



CHILD DEVELOPMENT

USING THIS RESOURCE

The information contained in this wellbeing resource is designed for practitioners and parents to build on awareness and understanding of child development.

This information provides a general outline of child development, expected milestone and some practical strategies that can assist where experiences of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) may have interrupted a child's progress. Primary carers and the people that support them could use this information to begin to adopt some practices or strategies that may help.

This wellbeing resource is informed by;

- www.raisingchildren.net.au
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/ActEarly
- www.1800respect.org.au/violence-and-abuse/children-and-violence/

This resource is not exhaustive nor is it intended to replace the support of medical practitioners or other professionals.

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Child development includes physical growth and the development of social, emotional, behavioural, communication and thinking skills. Areas of development are interdependent and influence each other. Research indicates that in the first five years of life a child's brain develops faster than at any other time. The development of children from some cultural backgrounds may vary from traditional developmental norms that usually reflect an Anglo-Western perspective.

"Babies are born ready to learn, and their brains develop through use. Your child needs a stimulating environment with lots of different activities that give her plenty of ways to play and learn, and lots of chances to practice what s/he is learning."

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Nutrition, physical activity, health care and connection to a community all impact on the development of a child, and two things are thought to be vital to children's development: relationships; and play.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships, in particular, relationships with carers, have the most substantial impact on child development. It is through relationships that children learn about the world around them, and relationships shape how they see and understand the world.

Through relationships, your child learns whether the world is safe and secure, whether s/he is loved, who loves her/him, what happens when s/he cries, laughs or makes a face – and much more. Your child also learns by seeing relationships between other people – for example, how you behave towards your partner, and how your partner behaves towards you. This learning is the basis for the development of your child's communication, behaviour, social and other skills.

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT & PLAY

Children develop through play, especially in their early years. The play is simultaneously fun and a learning experience. In play children move, observe, explore, experiment, think, solve problems, learn from their mistakes, and learn how to be with people and how to build relationships. Play that includes talking, listening, interacting, encouragement and a balance of support and allowing children to learn from their mistakes has improved outcomes for children.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Child development occurs in stages which usually happen in the same order, but children grow and develop at different rates, even in the same family. Key development milestones occur within **a range, not at a set time**.

Development does not occur in a straight line or evenly. Development progresses sequentially, although it is essential to note that while the path of development is somewhat predictable, there is variation in what is considered healthy development. That is to say; no two children develop in the same way.

The 'Centers for Disease Control and Prevention' have developed milestones of developmental stages from birth to five years. Each checklist notes what **most** babies, infants and children do at each stage, and how parents and carers can support their development. Additionally, each checklist provides indicators that if identified the recommendation is to seek additional medical advice.

The [Birth to Five Milestones](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly) are from www.cdc.gov/ActEarly

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

General health affects development and behaviour. Minor illnesses have short to medium term effects, while chronic health conditions can have long-term effects. Nutritional deficiencies can have negative impacts on developmental progression.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Living with Domestic and Family Violence is a distressing experience for children. The effects can be traumatising, ongoing and long-lasting. They can build up over time and impact on every aspect of children's lives, including health, development and wellbeing.

1800 Respect

1800 Respect provide information about children and violence

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/violence-and-abuse/children-and-violence/>

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