

Toddler's First Steps



**A Best Chance Guide to Parenting
Your 6- to 36-Month-Old**



BRITISH
COLUMBIA



Perinatal
Services BC
Provincial Health Services Authority

4th edition

My Circle of Support Information

Personal Support Team

Name/Title

Contact Information

Health Care Support Team

Name/Title

Contact Information



Introduction

Welcome to the 4th edition of *Toddler's First Steps: A Best Chance Guide to Parenting Your 6- to 36-Month-Old*, published by the Government of British Columbia and Provincial Health Services Authority.

Toddler's First Steps: A Best Chance Guide to Parenting Your 6- to 36-Month-Old is the second of 2 books on pregnancy and early childhood development available from the Government of British Columbia and Provincial Health Services Authority. The first book, *Baby's Best Chance: Parents' Handbook of Pregnancy and Baby Care*, covers pregnancy and the first 6 months of a child's life. Both books are available through public health units and online at healthlinkbc.ca.

The 4th edition of *Toddler's First Steps* continues to be evidence-based and aligns with best practices.

In this edition, we provide you with updated information that's based on current evidence and guided by the real-life experiences of parents and caregivers. In addition, we've revised the book to reflect the incredible diversity of families in British Columbia. This edition also contains new information about how to nurture a loving and healthy attachment between you and your child – a bond that will be a lifelong gift to you both.

Your child's early experiences lay the foundation for a life of healthy development and well-being. As a parent or caregiver, you have a beautiful and powerful role to play in giving your child the best start possible. This doesn't mean that you have to be perfect – it's your warm and loving presence that your child needs most.

The joys and challenges of parenthood are influenced by many things, including our childhood experiences, our families, and our culture. At the same time, we each have the opportunity to create our very own parenting journey. We hope this book provides you with the resources that will help you to create the journey you envision for yourself and your family.

This book is updated every 2 years. If you have suggestions for the next edition, please email us at chbcadmin@phsa.ca.

How to Use This Handbook

User-friendly. That's the goal we had in mind when we created *Toddler's First Steps*. So whether you prefer to read a book cover-to-cover or to flip through for specific information, you can find what you need quickly and easily.

Toddler's First Steps is divided into 5 main sections:

Section 1, **Toddler Development**, provides information on typical milestones and how you can support your child's development in all areas – from their brain and language skills to their physical, social and emotional growth.

Section 2, **Feeding Your Toddler**, covers your toddler's nutritional needs, with comprehensive information on everything from breastfeeding or chestfeeding to picky eating.

Section 3, **Your Toddler's Growth, Learning and Health**, details everything from sleep to using the toilet, with a focus on keeping your toddler safe and healthy.

Section 4, **Parenting Your Toddler**, helps you navigate the ins and outs of discipline, challenging behaviours and, of course, staying calm through it all.

Section 5, **Toddler Safety**, offers important information and helpful tips on keeping your child safe at home, at play, in the car and in the community.

Chestfeeding is a term that is becoming more commonly seen and used when discussing infant and toddler nutrition. It's a term that can be used by anyone, but often used by trans-masculine or non-binary parents to describe how they feed and nurture their child from their bodies. Language is constantly changing. Using the term "chestfeeding" is not just about human anatomy. It's about helping all parents and caregivers feel they can find the support and resources they need to feed their child. To learn more about chestfeeding go to: transcarebc.ca/

We've also included a number of additional pieces that can help you navigate the book:

Looking for insight into a particular topic or information on a key word?

Turn to the **Table of Contents** on pages 1 and 2 or the **Index** on page 143.

Need information on the services and supports available to help you and your family thrive?

See the **Resources** section on page 119.

Not sure what a word or concept means?

Check the **What is...?** boxes that appear throughout the book.

Interested in information on healthy eating?

See **Canada's food guide** on page 140.


Want to speak with a health care professional in person?


Phone **HealthLink BC**, an invaluable free service of the Government of British Columbia. **Call 8-1-1** toll-free or 7-1-1 for the deaf and hard of hearing. Services are available in 130 languages, 24 hours a day. Speak with a registered nurse (anytime), a pharmacist (nightly, from 5 pm to 9 am), a registered dietitian or a qualified exercise professional (9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday).


Want quick info at a glance? Look for the coloured boxes.


Throughout this guide, you'll find boxes in a variety of colours. Look to these for essential bits of information that will help you navigate life as a new parent – everything from ways to support your child's brain development to tried-and-true parenting advice from other parents and caregivers.


Our **What is...?** boxes explain key words and ideas in easy-to-understand terms.


 Our **Try This** boxes suggest simple first steps you can take to help you get comfortable with each new aspect of parenting.


 Our **Key Takeaway** boxes sum up the section's not-to-be-missed information.


 Our **What You Can Do** boxes suggest ways your support team can get involved.


 Our **Did You Know?** boxes offer handy bits of insider information that can help build your understanding.


 Our **Family Story** boxes give you a peek into the experiences of other parents.


 Our **How To** boxes help you master the practical tasks of parenting by breaking them down into easy-to-follow steps.


 Our **Money Sense** boxes share tips on how to save money on everything from child care to vision care.

 Our **Brain Builder** boxes offer simple ideas on how to support your child's brain development through everyday activities.

 Our **Be Aware** boxes draw your attention to common things that may be unsafe for your child.

 Our **Danger** boxes alert you to hazards that can pose a serious risk to your child.

 Our **Medical Emergency** boxes help you recognize whether a situation calls for immediate medical help.

 Our **Seek Care** boxes point out things that warrant a call to your health care provider or HealthLink BC.

