



Wee Beginner (0 – 18 months):

How Bath Time Stimulates a Baby's Brain

Wee Explorer (18 months – 3 years):

6 Milestones that Mark the Transition from Baby to Toddler

Wee Builder (3 – 4 years):

How to Manage an Independent Child

Wee Learner (4 – 5 years):

4 Strategies to Stop a Little Tattletale

Wee Expert (5 – 6 years):

Manners are Served!

Wee Mentor (6+ years):

How to Nix the Nagging





Wee Beginner (0 – 18 months) – How Bath Time Stimulates a Baby's Brain

There's more to bath time than simply wiping away the applesauce. Here are four (other) incredible benefits for your baby.

Make the most of bath time with your baby. You already know that a soothing bath time routine is an integral part of getting your baby in a sleepy frame of mind. But did you know that it also helps everything from brain development to deepening emotional bonds? Here are the coolest perks of a nice, warm soak.

Play anything. Playing with bubbles can help your baby develop hand-eye coordination and discover that objects exist even when they can't be seen. Even splashing in the water during bath time helps teach your baby about cause and effect.

Keep in touch. Your baby's first emotional bonds are built from physical contact, and studies have shown that routine touch and massage can lead to improved physiological, cognitive, emotional and social development. It also has been shown to improve mental development, increase alertness and attentiveness, and to better your baby's sleep quality (and quantity). Start incorporating regular massages after bath time, using a small amount of a specially formulated to help your hands glide softly over your baby's skin.

Scent it up. Did you know that babies develop their ability to smell while still in utero? Newborns rely on smell more than any other sense to familiarize themselves – and enjoyable, familiar scents have been proven to improve mood, calmness and alertness. Also, studies have shown that babies bathed with a fragranced product, like baby safe, lavender scented body wash, displayed 30% more engagement cues with their parent after bath.

Listen up. Singing songs during bath time can stimulate parts of the brain responsible for memory, and talking may help with language development – and may lead to a bigger vocabulary when your baby is older.

Excerpts taken from

<http://www.todayparent.com/sponsored/how-bathtime-stimulates-a-babys-brain/>





Wee Explorer (18 months – 3 years) – 6 Milestones that Mark the Transition From Baby to Toddler

One of the biggest issues parents face with the transition from baby to toddler is knowing what is developmentally normal, says Dr. Jeremy Friedman, Associate Paediatrician-in-Chief, Professor, Department of Paediatrics, and Head of the Division of Paediatric Medicine at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

There are a number of key milestones and changes your young toddler will undergo as he grows into a preschooler. Here's a deeper look into a few of them.

1. Your Baby Wants More Independence

Your child will no longer depend on you for everything. He'll be able to play more on his own, and develop a greater sense of self. "No, mommy. That block doesn't go there. It goes here." He will have his own convictions, and stick to them and though the child's attempts to assert himself can be frustrating sometimes, it shows strength of character.

2. Cue the Temper Tantrums!

Whatever the age, at some point before it's time to head to kindergarten, your toddler will likely begin to develop strong moods, and act out to determine what tactics work and what don't. It's all a learning experience. Dr. Friedman says parents need to view temper tantrums as a part of your child's normal development. "It's unpleasant," he says, "but normal, and just a phase." Interestingly, he says tantrums are a result of the child striving for that independence. Though he suggests parents avoid reinforcing the behaviour by giving in, but rather provide reassurance and guidance.

3. Mimicking Your Actions

I like to call it "The Shadow." Pick up the broom, and he wants to help sweep. Fold laundry, and he studiously hands items to you. This is a time when your toddler will want to be involved. So do your best to make him part of the process.

4. Deep-Thought Processing Begins

As toddlers age, they get more inquisitive and analytical. It's no longer "I hear a noise," it's "what's making all that noise?" Instead of banging toys on the table, they create a story with them, often mimicking things that you do.

Toddlers may eventually be more interested in complex toys like puzzles, building blocks, and crafts. It's the age of exploration! Dr. Friedman warns parents not to expect kids to perform at a level beyond their developmental skills. Doing so could





6 Milestones that Mark the Transition From Baby to Toddler Continued...

cause frustration, and lead to more tantrums. “The best type of activity is an interactive one when the parent gets down on the floor with their toddler and plays/interacts with them in a fun way, free play,” he says.

5. Changes in Sleeping Habits & Moving to a Big Bed

At some point, your toddler will climb out of his crib, or show signs that he’s ready to sleep in a full-sized bed. And this requires starting the sleep process all over again. Because your child is no longer confined to the four sides of the crib, he can (and will!) hop out of bed any time he likes. Unless baby number-two is on the way, there’s no reason to rush the move. It can happen, says Dr. Friedman, any time between 18 months and 3 years. But he suggests that if your toddler is soon to become big bro or sis, it’s best to start this transition before the wee sibling arrives so the child doesn’t feel like he’s being displaced.

6. It’s Potty Time

Kids can start potty training as early as 18 months. Dr. Friedman says most toddlers learn between 2 and 4 years. Knowing when to start is based on emotional and physical readiness, not necessarily age. Dr. Friedman agrees, saying the adjustment should never be guided by age or peer pressure. Every child and parent differs in terms of readiness. Be prepared for a lot of trial and error, and, inevitably, a mess here and there (and everywhere!).

It’s important to keep in mind that there’s a wide range of behaviours that are considered normal when it comes to your child’s development from babe into full-blown toddlerhood, says Dr. Friedman.

The key is consistency among all caregivers. Oh, and patience, lots of it.

Excerpts taken from

<http://www.canadianfamily.ca/kids/baby/6-milestones-that-mark-the-transition-from-baby-to-toddler/>





Wee Builder (3 – 4 years) – How to Manage an Independent Child

By preschool your child may develop a strong independent streak, resulting in tantrums and power struggles. Experts explain how to encourage and support your child, while staying in charge.

Why Your Toddler wants to be Independent

The drive to do things for themselves is a combination of cognitive development and watching what others can do, such as friends at daycare and older siblings and parents at home.

“It’s in their instincts to see someone doing something and want to do it, too,” says Christopher Gibbins, a Vancouver-based registered psychologist who works regularly with preschool-aged kids. “That’s how we’re wired as human beings. We learn by observation and by emulating what we see.”

If your child is happy to let others do things for her, Gibbins says that’s okay, too—to a point. “All young children have times when they are distracted or unmotivated and don’t want to try something difficult, which is normal. However, if a child rarely or never seems interested in copying adults or in trying things for herself, that may be a concern.”

When Your Child Pushes Your Buttons

Pushing buttons—and boundaries—is another part of the independence phase, as Vancouver-based mom Jodi McNell can attest. She is often met with resistance from her three-and-a-half-year-old son, Aengus, when she’s trying to get things done. “I try not to get too frustrated because I do want to support him and I want him to feel like there are certain areas of his life in which he does have some control,” says McNell.

This type of pushback is common, says Gibbins. And as a child’s desire to do more for herself grows, so does her need to control her environment. “Kids at this age don’t want someone—including mom and dad—interfering in ways they don’t like with their personal space, body or activities,” he says. “We all want to make decisions that affect us, and we all want to control our surroundings at a level that makes us comfortable.”





How to Manage an Independent Child Continued...

Support Your Child's Independence

Terry Carson, a parenting coach in Toronto, recommends setting your child up for success. One way to do this is to encourage her to problem solve. "So, for instance, instead of tying your child's shoes for her, show her how to do it and let her at it," she says. Carson suggests offering lots of opportunities to try things on her own so she can begin to feel pride in solving problems.

Asking open-ended questions is another way to foster independent thinking, says Carson. "If your child is having trouble gluing something, instead of grabbing the bottle and doing it, ask her 'What if we added more glue?' Get her thinking about the end result."

Managing your Child's Expectations

Sometimes desire comes before ability, and that can prove frustrating for kids. "If the task is too much for the child, reduce it into smaller pieces so she can achieve some level of success," suggests Carson. "This way, she'll feel a sense of achievement."

Beyond understanding that children's behaviours are linked to their level of development, Carson adds that parents need to be patient with them as they learn and mature. "They will eventually 'get it,' but growth takes time."

Gibbins couldn't agree more, adding that fostering independence today promotes future growth and learning. "Letting kids do things for themselves teaches them that if they try something challenging, they can improve and learn," he says. "They learn that sometimes they can solve their own problems and that just because they couldn't do something yesterday doesn't mean they won't be able to do it tomorrow."

Excerpts taken from

<http://www.canadianfamily.ca/kids/child/how-to-manage-an-independent-child/>





Wee Learner (4 – 5 years) – 4 Strategies to Stop a Little Tattletale

Do you tune out when your little one runs in tattling on someone else? Keep calm and stop your tattletaler with four expert tips.

4 Ways to Discourage Your Child from Tattling:

So as parents, how do we discourage tattling and encourage telling?

1. Look to everyday examples. Point out real-world situations around you and turn it into a game, suggests Freedman Smith: Ask your child, “Is this something you would tell on or is that tattling?” Kids’ books like *A Bad Case of Tattle Tongue* (National Center for Youth Issues) by Julia Cook can help expand the discussion.
2. Give praise when due. Praise children for telling when they should (“Thanks for keeping your little sister safe by telling me she was playing with marbles”) and for settling sticky situations on their own (“I love how you found a solution without tattling”) to reinforce those behaviours. Parents may need to help children this age brainstorm when it comes to problem solving, says Sara Dimerman, a psychologist and author based in Thornhill, Ont. For example, she suggests saying something like, “It sounds like you were frustrated when your sister put all the crayons on her side of the table. What can you say to help her share with you?”
3. Turn tattling on its head. Encourage your child to share good deeds instead of bad ones. For example, at the dinner table, give your children a chance to share something positive they saw someone do, says Dimerman. Parents can share random acts of kindness they witnessed during their workday and avoid gossip and negative talk about others—the adult equivalent of tattling.
4. Stick to the (short) script. Want to dim the lights on all the tattling drama? Skip the long monologue to avoid giving your child much attention and reinforcing the behaviour, says Freedman Smith. “When a child tattles, our suggestion is that you say, ‘How does that affect you? What do you need from me?’” Planning some short answers can help parents feel more confident and stay calm when dealing with tattling, she adds.

Excerpt taken from

<http://www.canadianfamily.ca/kids/child/4-strategies-to-stop-a-little-tattletale/>





Wee Expert (5 – 6 years) – Manners Are Served!

To teach your child to be polite at the table, etiquette experts have cooked up a plan.

Some of the traits you love about your kindergartner or first-grader -- her boundless energy, honesty, and hands-on approach -- may be the very things that drive you absolutely crazy at mealtime. If you're at the end of your rope with how she behaves at the table, consider yourself in good company and take comfort in this: "You can teach any 5- or 6-year-old basic table manners in a few weeks, but it takes repetition and practice," says Cindy Post Senning, Ed.D., great-granddaughter of manners guru Emily Post and coauthor of Emily Post's Table Manners for Kids. "You should introduce no more than two or three concepts at a time. Otherwise, it's too much information for a young child to process." Post and other manners experts suggest four simple steps that will end suppertime shenanigans once and for all.

Managing Expectations. For starters, limit meet-ups to two hours, and try not to divert from your daily routine too much. Be prepared to pack up your bag early when your child seems cranky or tired. "

Two to four children (with an adult for each) is ideal for a playdate -- any more can make things overwhelming for children. No matter who's been invited, don't feel bad if your little one doesn't really engage very much with her playmates, says Cheryl Rode, Ph.D. It's perfectly normal if she mostly plays next to them. Over time, kids will begin to imitate each other's actions. For instance, if your daughter's playmate starts running around the room, she might join him -- and then start jumping up and down, which he'll begin to copy too. This is a sign of children's growing social awareness, and an early step toward developing friendships.

Say Please and Thank You Without Prodding. You taught your child these words when he was 2 or 3, but maybe he uses them inconsistently or only with reminders from you. If your child tells you "Oh, yeah" when you ask if he'd like a drink or he snatches a roll out of your hand without thanking you, help him understand why it's important to be gracious. Dr. Senning suggests explaining to your child that "please" changes a demand into a request and sounds nicer while "thank you" shows someone that you care about (or appreciate, if your child understands the word) what he's done.

To get these words to become automatic for your child, emphasize and enforce them at every meal. Start the day with "Please come to the table for breakfast." When your child says he wants milk, don't pour it until he says "please" and wait until he says "thank you" to hand him the glass.





Wee Mentor (6+ years) – How to Nix the Nagging

Are you tired of nagging your six- to eight-year old? Here's how to foster co-operation instead. “Kids are resistant to listening when they don’t really have to pay attention,” explains Kathy Lynn, a Vancouver-based parenting speaker and author of *But Nobody Told Me I’d Ever Have to Leave Home*. “They have figured out that you will keep asking and they just need to ignore you.”

Changing Our Mindsets

While it’s easy to blame kids for “just not listening,” the reality is that the onus may lie with parents to adjust their expectations. “Parents want to raise children who are independent and self-reliant, who can stand up to bullies, say no to tempting behaviour and be leaders in their own lives,” says Terry Carson, a parenting coach in Toronto. “Yet, they also want those children to be obedient? Parents can’t have it both ways.” Which is not to say kids should just do whatever they want—far from it. However, if we want our children to learn to make smart choices, we have to give them the opportunities to do so, whether that means giving them the option of finishing watching a TV show even if it means not having time to play before dinner, or getting out of bed 10 minutes earlier to avoid being late for school in the morning.

Recognizing the Triggers

Being crunched for time is a nagging trigger for many families, and mornings are often the worst. “We have a set schedule, a routine that they know they have to go by,” says Connie Leslie, mom of Hailey, 9, and Logan, 6. “We have an hour to get ready, and usually right off the bat, they don’t get up on time. That’s where the nagging starts.”

Sound familiar? The Calgary mom gives her kids three warnings that it’s time to get moving, but still often finds herself herding them out the door in a rush. Leslie is on the right track, but may need to fine-tune her approach. Carson recalls a similar situation with her daughter, and the creative solution that worked for them. “We agreed that after two reminders to get ready to leave for school I had permission to yell. Interestingly, once she was part of the solution, I never had to yell again. No kidding.”





How to Nix the Nagging Continued...

Choices, Choices

Both Carson and Lynn agree that the key to a nag-free existence is including kids in the decision-making process. If a child knows what you expect of her, including her specific responsibilities and the time frames in which she must complete them, she is more likely to follow through on her end of the bargain without you having to badger her further. Carson suggests finding time to communicate—mini-meetings such as chatting while driving in the car—to sort out and resolve any issues. “The child must have input into these decisions, because without it she has no stake, no say in the matter, and therein lies the problem,” she says. “When parents dictate too much, kids rebel by not listening.” Setting realistic goals with your kids is also important. At this age, “it is not only reasonable but good parenting to have kids participate in the work of running the house,” says Lynn. Empowering your child by letting her choose her chores works in everyone’s favour.

It May Take Time

So, you’ve got the family meetings going, decided on chores and completion times and discussed the problems, and you get to the end of the week...and you’re nagging about the same old issues, again. If things go off the rails, don’t be discouraged; keep on trying to promote positive change. “It takes a long time to break bad habits,” says Carson. “But the more parents help kids to resolve these issues in a collaborative way, the less nagging and coercion will be needed.”

Excerpt taken from <http://www.canadianfamily.ca/kids/how-to-nix-the-nagging/>

