



Preschool Hotline Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2015 Edition

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Please contact your nearest Child Development Center in Fort St. John or Dawson Creek

• *The leaves are falling, falling gently to the ground!*

• Well that's a sure sign that Fall is here and winter is around the corner.

• As we settle in for those chilly winter days, we start to think about entertaining our children for those days that are too cold to send them outside. So just what can young children do for indoor activities?

• Our electronic world has developed so rapidly over the past few years, that our toddlers and preschoolers have much more exposure and opportunity with electronic media than ever before. In this edition you will find an article with some guidelines and myths on screen time and young children.

• Of course we always promote the real world activities for our children's developing minds. We have listed some developmental milestones for our 1 - 5 year olds to keep in mind as your child grows. In addition we include information

on some of our favourite books and what vocabulary and concepts can be promoted in each.

Remember to connect with your local Speech Language Pathologist if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's speech or language development. Or look for us under Public Health at northernhealth.ca.

Enjoy your Fall and Winter!!

- From your Northern Health
Community Speech & Language team



northern health
the northern way of caring

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Communication Milestones

Children communicate with others from the moment they are born. Crying and fussing are early signs of communication. As babies, they begin to understand what others are saying and as they grow they begin to use gestures, sounds, and words. The development of these skills is so important as these skills allow children to interact with their parents, other children and allows them to navigate the world around them. Below are some developmental milestones from birth to 5 years of age. If your child is not meeting one or more of the milestones, please contact your local Speech and Language Clinic. In the North, our clinics accept referrals from parents, doctors, preschools, and other community partners.

Your 1 year old child should...

- ✓ turn and look in the direction of sounds
- ✓ respond to his/her name
- ✓ copy actions and sounds you make
- ✓ recognize everyday objects (e.g. car, shoe, cup)
- ✓ begin to use sounds such as m, p, b, d, w, and h (by 1 ½ years of age)
- ✓ point to body parts (by 1 ½ years of age)
- ✓ be able to point to pictures in books (by 1 ½ years of age)
- ✓ start to pretend (e.g. talking on the phone)
- ✓ participate in games like peek-a-boo
- ✓ bring objects to show an adult (by 1 ½ years of age)
- ✓ wave bye-bye
- ✓ be understood by parents about 25% of the time

Your 2 year old should...

- ✓ use 2 words together (e.g. more apple)
- ✓ say at least 50 words
- ✓ follow two-step directions (e.g. Get your cup and take it to Daddy)
- ✓ use sounds such as m, p, b, w, t, d, n and h
- ✓ use most vowel sounds correctly
- ✓ start to use ing endings (sleeping), plurals (trucks), and possessives (mommy's car) - by age 2 ½
- ✓ use words to name objects, use action words, and use descriptive words (e.g. little car) - by age 2 1/2
- ✓ be able to pretend and add small steps into his/her pretend play (e.g. feed the baby and burp the baby)
- ✓ be able to build a tower of 6-7 blocks

Your 3 year old should...

- ✓ understand basic concepts such as in, out, on, off, big and tall.
- ✓ follow three-step directions (e.g. Go get your boots, your coat and wait by the door)
- ✓ use at least 3-4 words together (e.g. I want more milk)
- ✓ use words such as I, me, my, and mine
- ✓ use sounds such as m, p, b, w, t, d, n, h, k, g, f and s
- ✓ be understood by parents more than 75% of the time
- ✓ ask and respond to questions

- ✓ use one object to represent another when playing (e.g. stick for telephone)
- ✓ begin to play with other children (interaction rather than playing side-by-side)

Your 4 year old should...

- ✓ understand many basic concepts such as shapes, colours, and position words such as under and behind
- ✓ speak in 5-6 word sentences
- ✓ use pronouns such as he and she
- ✓ use sounds such as m, p, b, w, t, d, n, h, k, g, f, s, z,
- ✓ be understood by parents 100% of the time
- ✓ know many rhymes and sing simple songs

Your 5 year old should...

- ✓ understand questions such as 'why' and 'how'
- ✓ use sentences longer than 6 words
- ✓ be able to count to 10 and name most colours
- ✓ use most sounds correctly except for r, v, th, and ch
- ✓ be easily understood by siblings, parents, friends, and strangers
- ✓ take his/her turn in conversations, interrupt others less often, and listen to another person who is speaking



Smartphones, Tablets, TV...Oh My!!

Media is everywhere. First we had TV, internet, computers, video games, and now there are tablets and smartphones all captivating our children's attention.

With technology growing so quickly (really iPads are only 5 and ½ years old), our screen time choices for our young children have moved from passively sitting and watching TV to interactive devices like smartphones and tablets.

A child's brain develops rapidly during these first few years and young children learn best from interacting with people not screens. Having said this, Dr. Dimitri Christakis, an American pediatrician has suggested "all things in moderation". Because research on interactive media is in its infancy, there is limited evidence on the impacts on our children's developing brains. It is thought that interactive play (where you are doing something) that our newer touchscreen devices allow is certainly better than our passive TV shows.

Dr. Christakis suggests that if screen time is a part of your child's life, why not integrate it into family time. Sit down with your child and have fun playing an app together. Parent participation is very important as parents can make the screen experience a rich language interactive activity. Parents can also help their children make connections between what's on the screen to the real world.

However time should still be limited on these electronic devices to 30-60 minutes per day. You want to limit screen time to insure lots of time for play off screen. Children still learn best from exploration of their real world.

You want to optimize your child's awake time to help them learn and explore, to use their creativity and problem solve... all good things for the developing brain!



1 All screen time is detrimental to early learning.

Although children spend less time on exploration, the reality is that most young children are exposed to screen media at a very young age and can learn from these experiences. **What is most important is that:**

- (1) content is age-appropriate.
- (2) viewing time is limited, and
- (3) parents are involved and help children make the connection between what they see on the screen and the real world.

2 Children aren't impacted by TV that plays in the background.

Study after study shows that background TV interferes with children's play and learning. Exposure to programming not designed for young children, even when it is playing in the background, is associated with a negative effect on children's language development, cognitive development, and executive functioning.

3 TV at bedtime can help lull children to sleep.

Studies have shown that viewing TV within 2 hours of bedtime can make it harder for children to fall asleep.

4 Parental cell phone use doesn't affect kids' behavior.

A recent study that involved observing families at fast-food restaurants found that 40 out of the 55 parents used a mobile device during the meal. The longer that parents interacted with their mobile devices, the more likely their children were to act out.

5 The more interactive a screen experience is, the better for kids.

One study involving e-books showed that more interactive features actually interfered with children's ability to focus on the storyline. Although e-books can still be useful tools for children, it is important for parents to help children focus on the story and not allow the technology to drive the experience.

Learn More About Young Children and Screen Media Use and Download a FREE Copy of Screen Sense by Visiting:

www.zerotothree.org/screensense







Screen Sense: Setting the Record Straight—Research-Based Guidelines for Screen Use for Children Under 3 Years Old is released by ZERO TO THREE. Screen Sense was written by Claire Lewis, LCSW, ZERO TO THREE, and Rachel Barr, PhD, Georgetown University. In partnership with leading researchers in the field of media and young children.

It's All About That Book!

Vocabulary knowledge changes over time, not only because we learn more “different” words but also because we learn about each word!

We need to help children build their vocabulary both by adding new words AND by enriching the meanings of words they already know. How can YOU help to enrich the meanings of words?...compare and contrast words - what makes a lawnmower different from an axe? How many different utensils can you think of and what distinguishes them from each other.

Books are a great way to expose kids to vocabulary and gives you an opportunity to talk about the words that come up in the book. Don't forget to visit your public library or local book store where there are tons of books for all ages!

Book Title	Vocabulary & Concepts to Target
<p>On The Farm</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific animal names (foal, calves, chicks) - Location words (in, on, beside) - Baby vs. adult animal names - Action words (scoot, peck, gallop, trot, prance, twirl) - Descriptions concepts (muddy, fuzzy) - Number concepts (some, all, one, a few) - Emotion concepts (cheerful, content, excited) - Rare words (pasture, silo, shed, chicken coop, rumpus) - This book also has lots rhyming words and sounds to target
<p>Goose on the Loose</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific animal names (cockatoo, toad, pigeon) - Safety concepts (carefully, dangerous) - Location words/prepositions (in, out) - Feeling concepts (e.g. how did the toad feel about Goose? - angry, annoyed, flustered) - This book also has lots rhyming words and sounds to target
<p>The Very Lazy Ladybug</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ways to walk/move (action words - bounded, plodded, ambled, padded) - Color concepts - Rare words - (pouch, idea, branch, tortoise) - Descriptor words - (bumpy, lazy, noisy, dizzy) - Emotion concepts (happy, angry, scared)
<p>Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Color concepts - Size concepts (big, small, huge) - Pronouns - “you” and “I” - Location concepts (inside/outside or behind/in front) - Description concepts (fast/slow, loud/quiet, growly bear, magnificent horse) - Sequential concepts (beginning/end) - Categorization (land vs. air animals) - This book also has lots of repetition and is good for highlighting sounds

More Books to Explore!

