

Look at Me! I am 18 months!

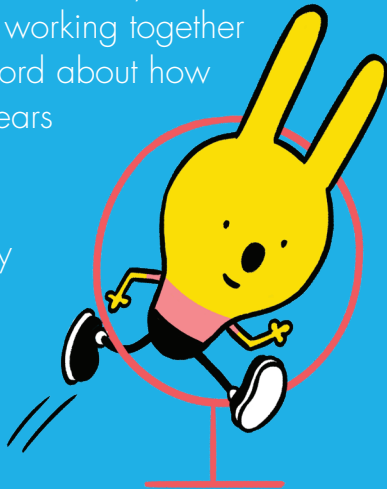
How to make sure every child is thriving by five.



Hello everyone!

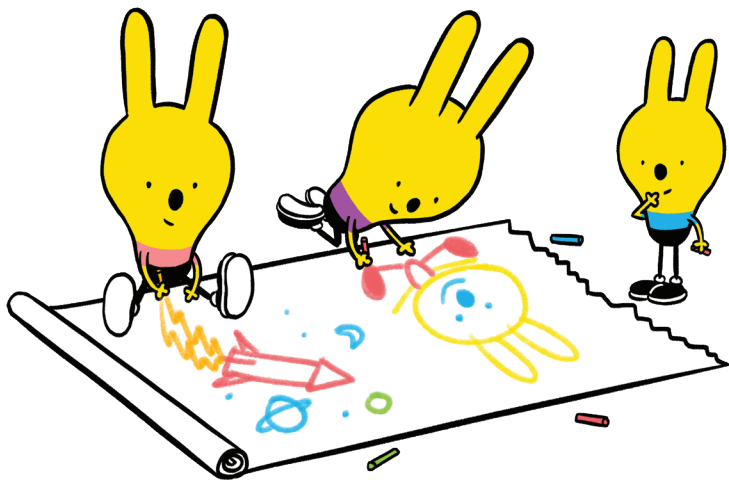
My name is Tukay...

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!



Kindergarten is still a few years away so we have lots of time to build these skills by the time I start:

- ☐ 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, create 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 am 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.

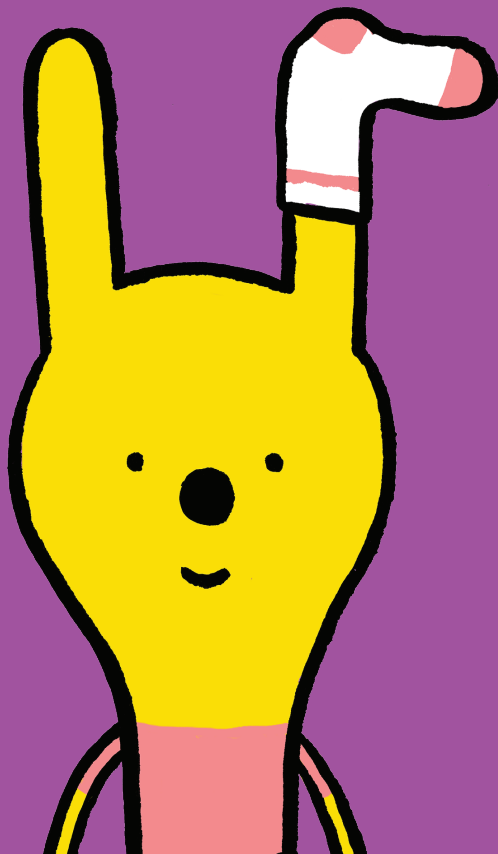
This is your manual.

I learn constantly but there are some really basic things I need to be able to do really well by the time I am 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 am 18 months old, I should be able to do everything (and probably more) on the following pages.

Physical health and well-being

DOING



I am 18 months and now I can:

- ☐ Walk without support.
- ☐ Carry objects and walk at the same time.
- ☐ Mark on paper with a crayon.
- ☐ Stack three blocks on top of each other.

Let's start:

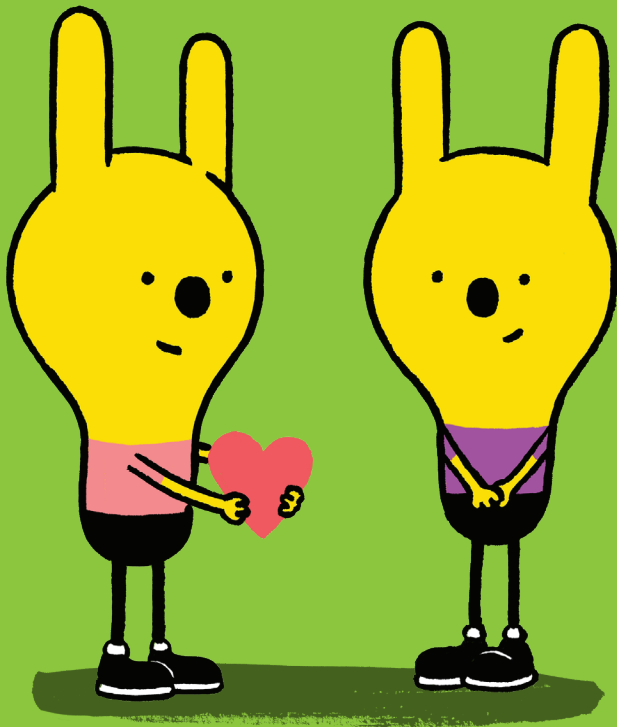
- ☐ Walking downstairs with help.
- ☐ Drinking and eating with a cup and spoon like you.
- ☐ Turning pages of a book.

Follow my lead!

- ☐ Take me outside every day; provide bubbles, blocks and balls.
- ☐ Give me safe finger foods.
- ☐ Tape large pieces of paper onto a table and give me non-toxic crayons to use.
- ☐ Allow me to engage in play that is uncertain, challenging, flexible and fun.
- ☐ Let's make a snack by putting Cheerios on a string.

Social competence

PLAYING



I like to:

- ☐ Play alone and alongside others.
- ☐ Demonstrate my increasing independence.
- ☐ Follow simple directions.
- ☐ Explore my environment.
- ☐ Understand that when you leave, you'll return.

Let's start:

- ☐ Identifying emotions — even negative ones.
- ☐ Providing opportunities for me to copy you
(ie. sweeping, brushing hair).
- ☐ Sharing accomplishments with loved ones.

Follow my lead — you are my best friend!

- ☐ Stay close but allow me to explore.
- ☐ Allow me to play with stuffed animals and dolls.
- ☐ Set routines during the day.

Emotional maturity

FEELING



I am just 18 months old!

- ☐ I demonstrate defiant behaviour and like to do things by myself.
- ☐ I can be given choices.
- ☐ I let you know how I am feeling with gestures, words, tears and facial expressions.

Let's work on:

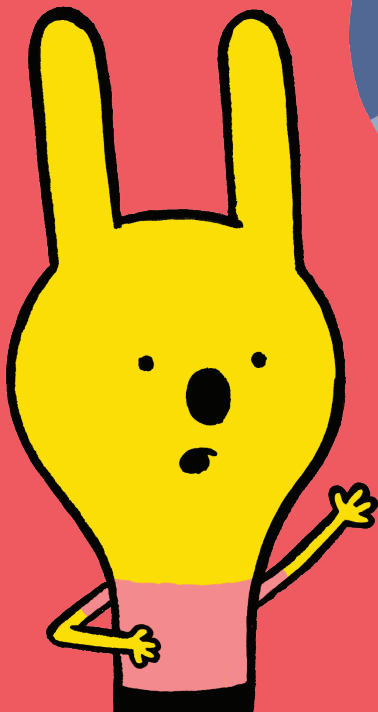
- ☐ Labeling my feelings.
- ☐ Exploring new places with you by my side.
- ☐ Trying new things by myself (Please be patient with me).

You can help!

- ☐ Snuggle close as we read stories together.
- ☐ Set routines including a regular bedtime — remember I still need 11–14 hours of sleep!
- ☐ Get down on my level; smile, laugh and play with me.
- ☐ Let me know when/if my routines are changing.
- ☐ Stay calm.

Language and cognitive development

LEARNING



By the time I'm 18 months I can:

- ☐ Understand up to 250 words.
- ☐ Use simple phrases.
- ☐ Follow simple (one-step) verbal instructions.
- ☐ Repeat words overheard in conversation.

Let's start:

- ☐ Labeling objects I point to.
- ☐ Asking me questions I can answer.
- ☐ Helping me label my emotions.
- ☐ Saying hello and goodbye when coming and leaving.

How do we do it?

- ☐ Talk to me during daily routines.
- ☐ Let me choose the books we read.
- ☐ Speak, read and sing to me.
- ☐ Provide simple 3–4 piece knob puzzles, nesting toys and large balls for me to explore.
- ☐ Pretend play.
- ☐ Please **NO** screen time (TV, iPad, phone, computer).

Communication skills and general knowledge

EXPRESSING



I am 18 months and I can:

- ☐ Say 8 or more words.
- ☐ Use words with p, m, n, h, w & b sounds.
- ☐ Begin to sort shapes and colours.
- ☐ Begin to use words when interacting with others.

Let's start:

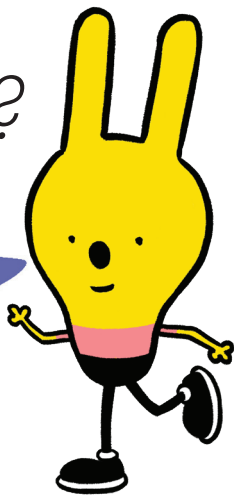
- ☐ Giving me opportunities to talk about my experiences and feelings.
- ☐ Playing near others outside in our community.

Please:

- ☐ Point to and label body parts.
- ☐ Talk to me about what you are doing.
- ☐ Sing songs such as 'Old MacDonald'.
- ☐ Praise me when I attempt to make longer sentences using new words.
- ☐ Tell me what you would like me to do.

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

WHAT TO READ	Sturdy books to touch and carry; books with images of children doing everyday activities (like sleeping or playing); books with rhyming and simple text
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	I speak basic words; start to say simple phrases; hand books to you to read; name and point at pictures; hold books the right way up
WHAT YOU CAN DO	Let me choose the books and turn the pages; make books part of routines like bedtime; name things and familiar pictures; respond when I point and talk; use books to help calm me down; get a library card; let me see you reading so I know how important it is
WHAT WE'RE PRACTICING	My ability to play alone for a few minutes; my growing independence; saying 'no!' and 'yes' and having those respected; playing next to other children; reacting to changes in routine; hugging and kissing familiar people

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**

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 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

litteredreading.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.

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

– Von Goethe

Notes

Notes

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

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.