

## Your baby at 2 months...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most babies do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

- Coos, makes gurgling sounds
- Turns head toward sounds

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

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

#### Movement/Physical Development

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

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

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

## Your baby at 4 months...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most babies do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

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

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Lets you know if she is happy or sad
- Responds to affection
- Reaches for toy with one hand
- Follows moving things with eyes from side to side
- Watches faces closely
- Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance

#### Movement/Physical Development

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

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

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

## Your baby at 6 months...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most babies do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

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

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

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

#### Movement/Physical Development

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

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

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

## Your baby at 9 months...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most babies do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

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

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

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

#### Movement/Physical Development

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

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

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

## Your child at 1 year...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most children do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

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

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing
- Finds hidden things easily
- Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named
- Copies gestures

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) continued

- Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair
- Bangs two things together
- Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container
- Lets things go without help
- Pokes with index (pointer) finger
- Follows simple directions like "pick up the toy"

#### Movement/Physical Development

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

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

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

## Your child at 18 months (1 1/2 years)...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most children do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Movement/Physical Development

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

#### Language/Communication

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

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

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

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

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



## Your child at 2 Years...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most children do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

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

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort shapes and colors
- Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books
- Plays simple make-believe games

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) continued

- Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- Might use one hand more than the other
- Follows two-step instructions such as "Pick up your toys and put them in the toy box."
- Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog

#### Movement/Physical Development

- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Begins to run
- Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- Walks up and down stairs holding on
- Throws ball overhand
- Makes or copies straight lines and circles

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

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

## Your child at 3 Years...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most children do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Says first name, age, and sex
- Names a friend
- Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

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

#### Movement/Physical Development

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

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

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

## Your child at 4 Years...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most children do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

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

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Names some colors and some numbers
- Understands the idea of counting
- Starts to understand time
- Remembers parts of a story
- Understands the idea of "same" and "different"

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) continued

- Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts
- Uses scissors
- Starts to copy some capital letters
- Plays board or card games
- Tells you what he thinks is going to happen next in a book

#### Movement/Physical Development

- Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds
- Catches a bounced ball most of the time
- Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food

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

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

## Your child at 5 Years...

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

### What most children do at this age:

#### Social/Emotional

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

#### Language/Communication

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

#### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

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

#### Movement/Physical Development

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

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

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



## Your Child at 6 - 8 Years...

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

### Developmental milestones:

#### Social/Emotional

Children in this age group might:

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

#### Thinking and Learning

Children in this age group might:

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

### Positive Parenting Tips

- Show affection for your child. Recognise their accomplishments.
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility—ask them to help with household tasks, such as setting the table.
- Talk with your child about respecting others. Encourage them to help people in need.
- Help your child set her own achievable goals—they will learn to take pride in themselves and rely less on approval or reward from others.
- Help your child learn patience by letting others go first or by finishing a task before going out to play.
- Encourage them to think about possible consequences before acting.
- Make clear rules and stick to them, such as how long your child can watch TV or when they have to go to bed. Be clear about what behaviour is okay and what is not okay.
- Do fun things together as a family, such as playing games, reading, and going to events in your community.
- Get involved with your child's school. Meet the teachers and staff and get to understand their learning goals and how you and the school can work together to help your child do well.
- Continue reading to your child. As your child learns to read, take turns reading to each other.
- Use discipline to guide and protect your child, rather than punishment to make them feel bad about themselves. Follow up any discussion about what not to do with a discussion of what to do instead.
- Praise your child for good behaviour. It's best to focus praise more on what your child does ("you worked hard to figure this out") than on traits she can't change ("you are smart").
- Support your child in taking on new challenges. Encourage them to solve problems, such as a disagreement with another child, on their own.
- Encourage your child to join school and community groups, such as a team sports, or to take advantage of volunteer opportunities.

## Your Child at 9 - 11 Years...

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

### Developmental milestones:

#### Social/Emotional

Children in this age group might:

- Start to form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships. It becomes more emotionally important to have friends, especially of the same sex.
- Experience more peer pressure.
- Become more aware of his or her body as puberty approaches.

#### Thinking and Learning

Children in this age group might:

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

### Positive Parenting Tips

- Spend time with your child. Talk with them about their friends, their accomplishments, and what challenges they will face.
- Be involved with your child's school. Go to school events; meet your child's teachers.
- Encourage your child to join school and community groups, such as a sports team, or to be a volunteer for a charity.
- Help your child develop their own sense of right and wrong. Talk with them about risky things friends might pressure them to do, like smoking or dangerous physical dares.
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility—involve your child in household tasks like cleaning and cooking. Talk with your child about saving and spending money wisely.
- Meet the families of your child's friends.
- Talk with your child about respecting others. Encourage them to help people in need. Talk with them about what to do when others are not kind or are disrespectful.
- Help your child set their own goals. Encourage them to think about skills and abilities they would like to have and about how to develop them.
- Make clear rules and stick to them. Talk with your child about what you expect from them (behaviour) when no adults are present. If you provide reasons for rules, it will help them to know what to do in most situations.
- Use discipline to guide and protect your child, instead of punishment to make them feel badly about themselves.
- When using praise, help your child think about their own accomplishments. Saying "you must be proud of yourself" rather than simply "I'm proud of you" can encourage your child to make good choices when nobody is around to praise them.
- Talk with your child about the normal physical and emotional changes of puberty.
- Encourage your child to read every day. Talk with them about their homework.
- Be affectionate and honest with your child, and do things together as a family.