

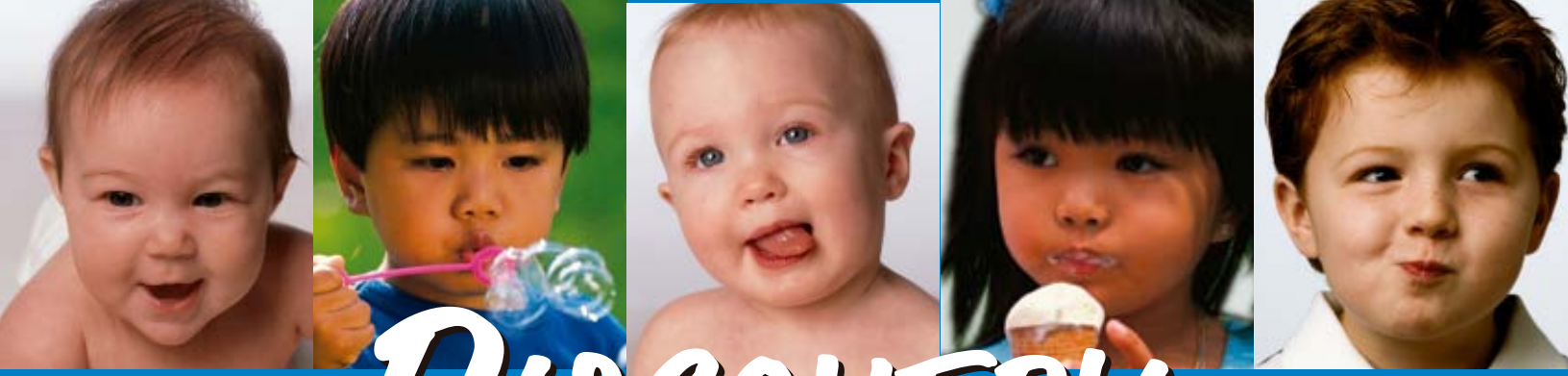


# DISCOVERY



Facilitating the Healthy  
Development of Children

0-6 YEARS



# DISCOVERY

## Behaviours & Activities for Children 0-6 Years

This document has been developed to help you in your new responsibility of effectively caring for children.

Children's behaviours and corresponding activities are framed in the context of age ranges. They are meant as a guideline to assist in the understanding of what is observed and promote healthy development.

Please refer to this document while planning to ensure that both you and the children benefit from your experience together.

# Contents

Behaviours & Activities for Children 0 – 6 Months	4-5
Behaviours & Activities for Children 6 – 12 Months	6-7
Behaviours & Activities for Children 12 – 18 Months	8-9
Behaviours & Activities for Children 18 – 24 Months	10-11
Behaviours & Activities for Children 24 – 36 Months	12-13
Behaviours & Activities for Children 3 – 4 years	14-15
Behaviours & Activities for Children 5 – 6 years	16-17
Bibliography	18

# Behaviours & Activities for Children

## 0-6 MONTHS

### Language Development

### Motor/Physical Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Responds to talk, tone of voice by babbling, cooing, etc.	Provide opportunities to sing lullabies, speak gently and read to baby.
Has favourite toys, places, people, etc.	
Cries.	
Turns towards sound.	
May imitate simple sound.	
Plays with own voice, repeats and tries sounds.	
Engages in reciprocal talk, babbles back at parents.	
Expresses needs and moods through variations in tone and intensity of crying.	

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Startles when touched unexpectedly.	Provide rattles that baby can grasp, durable non-toxic latex toys to chew on, teething rings, etc.
Will follow rattle with eyes for a short distance.	Vinyl covered crawling mats to roll and creep on.
Arms, legs, body move and wiggle at the same time.	When held in upright position, head should be supported.
Grasps finger when placed in hand.	activity centre where child can lie down or sit up provide and play with variety of attached toys.
Can bring fingers to mouth to suck.	
Turns to suck breast or bottle.	
Head is unsteady.	
Lifts head when placed on stomach	
May start to roll over at three months.	



## Cognitive Development

## Social/Emotional Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Uses sense of taste to explore.</p> <p>Repeats actions.</p> <p>Expects events to happen in a regular sequence (need for routine).</p> <p>Shows preference for particular toy, object or sound.</p>	<p>Establish a routine: bathe at certain time, rock before sleep for the night, turn off light, etc.</p> <p>Provide visual and tactile stimulation such' as colourful textured toys.</p> <p>Provide a crib/activity centre that can be pulled, pushed with gadgets that baby can eventually trigger music, sound, etc.</p>

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Likes to be cuddled.</p> <p>Develops trust with certain people.</p> <p>Imitates adult expression.</p> <p>Expresses clearly several differentiated emotions, pleasure, fear, etc.</p> <p>Comforted by voice. Recognizes parents' voices. Needs the closeness of holding for stimulation and bonding.</p> <p>Feeding is most important activity.</p> <p>Needs to suck.</p> <p>Smiles at a few weeks.</p>	<p>Hold and cuddle.</p> <p>Comfort when needed.</p> <p>Provide pacifier, bottles to suck on.</p>

# Behaviours & Activities for Children

## 6-12 MONTHS

### Language Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Babbling is prevalent.	Provide opportunities to read to and talk to baby, play games such as peek-a-boo, point and name, etc.
Sounds and intonation of native language are reinforced.	
Understands language better than speaking it. May shake head for no, point to dog, etc.	Reinforce sound that baby makes i.e. Ma – Mommy.
Cries and points to try and get needs met.	Try to understand him/her and meet needs to keep frustration to minimum.
Responds to sounds, music, airplane, own name, etc.	Enjoys action songs i.e. The People on the Bus, If You're Happy and You Know It, etc.
Likes to be held on lap and looks at books and hears rhythm of words.	
Likes interactive games, peek-a-boo.	

### Motor/Physical Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Continues to wave arms and kicks.	Provide balance bar at child's level for child to walk while holding on to bar.
Can hold head steady.	
Reaches toward hanging mobile.	Provide lots of opportunities to walk, crawl, explore, climb in a safe environment.
Sits with support.	Enjoys action games, crawls and barks like a dog, etc.
Pulls self up to stand with support to upright position, important for getting leg muscles ready for walking.	Ensure environment is child proof, small toys, chemicals and sharp object out of child's reach, as baby loves to explore.
Crawls and creeps, reaches, explores. May crawl upstairs.	Provide gates at doorways, stairs, etc.
May pull self up from sitting position.	Provide push-pull toys.
Walks holding on to objects.	
Enjoys action games.	



## Cognitive Development

## Social/Emotional Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Imitates facial expression.	Provide sensory experiences; water, sand, rice, playdough, with pails, measuring cups, shovels, etc.
Looks for objects when they are dropped.	
Egocentric, views everything from a personal point of view.	Provide toys with sound: squeeze toys, musical boxes, instruments, etc.
Explores objects through smell, touch and taste.	Introduce a variety of foods that he/she enjoys.
Establishes tastes.	
Demonstrates likes and dislikes in food.	

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Enjoys being held and cuddled at times other than feeding and bed time.	Sit on lap when read to. Provide variety in toys, activities.
Enjoys new experiences and objects.	Ensure parent stays with child prior to leaving. Child should see parent leave and say goodbye. Proper orientation.
Becomes a social being.	Provide an unbreakable mirror at child's level, loves reflection of self.
Loves interaction. Enjoys attention.	Songs, rhyme.
Shows preference for parents.	Warn before moving on to different activity eg. we are going to take a bath soon.
Scared around strangers, may cry when parents leave.	Avoid frustration as much as possible – soft lights and music before bed, nap after lunch.
Smiles at self.	
Enjoys simple games, pat a cake.	
Becomes upset if toys are taken away, needs are not being met.	
Establishes a routine and needs same.	

# Behaviours & Activities for Children

# 12-18 MONTHS

## Language Development

## Motor/Physical Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
First words spoken. Jargon and babbling continues. New words spoken daily.	Reinforce new words.
Loves rhymes, one-word page books.	Introduce cloth and vinyl books so can turn pages by himself/herself.
Use of words to attract adult attention.	Listening to wants will eliminate frustration and reinforce new words learned.
First two words. (telegraphic speech)	Call things by proper names. Child: baba. Parent: You want your bottle?
Indicates verbal and non-verbal needs.	

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Climbs stairs, stands alone, walks, climbs tables, gets under counters, bounces on furniture.	Provide lots of opportunities to move, climb, explore in a safe environment.
Picks up small objects.	Loves to pick up small objects. Make sure objects are large enough to avoid choking.
Uses both hands freely but may favour one hand.	Ensure toys, plastic pots are accessible on lower shelves.
Expands range of exploration, empties cupboards, pokes into shelves and drawers. Pulls out pots and pans.	Enjoys push-pull toys, soft blocks, pop up toys, nesting, size sorters.
Nests toys, pulls, pushes.	





## Cognitive Development

## Social/Emotional Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Gets frustrated when learning new skill. Expresses frustration by throwing tantrum.	Provide opportunities to repeat activity and new skill.
Short attention span. Often gets distracted when pursuing goals. Gets frustrated with own limitations.	Assist with expressive language by acknowledging frustration. Do not get angry with tantrums.
Skills in problem-solving begin to develop. Can match simple puzzle pieces in a foam board.	Enjoys simple, wooden three piece puzzles with knobs.
Development of imagination begins.	Provide Busy Box for child to operate.
Understands the concept of more.	Ask child if wants more milk, lunch, etc. and respond accordingly.
Begins to sort by colours, size etc.	Count with child to three or four.
Can count two objects.	

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Shows an interest and preference to toys and clothes.	Respond to wants by offering some choice, no more than two. Do you want to wear the blue shirt or yellow one?
Plays with dolls and animals as if they were real.	Provide stuffed animals (dolls with props, baby bottles, bowls and spoons, etc.)
Runs to be picked up and cuddled.	Have him run to you and pick up and cuddle.
Loves affection, and demonstrates affection. Enjoys rough housing.	Provide lots of opportunities for conversation.
Enjoys tossing games.	Provide soft ball - sand bean bags for tossing.
Will obey no, says no a lot.	Do not force to share – not ready for that yet.
Possessive.	Do not let parents sneak out, ensure they say good bye and leave quickly.
Likes to be within sight and ear shot of parents. May stop playing for a while to ensure parent is nearby.	Provide toys, blankets that child is attached to.
Has a sense of humour.	Bed, meals, baths, at regular times. Keep changes in routine to minimum.
Wants security blanket.	
Needs a daily routine.	

# Behaviours & Activities for Children

# 18-24 MONTHS

## Language Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Uses the word NO a lot. Uses two to three words in sentence.	Introduce books with two or three words on each page with illustrations of familiar objects, cat, ball, car, etc.
Names familiar items in pictures: cat, ball, etc.	
Follows simple direction, get your shoes, pick up the ball, etc.	Give simple instructions, one at a time.
Imitates animal sound, car noises, etc. Understands and uses words, hot, cold, high, low.	Provide opportunities to sing.
Can express wants. Asks why frequently.	Keep frustrations to a minimum.
Calls self by name. Talks to self as he/she plays.	Intervene before child gets really frustrated.
Enjoys rhymes, chants.	
May bite others when frustrated as expressive language is limited.	

## Motor/Physical Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Uses large muscles, arms, legs, trunk. Stacking, running, dancing, climbing, throwing.	Provide opportunities to run, dance to music, climb, throw soft balls, bean bags, etc.
Masters and fine tunes large and small muscles. Builds towers. Kicks large ball. Opens and closes containers.	Nesting and stacking toys, jars, etc.
Will scribble on paper, walls, etc.	Provide washable markers, paper, crayons, etc. to write with.
Readiness for toilet training begins.	Introduce toilet, let him/her see other children use the toilet.



## Cognitive Development

## Social/Emotional Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Curious.</p> <p>Strives for autonomy. Shows independent streak. Continues to be egocentric.</p> <p>Begins to get numbers 1 to 10 in sequence.</p> <p>Can identify size relationships, which ball is bigger, etc. can recognize similarity and differences in objects.</p> <p>Sees objects in terms of one or two prominent features.</p> <p>Begins to use toys and objects to represent persons.</p> <p>Demands rituals, need for a routine.</p> <p>Memory develops, object permanence.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for accomplishing simple tasks for self, i.e. feeding, putting toys away, etc.</p> <p>Enjoys number games, songs, matching and comparing opposites and similar objects, memory games, etc.</p> <p>Keep changes in routine to a minimum, as enjoys a predictable day.</p> <p>Introduce a print rich schedule.</p>

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Plays near other children, not with them (parallel play).</p> <p>Imitates parents.</p> <p>Resists demands of parents both playfully and seriously.</p> <p>Affectionate, yet could be rough. Treats children like objects, not realizing or meaning to hurt.</p> <p>Needs limits and supervision, yet lots of room to explore. Does not like change. Need for routine.</p> <p>Biting, part of normal development.</p>	<p>Enjoys presence of other children.</p> <p>Give choice, "do you want to play with your doll inside or outside?"</p> <p>Avoid frustration by encouraging expressive language, warnings, etc.</p>

# Behaviours & Activities for Children

# 24-36 MONTHS

## Language Development

## Motor/Physical Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Expands vocabulary to 1200 words, uses two to four word sentence.	Introduce storybooks with more words, musical instruments, action songs, silly stories, jokes, riddles.
Enjoys singing, rhythm instruments, repetitive tunes, clapping. Uses silly language, jokes, riddles and memorizes simple rhymes.	Opportunities to draw and represent characters, events by providing markers, crayons, paints. Adult could add descriptive words on child's picture.
Expresses artistic ability.	Use of road signs and logos in play.
Reading helps develop language. Spends time alone looking at books. Will ask for specific books to be read. Role plays favourite stories, makes pictures of favourite characters and events. May recreate personal experiences.	
Reads familiar signs symbols – prereading skills.	
Experiments with swear and toilet words.	

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Rides tricycle.	Provide: tricycles for outdoor play, peg boards, five to six piece wooden puzzle.
Inserts shapes, pegs into board.	Encourage serving of food portions to self.
Can work five to six piece puzzle.	Toilet training continues.
Strings large beads.	Provide blocks and accessories.
Develops skills such as eating, pouring.	
Walks down stairs.	
Bowel control, toilet training.	
Runs.	
Stacks, builds tower, climbs.	



## Cognitive Development

## Social/Emotional Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Enjoys and needs activities that develop and change fine motor skills.</p> <p>Can copy simple shapes.</p> <p>Can represent the world with mental images.</p> <p>Can classify objects, puzzles on the shelf, trucks on the carpet.</p> <p>Has an understanding of time concepts, "after lunch we will go to the park."</p> <p>Understands the concept of more, less, empty, full, up or down.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities to print, primary pencil, paper, etc.</p> <p>Begins to learn to print name.</p> <p>Print rich labels (picture and word will assist child clean up).</p> <p>Enjoys Simon Says.</p>

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Outgoing, lives in extremes love, hate, etc.</p> <p>Uses physical aggression if frustrated, tired, angry. Can become brash, disobedient, over demanding. Cries less, but whines a lot.</p> <p>Identifies with super heroes. Imaginary friends may develop.</p> <p>Fearful of the dark, monsters. May have disruptive sleep and act out aggressive feelings in nightmares.</p> <p>Possessive of play things. Watches and imitates play of others, but seldom joins in. Has difficulty taking turns.</p> <p>Begins to separate from parents more easily.</p>	<p>Dramatic plays.</p> <p>Need for very clear limits.</p> <p>Waiting should be kept to a minimum. No lining up.</p> <p>Enough toys for each child i.e. four chairs, four rolling pins, four pieces of playdough, etc.</p>

# Behaviours & Activities for Children

## 3-4 YEARS

### Language Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Approximately 3000 words, in vocabulary.</p> <p>Pronunciation may not be clear on all words.</p> <p>Can carry a simple tune. Finds singing enjoyable.</p> <p>Participates in shared reading experiences. Will pretend to read to other children. May create unique stories while playing in the block or drama centre. Role plays favourite stories, makes pictures of favourite characters and events.</p> <p>Enjoys extremes in voices (whisper, loud). May use gestures, voice, facial expressions to enhance personal statements.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities to sing, read.</p> <p>Encourage children to draw and talk about their picture, then staff can label drawing.</p> <p>Provide props, musical instruments and an environment that promotes creative expression.</p>

### Motor/Physical Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Lots of energy. Enjoys running, galloping, jumping, dancing.</p> <p>Fine motor skills such as cutting, hand-washing, and eating, continue to develop.</p> <p>Tricycle mastery occurs at the age of three.</p> <p>Enjoys throwing balls, beanbags, etc.</p>	<p>Provide lots of physical activities, tricycles, balls, skipping ropes. Enjoys throwing activities such as Frisbees, balls, bean bags, ring toss, bowling, etc.</p> <p>Use and obey road signs.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for lots of hand work such as cutting out pictures, tracing, sewing cards, etc.</p>



## Cognitive Development

## Social/Emotional Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Recognizes some letters and numbers.	Can complete larger puzzles.
Develops prereading skills by recognizing familiar signs, labels, names, etc. (Golden Arches for McDonalds).	Sorting, classifying activities.
Imaginative.	Can recognize and print own name. Can write numbers, may be able to recognize names of others.
Appreciation for diversity, uniqueness in children.	Can recognize signs and logos.
	Understands and appreciates other children's individuality.

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Parallel play evolves into cooperative play.	Opportunities to get together with friends.
Friendships develop and many develop a special friend who they seek for play.	Co-operative games, rules.
Shows appreciation for the creations of others.	Can begin take on housekeeping responsibilities.
Begins to develop more focused preferences.	
Shows pride in achievements.	
Has increasing awareness and sensitivity to nature, small animals, plants, cloud formation, etc.	
Turn taking skills are developed through positive successful play experiences.	
Sunny disposition, pleasant to be around.	
Imaginary friends and fears may develop. Egocentricity disappears.	

# Behaviours & Activities for Children

## 5-6 YEARS

### Language Development

### Motor/Physical Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT	BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
<p>Enjoys participating in shared reading experiences. Will pretend to read to other children. May create and role play, unique stories.</p> <p>Talkative, enjoys using extremes in voices (soft whisper, loud). May use gestures, facial expressions.</p> <p>Take things literally. "You can't have your cake and eat it too!" Would look around for cake.</p> <p>May have aptitude to learn to read.</p> <p>Enjoy humorous books and factual books that tell them about the world.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for reading, dramatic play, writing, pencils, erasers, chalk, chalk boards. Makes own books.</p> <p>Creative, provide opportunities to make up own plays, books.</p> <p>Introduce joke books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, national geographic, etc.</p>	<p>Very energetic. Masters skipping, throwing a ball. Catching is still not mastered. By this age, it is evident whether they are right or left handed.</p> <p>At five years of age, body is poised and controlled.</p> <p>Will develop certain interests in sports, dance, etc. May take lessons for some.</p> <p>Physical skill development relates closely to development of self-esteem.</p>	<p>Gross motor activities with learning skills, i.e. skipping, throwing ball, dancing lessons.</p>





## Cognitive Development

## Social/Emotional Development

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Knows all letters upper case and small case.	Provide opportunities to have input in planning activities such as menu, snacks, etc.
Counts accurately to 100.	Word recognition begins. Provide books and games to help develop reading skills.
Need to begin to make some of their own decisions by planning and managing their own time.	Could assist with layout of environment, classroom, bedroom, etc.
	Enjoys learning about nature, why things happen, etc.

BEHAVIOURS OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT
Pleasant disposition to five-and-a-half years.	Introduce responsibilities for pets, plants, etc.
Then can become brash and disobedient, over demanding and explosive. Need patience and understanding.	Enjoys science experiments and observations.
Enjoys helping and receiving praise for same. Shows pride in achievements.	Assistance with conflict resolution.
Influenced by peers (peer pressure.)	Needs to feel successful and industrious.
Has increasing awareness and sensitivity to nature, small animals, plants, cloud formation, etc.	

# Bibliography

Premiers Council on Health, Well-being and Social Justice, 1994  
*Yours Mine and Ours*  
Government of Ontario

Santrock, John W., 1995.  
*Children*  
Wm. C. Brown Communications Inc., Dubuque, Iowa

Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1994.  
*Starting Points, Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children*

Beaty, Janice J., 1990.  
*Observing the Developing Child*  
Merrill Publishing Company

Hohmann Mary and David Weikart, High/Scope Press, 1979.  
*Young Children in Action*  
High/Scope Press, Ypsilanti, Michigan

**Mission:** The YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity offering opportunities for personal growth, community involvement and leadership.

**Vision:** The YMCA of Greater Toronto will focus on making connections: connecting people, connecting with youth, and connecting with the community.

**Values:** Caring • Health • Honesty • Inclusiveness • Respect • Responsibility



YMCA

We build strong kids,  
strong families, strong communities.



United Way  
of Greater Toronto