



Parents and other family members play a very important role in the way a child develops. What you do during the first four years of your child's life may be the most rewarding thing you ever do. That's why it's important to Take Time for Kids.



The most important time in a child's development is from birth through 4 years of age. It is during this time that a child's brain develops most of its potential. It is also during this time that a child learns how to love and be loved, how to trust and be trusted.



Here are some things you can do:

- Talk with your child... and listen.
- Read to your child every day.
- Praise your child for things well done.
- Help your child learn new things.
- Have a routine for your child's daily activities.
- Choose healthy foods for your family.
- Eat with your child and let mealtimes be family time.

- Get regular medical and dental checkups for your child.
 - Set firm household rules and give your child reasons for these rules.
- You can look forward to seeing your child grow and change in many ways from the ages of 1 through 4. The information inside this pamphlet will help you know what to expect as your child grows.

Remember:

- Each child grows in his or her own way.
- Your child is learning many new things during the first four years. Learning takes time and practice.
- Each child has his or her own personality. No two children are exactly alike. Some children are quiet and enjoy watching, while others are very active and move all the time. Watch your child and learn about his or her personality.
- If you have a question about what your child is doing, ask your doctor or health-care provider.

Need help finding health services for your child? Call us! We can help.

If you don't have a doctor, or are not sure where to go to get health services for you or your child, call 211.

The person who answers this toll-free line can tell you about services that are closest to you, such as where to go for nutrition education, food assistance, checkups or shots, as well as where you can get services if your child is developing slowly or has a special health need.



A child health and safety initiative sponsored by the Department of State Health Services.

You can call between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, from any phone – **free!** So, if you need information or a referral, call:

211

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/ttfk>

Take Time for Kids envisions a Texas where children are a priority, parents are supported, families are valued, communities provide a culture of caring, and children live healthy lives.

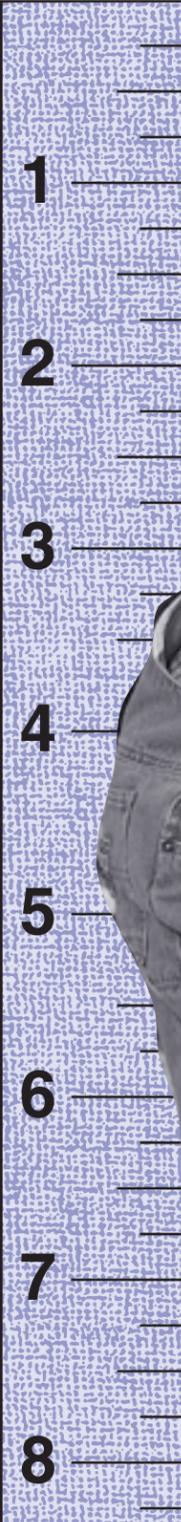


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Watch Me Grow Years 1 Through 4





15-18 Months

- I want to eat what you are eating. If you eat healthy, I will want to eat healthy, too.

Here's what I can do:

- I can stack two or three blocks.
- I like to pull toys and throw balls.
- I'm learning to run and I like it when you chase me.
- I like to show affection to my family.
- I know what the toilet is but I'm too young to use it.

I can be a handful!

- I like saying, "No!"
- I can follow simple directions, but I am easily distracted.
- I'm learning about the world and I like to get into everything. Please keep me safe.
- When I am tired, angry, or frustrated, I may have a temper tantrum or bite or hit someone.

I'm a messy eater!

- I'm learning about foods with different textures so I make a mess at mealtime.
- I am learning to feed myself with a spoon, but I prefer to use my fingers.
- It may take me many attempts to decide I like a new food.
- I can choke so be careful what you feed me. No hard candy, popcorn, pretzels, hot dogs, grapes, or raw carrots, please!
- I drink from a cup and I don't need a bottle.
- Some days I may eat a lot and other days I may want very little.

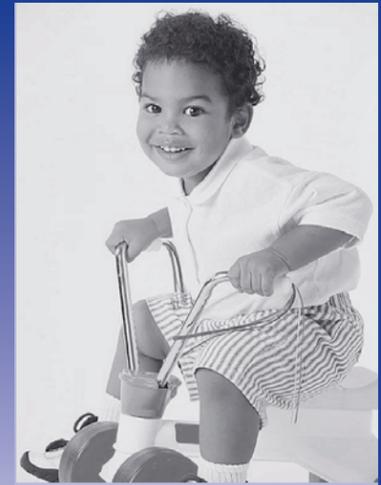
2 Years Old

Am I a picky eater?

- I can feed myself with a spoon but I still spill sometimes.
- I have definite likes and dislikes for foods.
- Sometimes I just want to play with my food at mealtime.
- I may have "food jags" (I want to eat the same food at every meal). Please be patient with me, don't force me to eat but continue to offer me other foods.

Look what I'm learning!

- I am learning to jump and I love to walk, run, and climb.
- I can put two or three words together to make sentences now. I'm learning new words all the time.
- Sometimes I repeat words or stutter when I'm trying to tell you something. Please be patient so I can learn.



- I like books. I can point to pictures and name them.
- I can point to or touch objects that you name — especially my eyes, nose, mouth, and hair.
- I am learning to use the potty, but I still have accidents.

Please remember:

- I like to "help" you.
- I have a short attention span and cannot sit still for long.
- Sharing is hard for me.
- I might object to a nap, but I enjoy the rest. I need routines.

3 Years Old

I can feed myself!

- I can eat with a spoon and fork now.
- I want to choose which foods I will eat, but please only offer me healthy choices.
- I like foods in different colors and shapes.
- I can pour liquids from a small pitcher but I may still spill a little.

Watch what I can do!

- I can dress myself.
- I use three- to five-word sentences.
- I love to run, jump, and climb. I can kick a ball pretty well.
- I like to play with other children.
- I may play with an imaginary friend.
- I know my name, age, and if I am a boy or girl.



- I like to imitate you when you do household chores such as sweeping, mopping, or measuring.
- I can stay dry in the day, but I may wet at night until I am 4 or 5.

Please keep in mind:

- I am easily influenced by what I see on TV.
- I enjoy bedtime routines. I don't like it when you change them.
- I like to hear the same story many times. Please read to me often.

4 Years Old

Mealtime is family time!

- I like my family to talk to me while we eat. I like to ask and answer questions.
- I want to help you prepare foods.
- I am interested in where food and other things come from.
- I still need to have three meals and two or three healthy snacks each day.
- I may continue to have "food jags." Please continue to be patient.

Look at what I've learned!

- I can skip, turn somersaults, catch a ball, and pedal a tricycle.
- I like to draw pictures.
- I can tell people my first and last name.
- I like how words sound and enjoy rhyming and singing.

- I'm learning to count, and know that "four" stands for four things.
- I make up stories and games and like to collect things.
- I am learning the difference between what is real and not real.
- I play with other children and am learning to get along.

Watch out!

- I am easily influenced by other kids my age and TV.

