



Northern
Territory
Government

Tune in to Little Ones



Healthy Development

Guidelines on supporting the growth and
development of little ones under 2 years old

About the Tune in to Little Ones kit

The ***Tune in to Little Ones*** kit has been developed by the Office of Children and Families as part of an initiative to focus on vulnerable infants. ***Tune in to Little Ones*** has five key elements (see back page) that aim to strengthen service responses for those who work with vulnerable infants under 2 years old and their families. It has been produced in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

Acknowledgements

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Contact us

Department of Children and Families
Darwin Plaza, Level 5, 41 Smith St Darwin NT 0800
PO Box 40596, Casuarina NT 0811

Telephone: (08) 8999 2737
Fax: (08) 8999 2833

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About this booklet

This *Healthy Development* booklet is a part of the **Tune in to Little Ones** kit.



Development outlines what you can expect children less than 2 years old (little ones) to be doing as they grow and learn.



Support then gives some ideas of things you can encourage parents and caregivers to do to have close relationships with their little ones and to support their development.

The booklet is divided into sections based on age ranges. Each section looks at important areas of a child's development:

- ◎ **social and emotional:** how a little one shows their feelings and learns about interacting with others
- ◎ **language:** how they communicate their needs and feelings to others
- ◎ **hand movements and understanding:** how they develop their hand coordination and learn to understand their world
- ◎ **body movements:** how they move their body and interact with their environment and others.

These are guidelines only. Children grow and develop at their own pace and in their own way, and their learning builds on what they have learnt already. Make sure you look at the sections before and after a particular age group to see how parents and caregivers can support their child's development and learning.

'Little ones' in this booklet are children under 2 years old. They can also be referred to as infants, babies, bubs, bobbies, tots, littlies or toddlers.

Parents and caregivers

The parents and caregivers referred to in this booklet include anyone who cares for and has responsibility for a little one. This can include:

mother grandparent kinship carer
father sibling extended family member
step-parent foster carer

Find out more about
child development and
parenting from the
NT Families website
www.families.nt.gov.au

Parents and caregivers play a vital role in providing a safe and nurturing environment to help their child grow, learn and explore.

Let them know:

- ☉ that it's important for them to talk and play with their little one
- ☉ they can't 'spoil' their baby
- ☉ that babies are not 'naughty' – they don't do things just to annoy their parents or caregivers
- ☉ that each child will grow and develop differently in their own way
- ☉ about safe sleeping practices (visit www.sidsandkids.org)
- ☉ that by responding lovingly and quickly to their little one's needs, parents and caregivers are:
 - helping them learn to comfort themselves
 - helping their brain development
 - helping them learn how to interact with others.



Health and development

Babies and infants need to be kept up to date with their development checks and immunisations. These are due at the following ages:

Immunisation 4 weeks 4 months 6 months 12 months 18 months

Development check 4 weeks 6-8 weeks 6-8 months 15-18 months

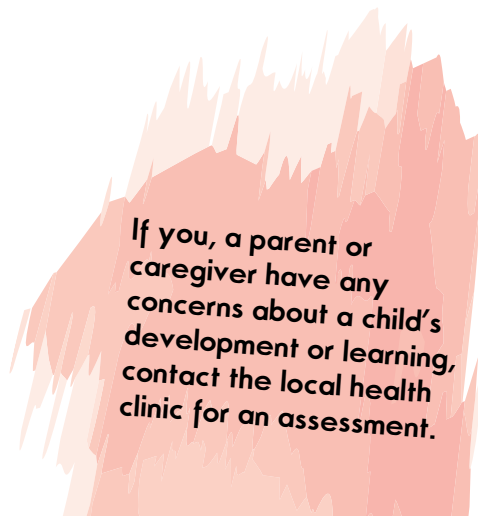
Support parents and caregivers to take their little one to the clinic or health centre if you need to.

A child's cultural and social environment can affect how they grow, learn and communicate their needs and feelings.

For example, an Aboriginal infant might:

- ④ walk earlier than this booklet suggests because they may be encouraged to walk and become physically independent at an early age.
- ④ use and understand more non-verbal language (such as hand movements and facial expressions) than verbal language.

It's important to use an interpreter or cultural advisor to help you work with families from a cultural or language group different from your own.



If you, a parent or caregiver have any concerns about a child's development or learning, contact the local health clinic for an assessment.

By 6 weeks



Development

Social and emotional

- Is learning to trust people close to them
- Smiles at people (within a few days after birth)
- Likes to look at human faces
- Likes to be cuddled and soothed

Language

- 'Asks for a break' by looking away, crying, arching their back, frowning
- Uses body movements, sounds (including different cries) and facial expressions to communicate when they are hungry, tired, upset, uncomfortable or bored
- Socialises by watching faces and exchanging looks



Support

- Smile and talk to their baby
- Work out ways to soothe their baby
- Gently comfort, stroke and hold their baby: skin-to-skin is good
- Kiss and cuddle their baby
- If possible, breastfeed for at least 6 months (good for health, but also to look into baby's eyes and smile, talk)
- Work out how their baby 'tells' them they have had enough
- Watch and listen carefully to work out what their baby's cries and movements are telling them
- Look into their baby's eyes and talk to them
- Talk and sing with their baby
- Copy their baby's sounds and movements

Development

Hand movements and understanding

- ☉ Hands close around objects placed in them, as a reflex
- ☉ Looks at and interacts with people and objects

Body movements

- ☉ Lifts head briefly while on their tummy (cannot support head without help)
- ☉ Focuses on objects (including faces) within 20-40cm
- ☉ With their eyes, follows an object moved in an arc about 15cm above their face until it is straight ahead
- ☉ Moves arms and legs on both sides of the body equally well
- ☉ Responds to a bell in some way, such as startling, crying, or being distracted by it

Support

- ☉ Offer different and safe things to look at, touch and hold
- ☉ Work out what kinds of things their baby likes best (e.g. singing, stories, looking at toys or objects)
- ☉ Hold their baby in a way that supports their head and neck
- ☉ Play 'tracking games' – slowly move their faces or colourful things back and forth so that their baby can follow the movement with their eyes, then later by moving their head. This helps develop eye and neck muscles
- ☉ Provide ways for their baby to see and hear, and to move their arms and legs freely

Help mothers, fathers and caregivers get support if they are feeling 'down' or unable to cope with their new baby.

By 4 months



Development

Social and emotional

- ☉ Laughs out loud
- ☉ Squeals in delight
- ☉ Notices strangers
- ☉ Smiles spontaneously



Support

- ☉ Smile and talk to their baby
- ☉ Talk to their baby about things that are happening
- ☉ Carry their baby facing away so they can see and explore
- ☉ Kiss and cuddle their baby

Language

- ☉ Starts 'conversations' and interactions with caregivers with their voice, movements and facial expressions
- ☉ Copy their baby's sounds and movements
- ☉ Sing songs and rhymes, listen to music
- ☉ Use a gentle voice and language

Babies love company and will respond to smiling faces and fun, gentle interactions.

Development

Hand movements and understanding

- ☉ Reaches for things to try to hold them
- ☉ Learns by looking at and holding objects, and by putting them in their mouth
- ☉ Waves a rattle, plays with their own fingers and toes
- ☉ Brings both hands together
- ☉ With their eyes, follows an object moved in an arc about 15cm above their face from one side to the other

Body movements

- ☉ Rolls over (one way)
- ☉ Holds head steady when upright
- ☉ Lies on tummy and holds head up to look around

Encourage parents and caregivers to have fun and enjoy time with their baby.

Support

- ☉ Offer light rattles/toys of different shapes for their baby to explore and reach for
- ☉ Provide ways for their baby to see, hear, feel, move freely and touch
- ☉ Play tracking games (see 'by 6 weeks')



By 6 months



Development

Social and emotional

- ⊙ Uses their parents and caregivers for comfort and security
- ⊙ May be wary of strangers
- ⊙ Enjoys playing and interacting with others
- ⊙ Recognises familiar faces and smiles
- ⊙ Laughs, squeals and chuckles

Language

- ⊙ Starts interactions with parents and caregivers (e.g. through voice, gestures)
- ⊙ Uses sounds and movements to show feelings and get needs met (e.g. coos, giggles)
- ⊙ 'Takes turns' with people to make noises and babble
- ⊙ Copies sounds and facial expressions, blows a 'raspberry'
- ⊙ Plays peek-a-boo



Support

- ⊙ Hold, cuddle and kiss their baby
- ⊙ Use facial expressions when talking with their baby
- ⊙ Work out how their baby lets them know what they want and how they are feeling
- ⊙ Play 'give and take' games with their baby with interesting objects

- ⊙ Smile, laugh and talk with their baby about what they are doing
- ⊙ Copy their baby's sounds and movements to have a 'conversation'
- ⊙ Work out how their baby enjoys communicating best
- ⊙ Read and tell stories
- ⊙ Point to and name things

Development

Hand movements and understanding

- ⊙ Makes links between what they hear, taste and feel
- ⊙ Puts everything in their mouths to touch, taste and learn
- ⊙ Can move things from hand to hand
- ⊙ Can reach for toys
- ⊙ Swipes at dangling objects

Body movements

- ⊙ Good head control (keeps head level with body when pulled to sitting)
- ⊙ Turns head in the direction of a voice
- ⊙ Holds head up and looks for sounds
- ⊙ May be able to sit without support
- ⊙ May be able to roll both ways and help to feed themselves
- ⊙ Can briefly support body weight when held on feet

Babies enjoy being outside and being shown the things around them.

Support

- ⊙ Work out what their baby likes playing with best
- ⊙ Offer safe objects of different shapes, sizes and textures for their baby to feel, taste and learn about (e.g. toys, cups, spoons, fruits and vegetables)
- ⊙ Allow their baby to explore things safely with their mouth
- ⊙ Think about how their baby likes to use their body to explore – what positions do they like/not like?
- ⊙ Place toys a little way away so their baby can reach and grab for them
- ⊙ Give their baby opportunities to sit up

From 6 months babies need solid foods as well as breast milk.

By 9 months



Development

Social and emotional

- ⦿ Watches how other people react to things, including their emotional reactions
- ⦿ Recognises and copies happy, sad, excited or fearful emotions
- ⦿ Expresses positive and negative emotions
- ⦿ Very anxious when separated from parents/caregivers
- ⦿ Wary of and anxious with strangers

Language

- ⦿ Lets people know when they want help and communicates with facial expressions, gestures, sounds and perhaps one or two words
- ⦿ 'Babbles', or 'baby talks'
- ⦿ Waves goodbye, plays peek-a-boo
- ⦿ Copies sounds and movements
- ⦿ Understands some words



Support

- ⦿ Model positive ways of behaving and showing emotions (their baby is watching them)
 - ⦿ Work out how their baby lets them know what they are thinking and feeling
 - ⦿ Tickle, cuddle and laugh with their baby
 - ⦿ Get down and sing, play, read and dance with their baby
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- ⦿ Work out how their baby communicates their needs and feelings
 - ⦿ Name and talk about things their baby points at
 - ⦿ Play peek-a-boo with a towel or cloth – let their baby pull it down
 - ⦿ Play copying games with sounds and actions, taking it in turns to be the leader (e.g. clapping, noises)
 - ⦿ Call their baby's name

Development

Hand movements and understanding

- 🌀 Looks for a dropped object
- 🌀 Looks for objects hidden from view
- 🌀 Dumps things out of containers
- 🌀 Very curious – bangs, feels, tastes and throws things

Body movements

- 🌀 Sits up without much help
- 🌀 Can lean forward to pick up and play with toys once sitting firmly
- 🌀 Works to get a toy that is out of reach
- 🌀 May be able to bottom shuffle, crawl, stand

Parents and caregivers can use simple everyday objects such as plastic cups, bowls, saucepans, wooden spoons and pegs to play with their little one.

Support

- 🌀 Teach their baby to wave bye-bye
- 🌀 Hide an object under a cloth and let their baby find it
- 🌀 Provide safe things such as cups, spoons and bowls to hold, bang and drop
- 🌀 Work out what their baby likes to play with. What does this tell them about their little one?
- 🌀 Provide soft toys and books to hold and play with while sitting
- 🌀 Place toys just out of reach to encourage crawling
- 🌀 Check if they need to make their place safer for their baby to explore
- 🌀 Provide plastic cups and toys to play with water (and always watch them)
- 🌀 Allow their baby to explore their environment – make it safe first

By 12 months



Development

Social and emotional

- Seeks comfort from familiar objects, family, and carers, and can be soothed by them
- Does not like to be separated from familiar people
- Begins to self-soothe when upset
- Good at showing feelings with sounds, gestures and facial expressions
- Shows strong emotions and moods
- Moves away from things that upset them
- Gets frustrated

Body movements

- Walks holding hands or furniture
- Pulls up to a standing position and gets into a sitting position
- Moves independently (e.g. crawls)
- Dances or bounces to music



Support

- Make their little one feel safe and secure by holding them and giving cuddles
 - Think about how their little one copes if they have to leave them. What helps to make it easier?
 - Play hide-and-seek games
 - Comfort their little one when they cry
 - If their little one is frustrated, help them to calm down and try again
 - Pull funny faces or make noises to make their little one laugh
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- Help their little one with walking by holding their hand or letting them push stable toys with wheels
 - Visit a playgroup, library, toy library or park
 - Play music to 'dance' to

Development

Hand movements and understanding

- ⊙ Learns and gets more confident by exploring and doing things repeatedly
- ⊙ Picks up objects with thumb and forefinger
- ⊙ Looks for objects hidden from view
- ⊙ Holds objects with both hands

Language

- ⊙ Enjoys communicating with family and other familiar people
- ⊙ Shows what they want in ways other than crying (e.g. points at things)
- ⊙ Turns head when name is called
- ⊙ Understands more than they can say
- ⊙ Uses their voice to get attention

Support

- ⊙ Help their little one to build towers, stack cups and knock them down
- ⊙ Play with their little one by handing toys/objects back and forth
- ⊙ Watch their little one and 'follow their lead' in playing with things
- ⊙ Work out their little one's favourite activities.

- ⊙ Help their little one learn tunes, songs and words
- ⊙ Look through simple books together and talk about the pictures
- ⊙ Name body parts for their little one to point to
- ⊙ Call their little one's name
- ⊙ Use simple instructions

Parents and caregivers can look in a mirror with their little one – smile and point to their changing images.

By 18 months



Development

Social and emotional

- ⊙ Shows a broad range of emotions (e.g. pleasure, anger, frustration)
- ⊙ Enjoys affection from parents and caregivers
- ⊙ May cling to parents and caregivers
- ⊙ May need help to deal with strong emotions
- ⊙ Seems independent but checks that a parent/caregiver is nearby
- ⊙ Enjoys company of other little ones but is happy to play alone
- ⊙ Does not want to share

Body movements

- ⊙ Very mobile (e.g. walks, runs, climbs)
- ⊙ Bends over to pick things up
- ⊙ Pushes and pulls large toys
- ⊙ Turns their head to sounds above and below them



Support

- ⊙ Include their little one in daily activities
- ⊙ Make their little one feel safe and secure by holding them and giving cuddles
- ⊙ Think about how their little one copes if they have to leave them. What helps to make it easier?
- ⊙ Think of positive ways to distract their little one away from unsafe things
- ⊙ Comfort their little one when they cry
- ⊙ If their little one is frustrated, help them to calm down and try again
- ⊙ Help their little one play with balls, buckets and spades, sand and water
- ⊙ Provide large toys to ride on, push and pull
- ⊙ Visit a playgroup, library, toy library or park

Development

Hand movements and understanding

- ⦿ Is curious about things and wants to explore
- ⦿ Can use 'pretend play'
- ⦿ Plays next to other children
- ⦿ Feeds self with spoon, hands
- ⦿ Drinks from a cup

Language

- ⦿ Uses at least three meaningful words and is learning lots more
- ⦿ Lets people know what they are thinking and feeling through sounds and gestures (e.g. pointing to things)
- ⦿ Shakes and nods head for 'no' and 'yes'
- ⦿ Follows simple directions

Playgroups, toy libraries and parks can be good places for parents and caregivers to meet, talk and share stories with others, as well as play with their little one.

Support

- ⦿ Work out what kind of play their little one likes
- ⦿ Provide safe containers and objects (e.g. cups, bowls, spoons) to stack, pour and pretend play with
- ⦿ Watch the different ways their little one plays with things
- ⦿ Sit together and take it in turns to stack and put things in and out of containers
- ⦿ Work out how their little one communicates what they want and feel
- ⦿ Encourage their little one to use words, sounds and gestures to communicate
- ⦿ Play games with simple instructions: see how many their little one can follow
- ⦿ Play, sing, talk, read, tell stories, and listen to music together: make up rhymes with actions

By 2 years



Development

Social and emotional

- ⊙ Likes to do things their own way
- ⊙ Feels frustrated and can have tantrums
- ⊙ Plays near, but not with, other children
- ⊙ Does not understand consequences

Language

- ⊙ Understands a lot and can communicate well with sound and actions
- ⊙ May be able to use words and be understood some of the time



Support

- ⊙ Encourage their little one to help with household tasks (e.g. dirty clothes in the wash, handing up pegs for the washing)
- ⊙ Offer their little one ways to feel in control by giving them choices (e.g. which cup to use, what shirt to wear)
- ⊙ Help their little one cope with frustration by calming them down and distracting them with another activity
- ⊙ Accept when their little one is upset and help them to put their feelings into words
- ⊙ Use simple sentences that their little one can copy
- ⊙ Turn words and phrases their little one says into sentences (e.g. when they say 'dog run', say 'Yes, the dog is running across the road')
- ⊙ Give their little one simple instructions to follow – and make it a game

Development

Hand movements and understanding

- ⊗ Enjoys pretend play
- ⊗ Uses fingers and hands to stack things (e.g. build a tower of 4 cubes)
- ⊗ Figures out simple problems
- ⊗ Uses toys and objects in different ways to play
- ⊗ Recognises and points to body parts and objects
- ⊗ Turns pages and points to pictures in books
- ⊗ Holds and drinks from a cup

Body movements

- ⊗ Takes off clothing
- ⊗ Actively plays and explores
- ⊗ Throws a ball
- ⊗ Squats

A large cardboard box can be used for climbing, hiding, playing peek-a-boo, throwing balls into, or as a cubby house.

Support

- ⊗ Provide things (e.g. toys, cups, pots, pegs) to stack, take apart, fit inside each other and use for pretend play
- ⊗ Do simple puzzles together
- ⊗ Let their little one play with sand, water, natural materials, playdoh and crayons
- ⊗ Provide old clothes to dress up in
- ⊗ Play pretend games
- ⊗ Look at books and tell stories
- ⊗ Work out the things their little one likes to do

- ⊗ Kick and throw balls, play chasing and running games together
- ⊗ Go for a walk together; point out and talk about things they see
- ⊗ Help their little one play with balls, buckets and spades, sand and water
- ⊗ Provide large toys to ride on, push and pull
- ⊗ Visit a playgroup, library, toy library or park

For more information and support

Community Care Centres

Alice Springs.....	8951 6711
Darwin (<i>Casuarina, Stuart Park, Karama</i>).....	8922 7301
Katherine	8973 8570
Palmerston	8999 3344
Tennant Creek	8962 4218
Nhulunbuy	8987 0435

Remote Health Clinics

www.health.nt.gov.au/Service_Locator/Remote_Health_Centres/index.aspx

Health Direct 24/7 health advice and information

Telephone 1800 022 222

Parentline parenting support, counselling and education

From 8am-10pm seven days a week

Telephone 1300 30 1300

NT Families Website *Parent Tip Sheets and 7 Steps to Safety kit*

www.families.nt.gov.au

The ***Tune in to Little Ones*** kit is for people who work with families who have a child under 2 years old.

This *Healthy Development* booklet gives ideas on how workers can assist parents and caregivers to support their little one's growth and development.

Other elements of the ***Tune in to Little Ones*** kit include:

Worker Resource Manual

Extra Concerns and How to Help booklet

The Wheel poster

Key Messages about Children poster

For references and further research,
visit *Office of Children and Families - Publications*
(childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au)

