

# I'm ready!

How to make sure every child is thriving by five.



# Hello everyone!

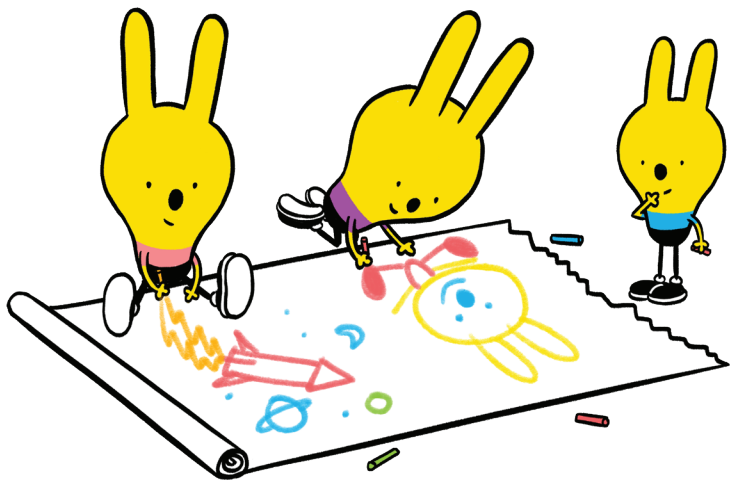
## My name is Tukay...

I'm about 2000 days old — that's why I'm called 2K... get it? For the first few years of my life I was a part of the First 2000 Days Network and the Calgary & Surrounding Communities Early Childhood Development Coalitions. They spent so many hours and so much energy working together to help spread the word about how important the early years of our lives are, and now I hang out with my friends at Calgary Reads so we can do the same!



Everything we do is to make sure that children just like me are READY for kindergarten and the first few years of school, the ones that create the foundation for all the learning that comes after.

We've found out how to build brains from other adults who are working hard on this issue, and we know that the best way to do that is to focus on the "five developmental domains" everyone keeps talking about (I just call them 'Doing', 'Playing', 'Feeling', 'Learning' and 'Expressing'). We know it's important that I feel loved, safe, strong, capable, fit, smart, secure and confident. So if you want to learn how to make sure YOUR kids feel that way too, READ ON!



I am excited about kindergarten!  
Here are some of the skills that I will  
need to have achieved by then.

- Get dressed, with a little help.
- Go to the bathroom by myself.
- Open my lunch containers.
- Ask for help.
- Take turns with my friends and with you.
- Follow routines and schedules.
- Listen and follow directions.
- Understand basic safety rules.
- Feel good about trying new things.
- Take part in group activities.
- Be curious.
- Run, catch, throw, jump and tumble.
- Be a helper.
- Paint, draw, sculpt and build items from my imagination.

# Hello adult. Welcome to my brain.

The first five years of my life are really, really important. That is when most of my brain is being wired. Scientists say that from the day I'm born, millions of neurons are making billions of connections. I'm learning all the time – at every moment of my day. Everything around me is teaching me, but the most important teacher of all is you. YOU are my interpreter, my guide, my steward, my security and my bridge to understanding the world around me.

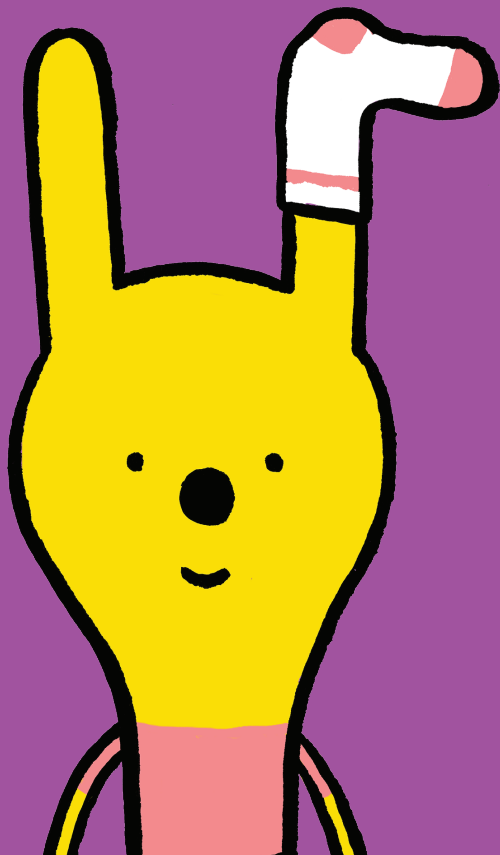
# This is your manual.

I learn constantly but there are some really basic things I need to be able to do really well by the time I'm five years old. These are called **milestones** and I can't reach them without lots of help. YOUR help. So, take some time to read through these milestones and follow some of my suggestions. You'll notice that most of it looks a lot like play and that's no accident. Learning should be fun, shouldn't it?

By the time I'm five years old, I should be able to do everything (and probably more) on the following pages.

Physical health and well-being

# DOING





What does it mean?

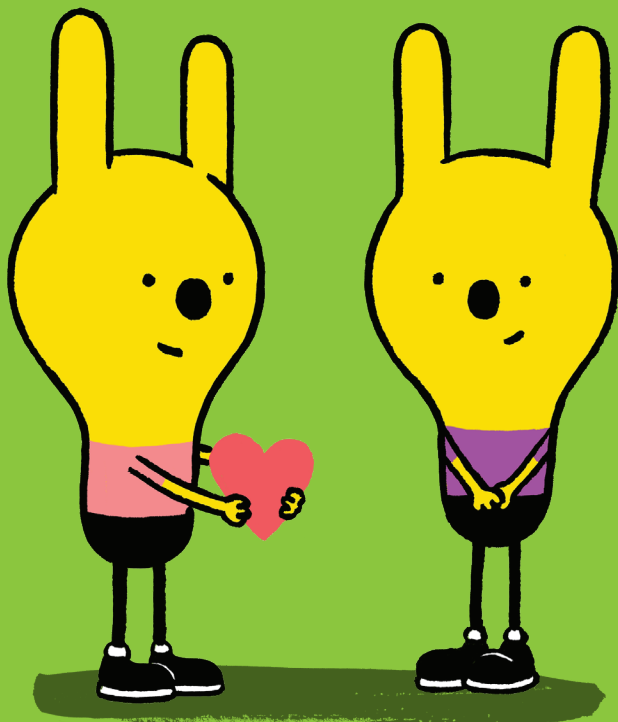
- I can climb big things and hold tiny things.
- I can go to the bathroom by myself (mostly).
- I'm ready for school: dressed, nourished and rested.
- I have enough energy to last the school day.

What do I need from you?

- Challenge me with lots of reading, grasping, beading, drawing and cutting activities and games.
- Give me lots of variety of foods. It might take trying some foods 10 times before I'll like them.
- Help me get lots of sleep, teach me to listen to my body and to rest when I'm tired.
- Make sure I get at least 2 hours of exercise every day – ideally outside activities.
- Show me nature – take me on walks in natural areas. It feeds my curiosity about the world and my place in it.

Social competence

# PLAYING



## What does it mean?

- I can play and get along with other children.
- I'm able to follow rules, instructions and routines.
- I accept responsibility for my actions.
- I show respect for others.

## What do I need from you?

- When I'm a baby, give me lots of skin to skin contact.
- Give me a safe environment that I can explore freely.
- Get me into a routine for sleeping, eating and playing.
- Teach me sharing and problem solving by playing lots of different games with me.
- Ask me what I think about things like decisions that affect me or others. Really listen to my answers and ask questions. Get me thinking!
- Show me how to be accepting of others and how to celebrate their differences. Be a good role model.

Emotional maturity

# FEELING



## What does it mean?

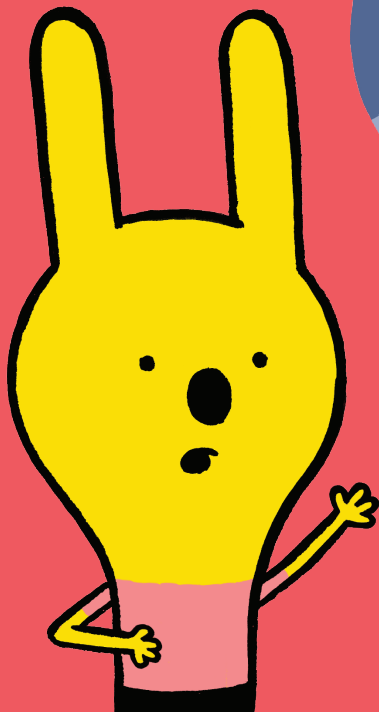
- I'm able to deal with feelings (for my age level).
- I'm strong enough to leave you once in a while.
- I can control some of my impulses and fears.
- I am able to focus on activities.

## What do I need from you?

- Make eye contact during reading, talking, singing, and playing.
- Teach me the right words for feelings.
- Let me make art – with whatever is around me.
- Be really consistent about what you expect for my behaviour. I need a heads up if routines change.
- I'm my own person so treat me with respect – you are modelling my ideas about fairness and equality.
- Let me do things by myself – I need to try. And fail!
- Make sure I have at least 5 people who are crazy about me – I need lots of teachers.
- Don't try and do it all alone. Sometimes kids and adults need extra help – so know where to find it.

Language and cognitive development

# LEARNING



What does it mean? Mostly, academic skills.

- I'm interested in reading, writing and telling stories.
- I can recognize letters and numbers (at my age level).
- I can recognize shapes, sizes and colours.
- I easily remember things (probably better than you can!).

What do I need from you?

- Speak and read to me every day in the language that you know. Point out and name things in books and things around me.
- Give me quiet playtimes without interruptions.
- Get a lot of toys for my age – puzzles, animals, stacking toys, blocks, books, dolls and cars.
- Don't let me get too familiar with TVs and other digital devices. Here are some guidelines for "screen time":
  - No screen time if I'm under 2 years
  - Less than 1 hour per day if I'm 2-4 years
  - Less than 2 hours per day if I'm older

Communication skills and general knowledge

# EXPRESSING





## What does it mean?

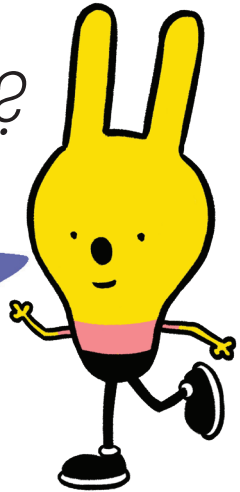
- I can tell you what I need without whining or fussing.
- I can tell you factual or imaginative stories.
- I can say words clear enough for a stranger to understand me.
- I have a good age level understanding of my world.
- I can play in imaginary worlds and stories.

## What do I need from you?

- When I'm a baby, respond to my crying (it's the only way I know how to communicate!).
- Loop me into what's going on – talk to me about what you're doing, even if you think it's boring stuff.
- If I babble as a baby, talk back in any language.  
Show me this is how we communicate back and forth.
- If I'm trying to talk, give me lots of praise.
- Ask me questions that make me think (who? what? etc.).
- Learn things with me so I can sometimes teach you.

*Did you know?*

The number of words I've heard, and the number of books I own and have read, are two of the **BIGGEST** predictors of my school and life success? Sharing and reading books with me is one of the greatest single activities you can do to boost my school and life skills!



READING strengthens skills  
in **all five** of the  
developmental domains!

## **DOING**

exploring books helps develop my hand-eye coordination, eye strength, manual dexterity and fine motor skills!

## **PLAYING**

spending time reading with someone who cares about me helps me bond socially and learn about what safe, caring relationships feel like!

## **FEELING**

reading for just 6 minutes a day can reduce my (and YOUR) stress by 68 percent! Imagine what will happen if I get my full 20 minutes a day? It also helps me strengthen my patience, self-regulation, and attention skills!

## **LEARNING**

if you read just one book a day with me, that makes 1823 books by my 5th birthday! That's a lot of learning, and will help me make a reading habit that lasts for the rest of my life!

## **EXPRESSING**

from vocabulary to comprehension, reading is the ability that helps me unlock every other subject. I can discover 4000-12,000 words per year through reading! And people who read a lot are more likely to be in the top 2% of achievement throughout their lives!

# READING MILESTONES

<b>WHAT TO READ</b>	Picture books with more characters and complex themes; alphabet books; counting books; books with longer stories, like fairy tales and legends; poetry
<b>WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE</b>	I can recite favourite parts of songs and stories I know; I am able to sit still for longer periods of time; I am learning numbers, letters sounds, and shapes; I use longer and more complex sentences; I show a lot of interest in reading
<b>WHAT YOU CAN DO</b>	Ask questions like "what comes next?"; create our own stories; connect stories to real people in my life; point out letters and numbers and help me identify their sounds; buy books as gifts
<b>WHAT WE'RE PRACTICING</b>	Being great at sharing and taking turns; play that involves roles and make-believe; finding my own ways to show affection; taking pride in my accomplishments; laughing and joking; growing a sense of right and wrong

**READ, SING, TALK, PLAY, & LOVE EVERY DAY!**

# Owning books matters. A lot.

Here's where to get some for little to no cost:

- Calgary Reads
- The Little Red Reading House
- Your Local Library
- Little Free Libraries in your community
- Book Banks
- Goodwill and Secondhand Stores
- Book Sales
- Book Swaps with friends



want to learn more about  
the power of reading  
with your little one?

visit **[weeread.ca](http://weeread.ca)**

# Wait!

## What is serve & return?!

Imagine our brains are playing a game of tennis – every time I "serve" you an interaction, I'm expecting you to "return" it to me with one of your own! I talk, then you talk! You sing, then I copy! You play peek-a-boo, then I laugh! Back and forth, back and forth, building my brain every time it happens!



# It's a big job, but I think you're ready!

Okay, so here are some important things we need to get busy on:

- Book yearly health checkups with our doctor.
- Get me to the dentist by age one with periodic checkups based on my dentist's recommendations.
- Keep all my vaccinations up to date.
- Get my EYES checked:
  - 6–12 mos. (before my first birthday)
  - Another check when I'm 3
  - At age 5 before school begins
- Get my EARS checked when I'm a baby.
- Read to your child **every day** of the first 2000 days of life (and beyond!).
- Go to [healthyparentshealthychildren.ca](http://healthyparentshealthychildren.ca) for literally EVERYTHING you need to know from pregnancy onward. *(It might seem overwhelming but just focus on the stage you are currently at.)*

# Helpful links:

Stay engaged and active by using these links:

**activeforlife.com** – resources for parents and educators to support the development of physical health and wellbeing in children

**alberta.ca** – resources for families including supports and early childhood services

**albertafamilywellness.org** – the latest on brain science and early brain development

**calgary.ca** – for family spaces, events and activities

**calgaryschild.com** – great resource for activities and information

**calgarylibrary.ca** – free books and online resources to explore

**calgaryreads.com** – resources and information about literacy

**littlefreelibrary.org/ourmap** – where to visit little free libraries near you

**littleredreading.house** – based on the simple idea that if you create a comfortable, fun space for children to read, they will. Learn tips to do this yourself!

**parentsmatter.ca** – resources in different languages for parents

**reachinginreachingout.com** – promotes resiliency in adults and children

**vroom.org** – a free app with daily tips for families with children ages 0-5



# What to watch for:

Talk to your doctor right away if you see any of these signs:

- 1) no big smiles, eye contact or warm engagement by six months
- 2) no back-and-forth babble
- 3) a regression of speech and/or skills.

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“There are two gifts we give our children; one is roots, the other, wings.”

– *Von Goethe*

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This book was made possible thanks to the knowledge sharing of the following communities:



first**2000**days  
Early Childhood Development Network



Download a copy of this booklet:  
[calgaryreads.com/tukay](http://calgaryreads.com/tukay)

We acknowledge that we live, learn, work and play on land traditionally known as Moh'kins'tsis, on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.