



Great Beginnings

Build your child's brain • Build your child's future

0-1

1-2

2-4

4-6



Your child's development during the first six years of life is critical. Key connections within the brain are developed during these important years. Providing your child with a loving, caring approach ensures she has experiences she needs to succeed in life.



Children who have positive experiences that support early brain development find home and school life to be happier and easier. The Great Beginnings book provides everyday ideas and tips to support you in your role as parent, caregiver or guardian.

Did you know that:

- your baby's brain starts developing early in pregnancy, even before you know you are pregnant.
- poor nutrition and the use of drugs and alcohol can negatively affect your baby's brain development.
- eating healthy foods, taking folic acid and seeing a doctor during your pregnancy are very important to your baby's development.
- your baby is learning before she is born. For example, your baby learns to suck on her fingers while you are pregnant.
- your baby's brain is the only organ in the body that is not complete at birth.
- your baby's brain will continue to develop after he is born, especially in the first six years of life.
- your baby is born with over one billion brain cells. These cells need to be connected with each other for the brain to grow and develop.
- as your child experiences things through his senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching), the "connections" between brain cells are built.
- the everyday experiences that you have with your child influence healthy brain development and build these connections. You are already doing this!

Brain connections:

- link one area of the brain to another and allow for learning to take place.
- grow very quickly during the first three years and up to six years of your child's life.
- allow your child to learn more difficult skills.
- become stronger when something is repeated over and over again. This way, the connections become permanent.

For the best connections to be made, your child needs:



to feel loved



to have an opportunity to play



to have healthy food and nutrition



to be able to explore her world in a safe environment

Great Beginnings:

- shows how simple, everyday experiences help your child learn.
- provides you with basic information on healthy brain development.
- gives you ideas you can use to help develop strong and healthy brain connections.

Great Beginnings is divided into four main age groups: birth to 1 year, 1 to 2 years, 2 to 4 years and 4 to 6 years.

Each age group contains practical ideas under each of the key areas: Love, Feed, Play and Protect.

These tips and ideas will help your child to have a great beginning in life!



Remember:

- learning happens in a certain order. For example, your child must hear language before he can learn to speak, read and write.
- your child needs to be ready to learn. The basic connections need to be made before the more complex ones can be formed.
- while positive experiences help to build healthy connections in your child's brain, negative experiences can also affect the way his brain develops.
- too much stress at home or school can make it harder for your child to learn new skills, manage his emotions and get along with others.
- for more information on resources available in the community, contact Region of Peel – Public Health at [905-799-7700](tel:905-799-7700).





0-1
years



Love



I need smiles, hugs and kisses every day so I feel loved.

- Your baby learns by imitating you. If you smile at your baby, she will learn to smile at you.
- Your baby is learning about emotions by watching your face, listening to your voice and feeling your touch.
- Watch your baby — even before she can talk, she will send you signals to show you how she feels.
- As you get to know what makes your baby feel better, you will feel more confident in your abilities as a parent.

Other ideas and tips:

- Talk to your baby when you give her a bath, change her diaper or feed her. Tell her what you are doing.
- When your baby is upset, try holding her in different positions until you find one that works.
- Let your baby look at herself in the mirror. It is fun for her to see her reflection. As she gets older, point to her body parts (nose, mouth, ears) and tell her what they are called.

Remember:

- Breastfeeding provides love, comfort and security for your baby.

0-1
years

Love



Pick me up when I cry. You cannot spoil me and I need your comfort.

- Crying is your baby's way to tell you that she needs something. She may be hungry, in pain or need your comfort.
- Going to your baby when she cries builds connections in her brain that help her learn that she is important.
- When you comfort your baby, she is learning that her world is safe and that she can rely on you.
- When your child feels safe she will explore and learn about her world. Feeling secure as a baby will help your child handle stress better later in life.

Other ideas and tips:

- Crying is often a late sign of hunger. Get to know the signals that your baby is getting hungry (opening her mouth, sticking out her tongue, sucking on her fingers) and offer breast milk sooner rather than later.
- Ask for help if you need a break. Some babies cry more than others and it can help to have another person take a turn comforting your baby.
- Never shake your baby. Shaking your baby in a moment of frustration is harmful and can cause brain problems that last forever.
- If you notice that your baby's cry is different and she cannot be soothed, seek advice from a health-care professional.

Remember:

- Love is a very real need and your baby learns about love early in life.
- Love will help your baby feel confident and secure.
- Love builds your baby's sense of trust.



0-1
years

Feed



Nutrients in breast milk help my brain to grow, so please breastfeed me for at least six months and up to two years and beyond.

- Proper nutrition is essential for healthy connections in your baby's brain.
- Breast milk is the best food for your baby and provides all the nutrients needed for brain development.
- Breast milk is all the food your baby needs for the first six months.
- Breastfeeding allows your baby to be close to you and provides very rewarding experiences through all of her senses.

Other ideas and tips:

- Learn about the many benefits of breastfeeding before your baby is born.
- Find out where to get breastfeeding help in your community. Call Region of Peel – Public Health at [905-799-7700](tel:905-799-7700) to learn about the services available.
- Surround yourself with supportive people and look after yourself. You are the most important person in your baby's world.

A logo for the 0-1 years age group. It features the text "0-1 years" in a stylized font. The "0" is a green circle with a white outline, and the "1" is a green number with a white outline. The word "years" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The logo is set against a white background with a green border and a yellow shadow.

0-1
years

Feed



When I can hold my head up and sit up, I can start to eat other foods.

- Your baby is not physically ready to eat other foods until at least six months of age.
- Breast milk is still your baby's most important food even after starting other foods.
- Remember, your baby is learning about her world as she eats and will form connections between eating and how she feels about herself.

Other ideas and tips:

- Signs your baby is ready to start eating other foods include: holding up her head and sitting in a high chair, opening her mouth wide when you offer a spoon and keeping the food in her mouth and swallowing it. Contact Region of Peel – Public Health at [905-799-7700](tel:905-799-7700) for more information on feeding your baby.
- Follow your baby's signals — if she shows that she has had enough by turning her head away or closing her mouth, follow her lead so that she learns to trust her own hunger.
- Explain what you are doing when offering other foods, even if your baby is not talking in full words yet. It is an opportunity for her to learn new words.
- Mealtimes should be pleasant so your child feels good about eating. Sing a silly song about the food she is eating.

Remember:

- You are responsible for what your child is given to eat and how it is presented. Your child is responsible for how much and even whether she eats.

A green oval logo with a white border containing the text "0-1 years". The "0" is a stylized green circle with a white dot in the center, and the "1" is a green vertical bar with a white dot at the top. The word "years" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font below the numbers.

0-1 years

Play



Play, talk and sing to me when you feed and dress me, so I can learn to understand and talk.

- The more talking, singing and reading your baby hears, the more words she will learn and speak. Remember to give her time to respond to you.
- Your baby can learn language very quickly at this age. She will start to babble in the language she hears most often at home.
- You are your baby's best toy. Simple songs are fun and let her learn about words and music.

Other ideas and tips:

- Take your baby outside in the stroller and talk about what you see.
- Make simple songs part of everyday routines, such as bedtime when your baby is getting ready for sleep.
- Watch for signs that your baby has had enough play time. Rest is also important for healthy brain development.

Remember

- Your baby is watching what you are doing and will try to copy you.

0-1
years

Play



I love when you read to me. Hold me close and let me turn the pages.

- Reading to your baby lets him use all of his senses.
- Seeing colourful pictures stimulates eye sight and helps your baby form connections between words and pictures.
- Listening to a story helps your baby learn words. He needs to hear words many times before he can say them.
- Your baby is starting to develop memory. Repeating the same stories builds strong brain connections.

Other ideas and tips:

- Your baby will enjoy looking at himself in a mirror. He will learn what he looks like.
- Play time on the floor gives your baby a chance to develop his back and neck muscles.

Remember

- Play is the best way to give your baby the experiences that build brain connections.

0-1
years

Protect



When we travel, put me in a car seat.
Read the instructions to make sure
it is installed the right way.

- Babies need special protection while riding in the car to prevent serious injuries.
- Your baby's car seat needs to face the back of the car until she is at least one year.
- Her head is very large and her neck muscles need to be strong enough to support it before she can face the front.
- Airbags can cause brain injuries and even death. Make sure that your baby's car seat is not near any airbags.

Other ideas and tips:

- Have your car seat installed and inspected to make sure that it is safe. Call Region of Peel – Public Health at [905-799-7700](tel:905-799-7700) to find out where to go to have this done.
- Read the instructions that come with your baby's car seat.

0-1
years

Protect



I need to visit my doctor regularly to check how much I am growing and to be sure my immunizations are up to date.

- Your baby's overall health is very important for healthy brain development.
- Breast milk provides your baby with natural immunity against many illnesses.
- Your doctor will talk to you about the vaccines that help protect your baby.
- If you are concerned about how your baby is developing, talk to your doctor. Getting help early is the best way to ensure healthy development.

Other ideas and tips:

- Try to make your baby comfortable when visiting the doctor. This will help your baby learn that visiting the doctor is a normal part of life and will make visits less stressful.
- Tell your baby that you are going to the doctor and what is happening, before he has started to talk.
- Bring a comfort item to the appointment, such as a favourite blanket. Your baby will learn to trust the doctor.

0-1
years





1-2
years



Love



I feel loved when we read, play games and sing songs together.

- Learning takes place well before your child starts school. He is always learning, especially in the first six years of life.
- When you read a book with your child, he makes a connection in his brain that reading makes him feel good and he will want to read as he gets older.
- Reading allows time for you to be close to your child and builds a strong bond between the two of you.

Other ideas and tips:

- Let your child pick out the books that you will read together.
- Don't expect to read a book from start to finish. Read only until your child loses interest. Follow his lead and make it a positive experience.
- You don't have to read the story. Young children like to look at the pictures and talk about them.
- Your child will enjoy seeing and hearing the same books over and over again.

1-2
years

Love



Please be calm when I have a tantrum.

- Your child needs to develop connections in the brain that help him to control his emotions. This takes time.
- Remember that your child is watching you. If you demonstrate positive behaviours, he will learn these too.
- By having a trusting relationship with you, your child will have the confidence to deal with stress as he gets older.

Other ideas and tips:

- Talk to your child about his emotions. Name the emotions so that he can learn about what he is feeling.
- Set age-appropriate limits and expectations. Be consistent in dealing with tantrums. For more information call Region of Peel – Public Health at **905-799-7700**.
- Remember that sometimes your child's behaviour is a sign that he is overtired. He may need some quiet and calm time to gain control over his emotions.

1-2
years

Feed



You decide what I eat so offer me healthy foods. I decide how much to eat.

- Your child needs to learn to listen to her body to know when she is hungry and full.
- Choose healthy food that provides the nutrients she needs for healthy connections to be made in her brain.
- How your child feels about her body starts at a young age. Help your child feel good about her body by showing her that you feel good about yours.
- Your child is learning about the world by watching and copying you. If you eat healthy foods, she will be more likely to do the same.
- Your child will form connections between her emotions and eating. By keeping mealtimes happy, she will feel good about eating and about herself.

Other ideas and tips:

- Ask your child about her day during mealtimes. This is a chance to learn about how she is feeling and for her to practise language skills.
- Be patient when starting a new food with your child. It may take many attempts before she tries it.
- Remember that your child's tummy is not very big. Offer a small amount and let her ask for more if she is still hungry. She is learning to listen to her own body.
- Breast milk is still a healthy food for your baby. Breast milk changes as your baby grows so that it still provides the nutrients she needs.

1-2
years

Feed



Please let me be messy. I learn about my food by touching and mashing it.

- Your child is learning about his world through his senses. He can enjoy food with all of the senses.
- Allow your child to feed himself so connections in his brain can grow stronger. He is learning a new skill.
- By touching, picking up and mashing his food, your child is making connections in his brain. He is learning how to control his fingers and hands.
- The same actions that your child uses to pick up bite-sized food will be used and further developed when he learns to print.

Other ideas and tips:

- Remember to think about safety when giving finger foods to your child.
- Let your child practise pouring water from one cup to another.
- Place a large, plastic tablecloth on the floor under your child's eating space to help with cleanup.

Note:

Remember that your child will be eating with his hands. Begin a routine around handwashing before snacks and meals. This will help protect him from illness.

1-2
years

Play



I enjoy throwing, rolling and kicking my ball.

- Physical activity is an important part of your child's overall health.
- Your child's brain develops when she tries new physical activities such as walking, running and jumping.
- While playing with a ball, your child is learning by trial and error. This will help her solve new problems as she grows.
- When you throw a ball to your child, she is practising her hand-eye co-ordination and gaining muscle control.

Other ideas and tips:

- Have different sizes and colours of balls — talk about them and have her tell you which one is the biggest.
- Set up a laundry basket outside and have your child try to throw the ball into the basket.

Remember

- Playing with you is more fun for your child than playing alone.

1-2
years

Play



Show me how to jump in the leaves, splash in the puddles and explore the outdoors.

- Taking the time to play outdoors with your child makes him feel important and makes him feel good about himself.
- Being outdoors gives your child many learning opportunities — he can learn about nature, the weather and birds.
- Your child is developing memory at this age — positive experiences help to form happy memories.

Other ideas and tips:

- Set up a cave in your back yard using boxes and blankets.
- Collect leaves that have fallen off the trees. Talk about their colour and save them to make a picture.

Remember

- Playing and learning does not need to be expensive — learning about the outdoors is free!

1-2
years

Protect



I am learning to crawl and walk.
I can get to places fast and reach
new things. Stay close so you can
keep me safe.

- Your child is naturally curious at this age. He is discovering his world and learning new things.
- When you make sure your child has a safe place to play, he feels confident and safe enough to explore.
- Remember that he is also developing his memory – if he gets hurt, he may not be as eager to explore.

Other ideas and tips:

- Protect your child from falls by putting safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Keep medicines, cleaning products and other poisons locked up and out of reach.
- Make sure that bookcases, lamps and heavy furniture are fastened to the wall so that your child can't pull them down on himself.
- Lead is especially dangerous to your child's developing brain. Call Region of Peel – Public Health at [905-799-7700](tel:905-799-7700) for more information.

1-2
years

Protect



I like to put small things in my mouth.
If I can reach it, make sure it is
bigger than a two dollar coin or
I could choke.

- Because your child is learning through his senses, he is naturally going to put things in his mouth.
- Your child has a small airway, so grate, mash or blend food into small pieces so there is less chance of choking.
- Remember that being able to bring things to his mouth is the beginning of being able to use forks and spoons.

Other ideas and tips:

- Keep your child seated when he is eating so that he is not running with food in his mouth.
- Take an approved CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and First Aid course.
- Pay attention to the age recommendations on toys so your child can play without the worry of choking.

1-2
years





2-4
years



Love



Please remind me about clear and simple limits because I forget quickly.

- Learning about limits in everyday activities help your child build connections in her brain about what is right and wrong.
- Because learning takes place in stages, the limits need to be simple enough for her to understand.
- Repeating what you expect from your child helps make the connections stronger so that limits will be learned permanently.
- The simple limits you teach your child now will help her in school. You are your child's most important teacher.

Other ideas and tips:

- When you play games with your child, explain the rules to her and why they are important.
- When you hold the door open for your child, explain why you are doing it and why it is polite.
- Try not to get angry when your young child forgets about the limits that you have set — she is learning and will eventually remember them.

2-4
years

Love



I like to dress myself and put my own toys away, even though it takes a long time. Thank you for being patient.

- Even though your child may pick out clothes that don't match, he is learning independence by deciding himself.
- Remember that learning something new takes time and practise. It may take a long time for your child to put on his coat, but the more he tries it, the easier it will get.
- Learning these new skills will help your child once he starts school.
- Giving your child an environment that is not rushed allows your child the chance to explore and learn. Try to leave extra time to get ready.

Other ideas and tips:

- Getting dressed is the perfect chance to teach your child new words. Talk about the colours, count the socks and name the clothing.
- Notice your child's efforts when he picks up his toys and let him know that you appreciate it. Do not be critical if it isn't perfect — he will be more likely to tidy up if it is a positive experience.
- Comment on what your child was able to do rather than what he wasn't. It will build his confidence.

Remember

- Learning life skills are just as important as learning to read and do math.

2-4
years

Feed



If you eat healthy foods, I will try them too.

- Remember that you are your child's first role model. If you eat a healthy variety of foods, she will be more likely to do the same.
- If you say bad things about food or mealtimes, your child may form connections in her brain that make her feel the same way.
- Often the main attraction for your child at mealtime is not the food but you and your family.

Other ideas and tips:

- Let your child become involved during mealtimes. Give her plastic spoons and forks to place on the table.
- Talk about healthy foods when you visit the grocery store. This is a great chance for your child to learn about words and colours.
- Make healthy food choices more appealing by cutting them in interesting shapes and presenting them in different containers.

2-4
years

Feed



For me to grow, think and play I need three healthy meals and at least two snacks every day.

- Because your child's brain is developing very quickly at this age, he needs a regular supply of energy and nutrients.
- Eating a healthy breakfast gives your child the nutrients he needs to learn.
- Your child has a small tummy and he uses a lot of energy. He needs to have healthy snacks between meals.
- Having good nutrition allows your child to explore his world and learn new skills.
- Breastfeeding can still be a source of nutrition and comfort for your child.

Other ideas and tips:

For meals, remember to include food from at least three of the following food groups:

- Grain Products
- Vegetables and Fruits
- Milk Products
- Meat and Alternatives

For snacks, include food from at least two of the food groups.

For more ideas on meals for young children, call Region of Peel – Public Health at [905-799-7700](tel:905-799-7700).

2-4
years

Play



Let's play follow-the-leader because I like to be active and keep moving.

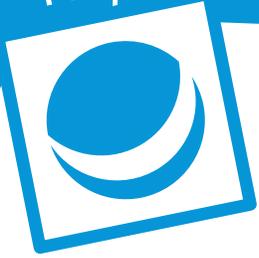
- Playing with other children at this age is important for your child to learn how to get along with others.
- Play is the best way to learn social skills such as talking to each other, problem-solving, taking turns and getting along with one another.
- Physical activity is important for your child's overall health and helps to develop her physical skills.

Other ideas and tips:

- Listen to a variety of music with your child — the part of the brain that learns about music is the same area that is used for math skills.
- Boxes, blankets, pillows and cushions make great forts and castles.
- Visit your local Ontario Early Years Centre, Readiness Centre, HUB or Public Library. They are free and offer a wealth of programs where you and your child can meet new friends.

2-4
years

Play



Doing simple puzzles together is fun.
Thanks for helping me when I get
frustrated.

- Solving simple puzzles helps build the skills that are needed for problem-solving as your child grows.
- Remember that your child needs to learn basic things before he can learn more complicated ones.
- Make sure the puzzles you do with your child are for his age. This will help prevent him from becoming frustrated.
- If your child is getting frustrated, tell him what he did well and move on to another activity.

Other ideas and tips:

- If your child does get frustrated, help him name his emotions and let him know that you understand how he feels.
- Make your own puzzles at home together. Take old greeting cards and glue them on heavy cardboard. Cut the picture into puzzle pieces.
- Remember that puzzles are a great activity for grandparents, aunts and uncles to do with your child.

2-4
years

Protect



Never leave me alone in the bathtub, at the beach or pool because I can drown very quickly.

- Because it is very easy for young children to learn new activities, this is an ideal time to introduce your child to water and swimming under adult supervision.
- Water provides a rich sensory experience and can be a lot of fun at this age.
- Infants and young children drown more frequently than all other ages.
- The only safe way for your child to explore water is to be with her and watch her at all times.

Other ideas and tips:

- Take your child to a swimming program. Parent and tot classes are a fun way to learn about swimming and to meet other families.
- Remember that older children are not developmentally ready to take on the responsibility of watching your young child in the water.
- Make sure all of the adults who look after your child know how to swim and know they must give your child full attention around water.

2-4
years

Protect



1..2..3..4..5..



You tell me never to hit anyone even when I am really angry. I learn from what you do.

- Part of brain development is learning about the connection between emotions and actions.
- Remember that your child is constantly watching the behaviour of the adults around her and she will use the same behaviours.
- Your child will be confused if you tell her to act a certain way and then you do the opposite.

Other ideas and tips:

- If your child does hit, talk to her about it right away and tell her how it made you feel. This will help her to learn about other people's feelings.
- Be consistent with your child. Say and do the same things in the same situations. This way she will learn to trust you.
- If your child feels safe, she will learn about her world.

2-4
years





4-6
years



Love



When you encourage me when I have done something well, I feel good about myself.

- Part of your child's brain development is building connections about how she feels about herself (self-esteem).
- Talking to your child about her actions allows her to learn. This gives her a chance to talk to you about them too.
- Your child will start to build the connection between what she has done and what happens.
- You can help your child learn family values by explaining to her what she did and how it made you feel. This helps her learn about your feelings and her own.

Other ideas and tips:

- When you listen to your child talk about her feelings, you are showing her how to listen too. This will help her learn about how people feel and help her get along with others.
- If your child builds something with blocks, let her know you saw how hard she worked on it. Ask her about what she built so she can tell you about it.

Remember

- Your child is learning about emotions by watching you. Make sure your words match your body language.

4-6
years

Love



I need simple choices so I can learn to make decisions.

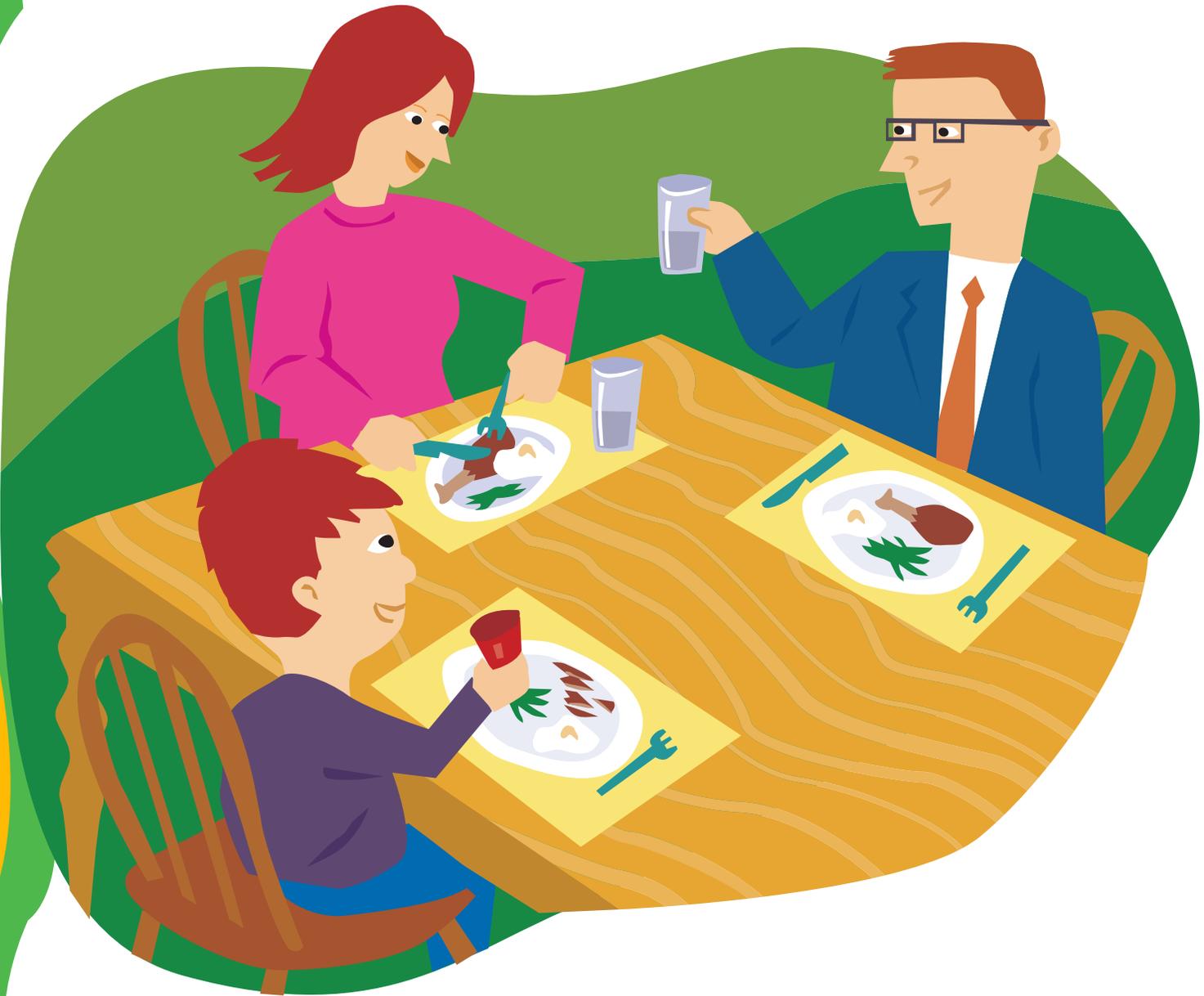
- Part of your child's brain development is forming connections that let him learn to make decisions.
- Decision-making is the beginning of problem-solving. That will be useful when he goes to school.
- Simple choices let your child make decisions and learn about their effects.
- Your child's brain needs to learn basic skills before he learns more complicated ones. Therefore, the choices you give your child must be simple.

Other ideas and tips:

- Ask, "Would you like water or milk to drink?" instead of asking, "What do you want to drink?"
- Playing a simple card game provides many opportunities for your child to make decisions. Make sure that it is appropriate for your child's age.
- When you have a free day, provide your child with two or three ideas of what you could do together and let him choose. Make sure to offer ideas you can follow through on.

4-6
years

Feed



Sit down and eat with me. When I enjoy mealtimes with my family, I learn to eat healthy food.

- Enjoying meals with family members builds connections in your child's brain that mealtime is a happy time.
- Eating together provides the perfect chance for you and your child to talk about what happened during the day. This helps your child feel important.
- Creating memories is actually part of brain development. Pleasant mealtimes often become strong memories.

Other ideas and tips:

- When you and your child sit down to eat together as a family, he will be more likely to eat healthy foods.
- Eating at the table gives your child the chance to learn and practise social skills.
- For more information on healthy eating, visit: peelhealthykids.ca.

4-6
years

Feed



I may say “no” to new foods you offer to me. Keep trying – one day I might decide to taste it.

- Be positive when offering new foods and try not to get upset if your child will not try it the first time.
- When you get upset, he may form a connection between that food and negative emotions. He will be less likely to try it again.
- The brain needs to learn to like new foods. It may take several tries before he likes it.
- Your child may try new foods if he has helped you prepare it. Helping out during mealtimes makes him feel good about himself and lets him learn new skills.

Other ideas and tips:

- Add healthy ingredients to foods that your child already likes. For example, add shredded apples to pancakes.
- Cut fruits and vegetables into interesting shapes and offer a dip, such as yogurt or sour cream.
- Talk about colours while you are eating. Ask your child to eat something orange, green or red. Often colourful veggies and fruits have healthy nutrients.

4-6
years

Play



I like to use my imagination and play dress-up with my friends.

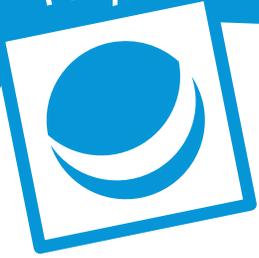
- Encouraging imaginative play helps build the part of the brain responsible for creativity.
- Playing dress-up lets your child express her emotions.
- Pretending is a natural way for your child to learn about real life experiences.
- Your child can try different roles during imaginative play — mother, father, teacher and doctor.

Other ideas and tips:

- Go to your local second hand clothing shop and purchase some interesting clothes or save some of the ones you no longer wear. Wash them and keep them in a box as a dress-up centre.
- Make a puppet theatre out of an old paper box. Using puppets also lets your child role play and use her imagination.
- Playing dress-up with friends allows your child to practise interacting with others.

4-6
years

Play



I like to tell you stories about pictures I draw, paint, cut and paste.

- Creating stories forms connections in your child's brain between imagination and language.
- By letting your child create a story, he is learning by experience and using decision-making skills.
- Sometimes, your child may use a story to show you how he is feeling.
- Using scissors, paint and paper allows your child to practise using his fingers and hands.

Other ideas and tips:

- Provide your child with the paper, glue and crayons but let him decide what he will make. This will help encourage his creativity.
- Don't worry if your child colours the sky red and the grass blue — this is his way of creating.
- Provide an area in the house where your child can do crafts. A small table with a tablecloth underneath it will make cleanup easier.

Remember

- Being creative at a young age will help him adapt to new situations as he grows.

4-6
years

Protect



I learn by watching you. Tell and show me the traffic safety rules.

- What your child learns now will create connections in the brain and build knowledge that he will need as he grows.
- If your child learns early that putting on his seatbelt is a routine when getting into a car, he will form a connection that he should wear it every time.
- Remember that you are the most important role model for your child — set a good example for him by following the rules.

Other ideas and tips:

- When you are travelling in the car or on the bus, use this time to talk about what you see, hear and smell. Learning can happen anywhere.
- Talk about the different traffic signs and what they mean. Have your child play a game where he looks for certain signs.
- Have your child practise recognizing words and letters on signs.

4-6
years

Protect



You take the time to ask me about my day every day. You listen to me so I know I can tell you anything.

- Your child is learning about trust from birth. He learns that he can always talk to you about worries when you listen to what he has to say.
- Even when your schedule is very busy, taking time to listen to your child will help him learn that he can always come to you.
- It is very important that your child feels comfortable talking to you. This will help him talk to you about serious problems such as bullying as he gets older.
- Tell your child about some of the things you did during your day especially if you haven't seen each other all day. Your child will copy you.

Other ideas and tips:

- Give your child some quiet time to unwind at the end of his day — remember to read his cues.
- Get involved at your child's preschool or school.
- Meet some of your child's friends and their parents. Set up a play date at your house for your child and his friends.

Remember

- Having good quality child care is extremely important. It can affect how your child learns and develops.

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4-6
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