water,” ask her, “Do you want some water?”)
- Teach your child how to wash her hands and brush her teeth.
- Take your child to the park. Making sure that she is safe, let her run, play on the swings, go down the slide, play in the sand, etc.

Things to keep in mind

- Self-assertion is an important stage in your child’s development. Give her opportunities to choose between two things (e.g. toys, books). For instance, when you are dressing her, let her choose between two tops. (“Do you want to wear your red T-shirt or your yellow T-shirt?”)
- Your child needs guidelines:
 - It’s good to set limits, to always say “no” to the same things and to correct inappropriate behaviour. Your child will learn what is allowed and what isn’t allowed. This will reassure her.
 - It’s also important to acknowledge your child’s good qualities and to praise her. This will make her feel loved.

Soon

- Her vocabulary will get a lot bigger.
- She will put two words together: “Dada gone.”
- She will be able to follow a simple story.
- She will be able to tell you her age.
- Your child may have tantrums. She may assert herself one minute and be the sweetest kid in the world the next. Her personality and character are emerging.
- Your child will want to do everything by herself. At other times, she will want help.



Your comments

Let's talk about...

Disciplining your child

Your child needs love, but he also needs limits. It's your role as a parent to establish rules and set limits.

Help your child respect rules by doing the following:

- Give clear instructions.
- Use a firm but pleasant tone of voice.
- Be consistent. **The message should be short and precise.** For example, "Leave the ball outside."

Set an example. Your child understands better when there is a connection between what you say and what you do. For instance, "I don't want my child to swear so I'm careful not to use bad words myself."

The younger the child, the shorter his attention span and memory will be. That is why you have to repeat the same instructions over and over again before he remembers them.

Some children are more excited and active than others. It is a question of temperament. This is more often the case with boys than with girls. With these children, you go about setting limits in the same way, but you have to be more patient.

Your child does not learn from physical punishment and shouting. Instead, reward good behaviour, stop inappropriate behaviour and don't pay too much attention to it.

If necessary, when and how should a child be punished?

Before the age of 2, a child can't really make the connection between his behaviour and the punishment (consequence).

There are many ways to show your disapproval:

- Tell your child right away that you don't like what he did and keep your cool.
- Always use the same words ("I don't want you to . . .").
- Show your child that there are more appropriate behaviours.

If your child does the same thing again:

- Give him a time-out by having him sit on a chair for two or three minutes. Always use the same chair in the same spot.

If your child doesn't stop:

- Take him to his room and leave him there to think about things for two or three minutes.
- When the time is up, tell your child again why he was punished (given a consequence). Show him that he can correct his behaviour. Explain that **you are unhappy about what he did, not unhappy with him.**

Your child will learn if the message is clear and consistent.

If you were too harsh (it happens to everyone), tell your child. He will understand, even if he is only 2 years old.

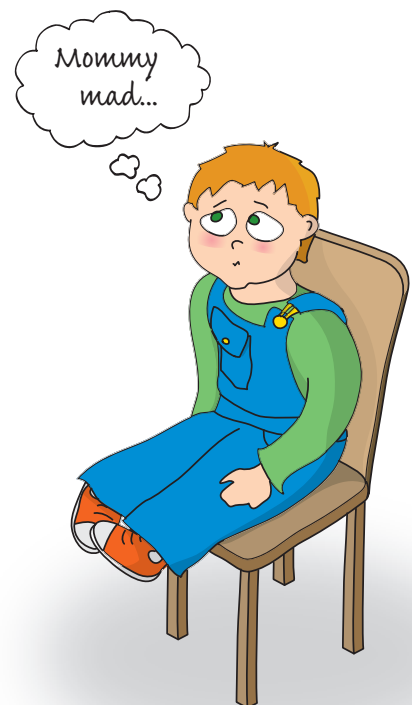
It's important to give your child credit for his good behaviour. Say things like "You're such a good boy!" When punished too often, children become aggressive and think that they are bad.

What about spanking?³

It's best not to hit your child because:

- He may think that it's okay to hit anyone who doesn't behave the way he wants.
- He may think that it's okay to hit someone who's smaller.
- He may become afraid of the person who hit him and not love that person anymore.
- He may become afraid of adults.

Spanking is often done out of anger. Find another way to discipline your child. For example, have him sit on a chair or send him to his room.



³ Based on the parenting program *Nobody's Perfect* (Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada, 1988).

Let's talk about...

Helping your child to manage stress

Children experience stress too, and some feel it more than others. For example, the sound of a TV that is always on, especially if it is loud, may bother them. Or they may be sensitive to tone of voice and react badly when their parents argue. Other children may witness violence between their parents, which is very stressful for them.

When your child is under too much stress, she may not be able to concentrate or learn. She may also be less motivated and have problems getting along with others. Your toddler may act out her stress through undesirable behaviours like crying, shouting, biting and hitting.

If your child is under 3 you can rock her, read her a story or rub her back to help her calm down. If she is over 3, you can teach her ways of venting her emotions by relaxing, taking deep breaths and stretching, as described below in the activity **Cloud Push**. You can also do other activities that she enjoys and that make her feel better. This will help her discover better ways, like dancing, to manage her stress. These strategies will be useful to her for the rest of her life.

Relaxation techniques are a good way to manage stress. As you know, parents are a child's main role models, and your child copies your behaviour often and in different situations. When you relax or engage in physical activity you show your child how to relieve her stress and feel better.

Cloud Push⁴

This activity encourages you to stretch and relieve tense muscles.

Stand up straight. Put your hands on your hips.

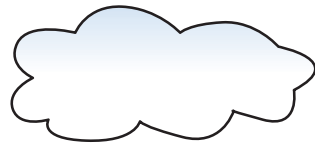
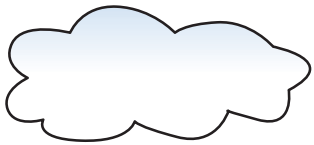
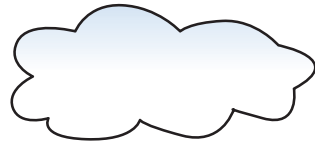
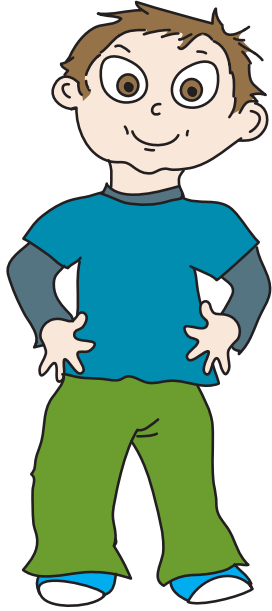
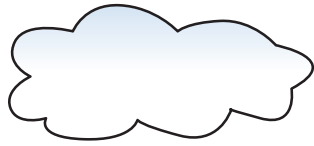
Raise one arm over your head as high as you can. Try to reach a cloud and push it away. Really stretch.

Then, bring your arm down slowly and stretch the other arm the same way.

Then raise both arms over your head at the same time. Clasp your hands, turning your palms to the sky and push the clouds up. Then slowly bring your arms back down to your sides.

Repeat two or three times.

⁴ Based on the *Kids Have Stress Too!* program (Toronto: Psychology Foundation of Canada, 2004). To see a demonstration of **Cloud Push**, go to <http://www.psychologyfoundation.org/resourceMedia.php>. Click on "Stress reduction activities." [Accessed April 28, 2011.]



What to expect

Your child is talking a lot. He likes being read to. He likes to talk about the characters in the story with you. He is learning new words and is starting to make sentences.

He is getting more interested in drawing. He tells you about his pictures. He likes to hang them on the wall.

He still expresses himself by throwing tantrums, crying and laughing. He can say more and more words.

Your child is asserting himself. He often tells you, “I can do it by myself.” He likes to do small chores.

Your child watches you and does as you do. He copies his brothers and sisters. He says “no” often. He is centred on himself. He does not want to share his toys.

Generally, a child between the ages of 2 and 2½ can focus on a single task for about 10 minutes.

Does your child:

	✓	Age
• point to things in books and name them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• choose books at the library?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• understand the meaning of		
– go up/go down?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– inside/outside?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
– turn the page?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• understand certain requests (e.g. “Please go sit down.”)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• ask simple questions (e.g. “Where baby?”)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• play longer with the same toy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• stack four to seven blocks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Things you can do with your child

- Read the same story to your child over and over. Get him to say the words that come up often (e.g. the name of a person in the story or of the person's dog).
- Set up a reading corner for your child.
- Include your child in family reading and writing activities (e.g. reading the newspaper, writing letters).
- Draw pictures with your child (e.g. of the sun, of a house).
- Teach your child how to use kids' safety scissors.
- Teach your child songs (e.g. "The Farmer in the Dell").
- Tell your child what colour things are (e.g. "The apple is red." "The shirt is blue.").
- When you're out with your child, read him the names that you see on street signs and store signs.
- Point out the first letter of his name when you see it in books, on cereal boxes, etc.

Don't forget that moms and dads may take a different approach to parenting. Each parent has his or her own way of doing things. It is important to trust yourself.

Things to keep in mind

- When your child sees you read he gets the message that reading is useful. Read often, and encourage your family to read, too: magazines, newspapers, flyers, etc.
- Your child needs rules. When he behaves badly, explain to him what he has done wrong. Make him understand that it is his behaviour you don't like and not him personally.
- Your child needs encouragement. Let him know that you are proud of him and that he is good. A child who feels loved and who is offered stimulation and support is a confident child.

Soon

- Your child will reject rules more and more. This is normal. His anger isn't aimed at you.
- Your child will pretend to write.
- Your child will have fun imitating the voices and sounds of some of the characters in his books.
- Your child will charm you with the songs he sings.
- Your child will learn to express what he wants using words, not anger.

Your comments



What to expect

Your child can take part in reading stories. She can guess words, sounds and sentences. She can answer simple questions about the stories that you read to her.

Your child is becoming independent. She understands routine instructions. She chatters. She continues to learn new words.

Your child is discovering that the things she does have an effect on her parents and the people around her. She likes to be with other children. She enjoys spending time with family (e.g. aunts and uncles, grandparents).

Your child is applying everything she has learned so far. You can see what you have taught her.

Does your child:

	✓	Age
• recognize familiar symbols (e.g. a stop sign, a restaurant logo)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• like to go to the library?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• look at a book the right way up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• turn the pages of a book one at a time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know the top of a page from the bottom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• look at books on her own?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• play by herself for more than 10 minutes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• recognize at least four colours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• tell you the things she has seen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• form sentences with two, three or four words?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• talk to herself when she plays?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• play by herself often?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• get dressed and undressed by herself?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• put away her toys?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Remember, no two children are the same. Yours may do things a little earlier or later than indicated in these guidelines.

Things you can do with your child

- Read a book with your child. Run your finger under the words, from left to right. Use certain expressions (e.g. “at the bottom of the page,” “at the top of the page,” and “on the left”). Let your child guess the ending of the story.
- Make cookies with your child, reading the recipe out loud. Explain to her what you’re doing.
- Write e-mails to family or friends with your child.
- Encourage your child to talk on the phone with friends or her grandparents.
- Frequently ask your child to tell you her first name, last name and age.
- Play with building toys with your child.
- Introduce your child to playing cards. Ask her to name the colours and to sort the cards in order. This will help her learn her numbers.
- Help your child to express what she understands and feels.
- Take your child to the library, community centre and other places.

Things to keep in mind

- Your child needs to ask questions. It’s good to repeat the answers often. This will help her learn new words and makes her feel important.
- Your child is developing at a very rapid rate. She is absorbing a lot of information that will help her do well at school.
- Your child needs to do things on her own. Let her try to do them and praise her efforts.

Soon

- Your child will be able to say what she wants, using short sentences.
- Your child will know the difference between a drawing and a word.
- Your child will make up stories. She will include you in her games. She will pretend to be different characters. You can play with her. She learns a lot through these games.
- Your child will be calmer.
- Your child will be able to participate better in group activities.

Your comments



Let's talk about...

Encouraging your child's language development⁵

It's important to listen to your child and to answer him. He has his own way of saying things. This is normal—he's learning.

When your child makes a mistake, don't correct him or make him repeat the right answer. Instead reply, using the right word or sentence. Don't give him the impression that he has made a mistake. Consider the examples below.

Your child says a word wrong

Child: I want a *aminal* cracker.

Adult: Ah! You want an animal cracker.

Child: Look, a *pider*!

Adult: Yes, there's a spider!

Your child uses the wrong word

Child at zoo: Look at the pussycat.

Adult: It's a lion. You know, it's much bigger than a pussycat.

Child: The little dog is shouting.

Adult: Yes, the little dog is barking.

Your child uses the wrong verb form

Child: I goed there.

Adult: Ah, you went there, did you?

⁵ Guy Labelle and Roland Pelchat, *L'intervention langagière*.

How to increase your child's vocabulary

Look at a picture book together.

Child: A cat.

Adult: Yes, a cat sleeping in a basket.

Or perhaps:

Child: A cat.

Adult: Yes, a cat.

Adult: What is the cat doing?

Child: She's sleeping.

Adult: Yes, the cat is sleeping on her pillow.

Things to avoid⁶

Your child may feel frustrated if

- he asks a question and doesn't get an answer
- he is told to be quiet
- he asks a question and gets an answer that doesn't make sense

Child at zoo: Do tigers bite?

Adult: Look at the bird!

- he gets the impression that how he says something is more important than what he says

⁶ Paule Aimard, *L'enfant et son langage* (Villeurbanne: Simep, 1982), 55.

What to expect

Your child may ask questions about the content of a story or the meaning of certain words.

Your child may pick up reading strategies. For example, he may follow along with his finger as the words of a story are read to him.

Your child likes to choose books at the library.

Your child makes up stories and plays make-believe. He tells you about his adventures and is discovering the world through play.

Your child is very curious and asks lots of questions. He can make longer sentences and is learning new words.

Generally, a child between the ages of 3 and 4 can focus on a single task for about 15 to 20 minutes.

Does your child:

	✓	Age
• tell the end of a familiar story?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know the difference between a drawing and a word?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• “write” messages?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• use children’s safety scissors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• draw stick figures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know his colours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• use new words?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know how to ask questions (“Where?”, “When?”, “Why?”)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• say his first and last names?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know how to tell events in the right order?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• say what he is afraid of (e.g. the dark, certain animals)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Some children have more energy than others and just never seem to stay still. This is perfectly normal. *It is in their nature* to keep moving. It doesn’t necessarily mean they will be hyperactive later on. Under the age of 4, it is hard to tell whether a child is hyperactive or simply lively and full of energy. It takes an assessment by a qualified professional to determine whether a child is hyperactive.

Things you can do with your child

- Set up a special corner for your child with books, jigsaw puzzles, crayons, paper, old magazines, etc.
- Ask your child to describe a character based on a picture (e.g. the colour of the character's hair, how he or she is dressed, how he or she is feeling).
- Ask your child to describe the pictures in a catalogue.
- Ask your child to help you make a grocery list ("So I don't forget anything").
- Write your child's first name on his drawings and hang them on the wall.
- Ask your child to get undressed and to put on certain clothes without help.
- Ask your child to put an object somewhere (e.g. "inside," "behind," "beside" another object).

Things to keep in mind

- Your child likes to do things with you. You can cook together, fold laundry, set the table or tidy his room together. It's good to show him why it is important to finish what he starts. Remember to thank him for his help. You are his teacher and, in his eyes, the most important person in the world.
- When your child turns 4, you can enroll him in kindergarten for 4-year-olds or the Passe-Partout program, if it is offered by your school board.
- Educational games in electronic format or on the computer can help children become familiar with reading and writing.

Soon

- Your child will hold a crayon properly, between thumb and index finger and resting on his middle finger.
- Your child will be able to colour without going outside the lines of his drawings.
- Your child will be able to copy a few numbers and letters.
- Your child will be able to tell a story to someone else.
- Your child will be able to have a real conversation with you.



Your comments

What to expect

Your child may be able to identify 10 objects in a picture.

Your child knows her first and last names as well as her parents' names.

Your child is strongly attracted by anything new. She asks lots of questions. She listens and uses words.

Your child may switch from laughing one minute to crying the next. She still has difficulty controlling her emotions.

Generally, a child between the ages of 4 and 5 can focus on a single task for about 20 to 25 minutes.

Does your child:

	✓	Age
• enjoy going to story hour at the library?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• learn her favourite stories by heart?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• tell the story in one of her books to someone else?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• pick out the types of food she likes in flyers and name them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• recognize certain logos?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know that you read from left to right and from top to bottom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• hold a crayon properly between thumb and index finger?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know how to draw an X?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• cut out simple shapes (e.g. circle, square, triangle) with children's safety scissors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• know the names of the different coins?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• make sentences with 5 to 6 words?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• put coins in a piggy bank?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
• enjoy doing group activities with other children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Things you can do with your child

- Help your child make her own storybook with coloured cardboard, sheets of paper folded in half and stapled. Your child can draw or glue pictures in the book while she tells you her story.
- Play “Tell me a story” based on pictures in a magazine.
- Play “Restaurant.” You are the customer and your child is the waiter. She pretends to write down your order by scribbling on a piece of paper.
- Play Snakes and Ladders.
- Display her drawings and paintings on the fridge or a bulletin board.
- Look at a photo album. Ask her to name the people in the photos and say what they’re doing.
- Play “Simon says.”
- Play a matching game to improve her concentration and visual memory.

Things to keep in mind

- Your child needs you to answer her questions.
- Your child needs you to let her do things by herself (e.g. brushing her teeth without help). This helps her become independent.
- Your child needs your attention and encouragement when she does something well. This helps her develop self-esteem.
- Your child is ready for kindergarten.

Soon

- Your child will be able to follow a story without pictures.
- Your child will recognize and be able to say her numbers from 1 to 9.
- Your child will be able to fold a piece of paper diagonally.
- Your child will know her left from her right and be able to point to different parts of her body.
- Your child will be able to learn her address, phone number and birthdate.



Your comments

Let's talk about...

Preparing your child to go to school

At school, your child will gradually make the transition from a world based on the imagination to one based on reason.

He will need certain skills to adapt well to school life.

He knows how to get dressed by himself, but needs help fastening certain articles of clothing. He puts his shoes on the right feet. He feeds himself and can even cut his meat and vegetables with his knife. He wipes himself after going to the toilet. He can blow his nose properly.

He knows a lot of numbers. He is learning his phone number. He can hold a book properly and knows that you read from left to right and from top to bottom. He knows his left from his right and can hold a pencil properly. He is learning to write his name.

He is used to books and knows what to do with them.

He cooperates with other children in activities and games. He can follow instructions. He can deal with frustration more easily.

He is familiar with the purpose of everyday objects: you sit on a chair; you eat with a fork. He recognizes objects or patterns of objects that are the same or different. He tries to solve problems.

He knows other adults. But it's you he will need to help him with his homework. He will need your encouragement. He will be happy if you take an interest in his life. He will be proud if you participate in activities at his school.



Encouraging a love of reading and writing in your child

It's at home that your child will learn to enjoy books and reading. There are simple things you can do to spark her interest. You can become her guide to the world of books.

- Let your child see you reading regularly.
- Read aloud from newspapers and magazines, product labels, recipes, etc.
- Show your child the pictures on cereal boxes, yogurt containers and cans and explain what they mean.
- Set up a reading and writing corner for your child, complete with books, magazines, paper, pencils, crayons, a writing board and puzzles.
- Give your child books as presents.
- Read aloud to your child as you write. Explain what a grocery list and a cheque are.
- Encourage your child to “write” then ask her to tell you what she has written.
- When you're out and about, read signs and say the names of stores.
- Go to the library as a family. Ask for help choosing age-appropriate books for your child. Let her choose some too.
- Encourage your child to play educational electronic or computer games that promote reading and writing readiness.

Let's read a story...

It is good to read to your child regularly. He learns many things by listening to you and watching you read. He learns that you read from left to right, and from top to bottom. He gradually learns to concentrate and to pay attention. He also learns new words. He learns to build sentences. He learns how to describe something that happens.

With you, your child also discovers the joy of reading. She plays with words and images. She imitates characters. She guesses the ending of a story.

It is good to read books that are geared to your child's age. The library staff can help you choose. Gradually increase your reading time. At the beginning, read for a few minutes. Slowly work your way up to 20 minutes or more. Reading should be done in a relaxed environment.

In short, by reading with your child, you are helping him get ready to learn to read.

Tips

- Small children look at the pictures. They shriek with pleasure when they are enjoying something. Encourage your child and get her to notice the colours on the page and your tone of voice.
- As children get bigger, they may guess the words. They can describe the characters and even make up what happens next in a story. It's a good idea to ask your child questions.
- Read with expression in your voice. Emphasize new words and imitate the sounds made by animals and objects in the story.
- Read the same book over and over to your child. This will give her a chance to show you what she knows.
- As you read aloud, run your finger under the words.
- Focus on the pictures. Point at something and ask your child to name it. Repeat the word, pronouncing it carefully. Use the proper names for things, not baby talk ("blanket," not "blankie" or "binkie").
- You can also name the objects that your child points to and make connections with everyday objects around the house.
- Use the following words often: "page," "read," "book," "picture," "word," "sentence," "left," "right," "at the top," "at the bottom" and explain what they mean.

- Ask your child to turn the pages of the book.
- Have your child help tell the story. She will pay more attention that way. Stop reading every now and then and ask your child to finish the sentence (“And they lived...”).
- Ask your child to repeat the words that come up often or to act out part of the story or draw a picture of it.
- Ask your child to describe a character physically and emotionally. Give some examples.
- Your child can guess what happens next by looking at a picture. She can say why something happened.
- Ask your child to describe pictures and to tell a different story by looking at certain pictures.

Remember that big brothers and sisters can read a story to your child. This gives them a chance to practise and to be good role models.

If you have trouble reading, here are some options:

- Tell your child a story about something that really happened. She will enjoy hearing about her grandparents and her family history.
- Make up a story from the pictures in a book.
- Listen to audiobooks with your child.

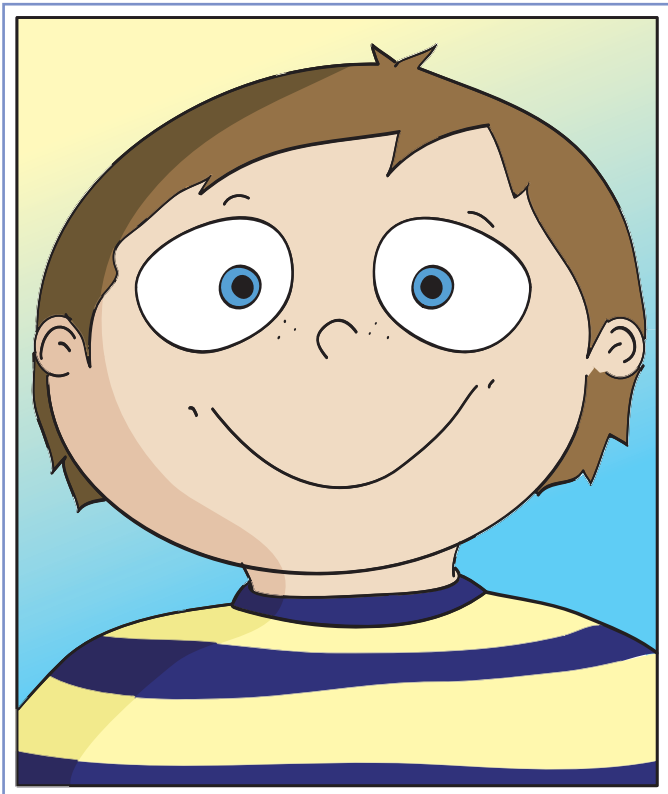
Local resources

Your local community organizations can provide you with more information.

	Contact Person	Telephone Number	Suggested Activity
Library			
Adult education centre			
Childcare centre			
CSSS (health and social services centre)			

	Contact Person	Telephone Number	Suggested Activity
Elementary school			
Toy library			
Maison de la famille (family services centre)			
Literacy organization			

Portrait of a schoolchild



My name is:

Child's photo

Fill in the information with your child

I start school on: _____

The name of my school is: _____

At school, I want to learn: _____

My favourite books

Title

Author

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

My favourite time to read is: _____

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