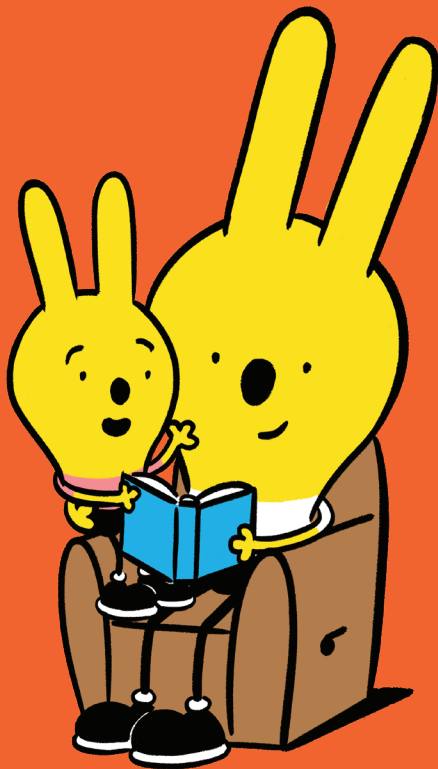


Look at Me! I am 6 months!

How to make sure every child is thriving by five.



Hello everyone!

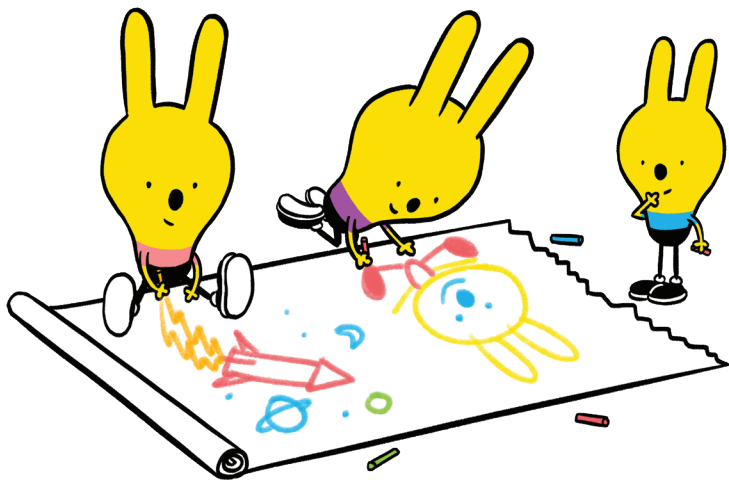
My name is Tukay...

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!



I am excited about kindergarten!
It may be a couple of years away,
but 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 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.

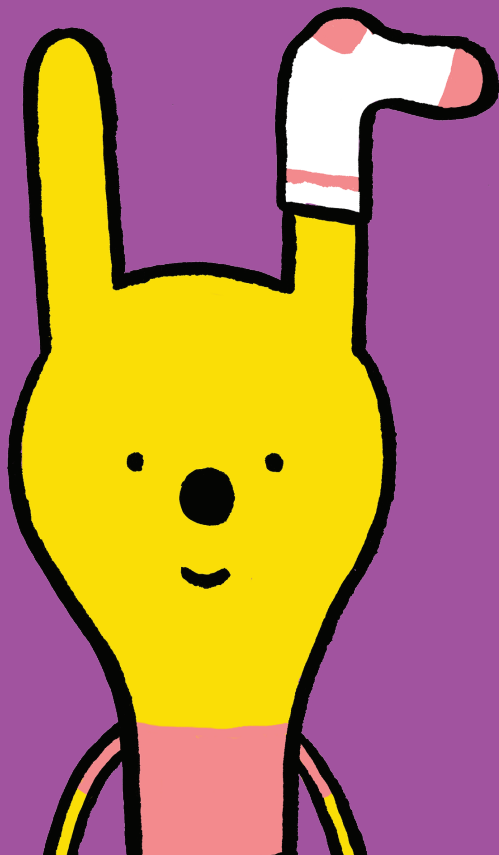
This is your manual.

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. Having fun is how our brains learn best.

By the time I am 6 months old, I should be able to do everything (and probably more) on the following pages.

Physical health and well-being

DOING



I am 6 months and now I can:

- ☐ Roll from my back to my tummy or tummy to my back
- ☐ Lift my legs high enough to see my feet
- ☐ Reach for toys using both hands
- ☐ Turn my head to look side to side

Let's start:

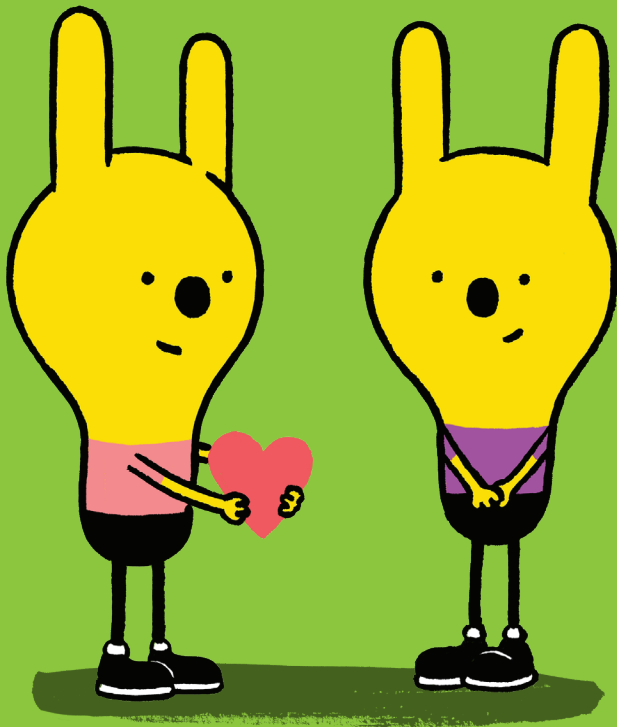
- ☐ Sitting up with support
- ☐ Offering safe foods to pick up with my fingers
- ☐ Taking me outside every day

Follow my lead!

- ☐ Let's continue having time on my tummy
- ☐ Play with me: I like peek-a-boo, rolling a ball, and shaking toys
- ☐ I need support to get 14–15 hours of sleep a day

Social competence

PLAYING



I like to:

- ☐ Share meals with you and interact during feeding times
- ☐ Play in front of a mirror
- ☐ Look into your eyes and be cuddled and held while we are playing together

Let's start:

- ☐ Singing songs and rhymes in the languages you know best
- ☐ Meeting new friendly faces while exploring the world together
- ☐ Stacking up and knocking down safe objects
- ☐ Looking for community programs to join

You are my first and best teacher!

- ☐ Say the names of things I'm looking or pointing at
- ☐ Set routines during the day
- ☐ Interacting with **you** is my favourite thing; I don't benefit from any screen time when I'm this young
- ☐ Get down on my level while I'm on my tummy

Emotional maturity

FEELING



I am just 6 months old!

- ☐ I am communicating with you when I cry or am upset, so respond to me with love
- ☐ Physical touch helps me calm down and regulate my emotions – try massage or extra cuddle time
- ☐ When we serve & return, it prepares me for life-long learning

Let's work on:

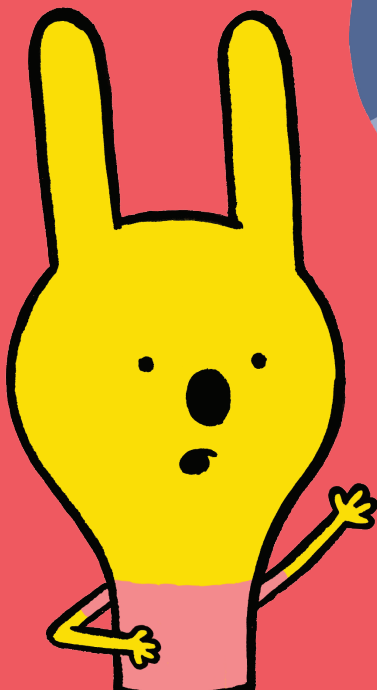
- ☐ Naming feelings, both mine and your own
- ☐ Staying close while allowing me to explore
- ☐ Talking to me about what we are doing next

You can help!

- ☐ Snuggle close
- ☐ Set routines including a regular bedtime
- ☐ Get down on my level
- ☐ Smile, laugh and play with me
- ☐ Notice how **you** are feeling and call a friend for support when you need it
- ☐ Play peek-a-boo, hold a scarf over your face and pop out with many expressions

Language and thinking skills

LEARNING



By the time I'm 6 months old I can:

- ☐ Turn my head if I hear my name being called
- ☐ Hold a toy in my hand
- ☐ See the difference between colours

Let's start:

- ☐ Modeling how we say hello and goodbye
- ☐ Exploring the difference between objects and textures
- ☐ Playing games with our hands like, Itsy, Bitsy Spider & Pata-cake. This is a great way for us to serve & return

How do we do it?

- ☐ Talk to me about what's happening during daily routines
- ☐ When I try to grab your glasses and pull your hair, I am exploring the world and learning boundaries
- ☐ I learn through all of my senses; my eyes, ears, nose, hands and mouth
- ☐ Be patient as I explore this big world; learning is a process

Communication skills and general knowledge

EXPRESSING



I am 6 months and I can:

- ☐ Squeal, grunt, and groan. Who knew babies were so noisy?
- ☐ Smile and sometimes laugh when I look at you
- ☐ Express my first signs of fear around new people, situations, and sounds

Let's start:

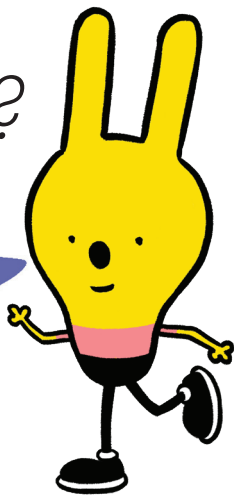
- ☐ Making sounds together. Try saying "ma, ma, ma" to me and see if I copy
- ☐ Imitating different sounds & noises I make – this is how we serve & return
- ☐ Calling me by my name

Please:

- ☐ Sing and talk to me when you change my diaper or give me a bath
- ☐ Read stories with me daily; you can read the words on the page or even just tell me what you see
- ☐ Understand I have my own personality and I can cry for all sorts of reasons, not only when I'm hungry or uncomfortable

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	Board and cloth books; bathtime books; high-contrast or brightly-coloured books; books with photos of baby faces or familiar objects; nursery rhymes
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	I smile, coo, gurgle and babble; know familiar voices; respond to my name; respond to the faces of other babies; follow simple requests like "wave bye bye"
WHAT YOU CAN DO	Take turns talking and making eye contact with me; point at and name objects; read, sing, talk, play and LOVE with me every day; play back-and-forth games like peekaboo; use lots of repetition; read aloud every day
WHAT WE'RE PRACTICING	I am seeking comfort and being soothed by familiar adults; communicating emotions and needs through sounds, gestures, facial expressions; expressing joy, as through laughter; self-soothing such as with a blanket or my thumb; giving affection and love

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.