

## Every child is different

Most children enjoy play, but each child plays differently. Some bounce from one activity to another while others stick to a task until it's done.

Some children enjoy their own company and some prefer to play with others. Some children jump right in to a game while others stand on the sidelines, getting a feel for what's happening before joining in.

Some children love a routine and find it hard to adapt when things are out of order. Others are never hungry at dinner time, nor tired at bedtime (which adults find challenging).

## Learning to walk is not a competitive sport

Because your child is a unique individual, they will learn in their own time and in their own way.

Some children walk at 10 months; others much later. It's not a race to be first; nor is it a test to finish on time.

Most children learn skills like talking and walking in a predictable order: sit, crawl, walk, run. But they don't learn them to a pre-set timelines. And that's good news because it means you don't need to worry if your child is not doing something.

There is, however, a broad time period in which most children acquire certain skills.

If you are concerned about your child's learning or development, always talk to your maternal and child health nurse, your family doctor or your child's educator.

## What does this mean?

- Value what is unique about your child and accept your child for who they are right now. This is an important way to help you child have a strong sense of identity.
- Try not to compare your child with other children. Each child learns in their own time.
- Be aware of your child's temperament and work with it instead of fighting it. If your child dislikes rough and tumble play, don't force them to wrestle with you! Find gentler ways to relate physically.
- Watch how your child likes to learn. Do they hold back, watch and then try? Then let them observe first, before encouraging them to join in. Do they need to try it for themselves?
- Be aware of your own uniqueness. How does your temperament affect the way you interact with your child? Does your child 'press your

buttons'? How does this affect your family? What does your child learn from your reactions?

- Offer your child rich learning and play experiences. Encourage and support their interests, but don't push or pressure them to reach milestones before they are ready.

## Related links

See Kids Matter's:

- [Growing together in relationships](#)

See also Raising Children's:

- [Newborn behaviour: in a nutshell](#)

## You may also like to read

You may also like to read other titles in this series:

- How do you see your child?
- Your child's most important teacher
- Helping your child to have a strong sense of identity.

Other related newsletters can be found at [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

