

# The Right Track Program for *Infants & Toddlers*

## WHAT IS THE RIGHT TRACK PROGRAM?



Children experience the greatest amount of growth and development in their first three years of life.

The goal of the Right Track program is to provide every child with the best opportunities in their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. The Right Track Program for Infants and Toddlers provides free developmental screenings for North Dakota children from birth to their third birthday. Screenings are provided in the comfort and privacy of the family's home. Our professional consultants can provide ideas on stimulating your child's development as well as information and referrals to local, state, and national organizations.

This wonderful program is provided through the North Dakota Department of Human Services with funding through the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act Part C for Infants and Toddlers.

*Here is information about your child's  
development (12-15 months)...*

## Development At A Glance—*Twelve to Fifteen Months*

During this stage you will continue to see your child's skills expand on a daily basis. He will be exploring more and more both in your home and in new places. Each new place will be a challenge for him to see what he can find. It will also be a challenge to his balance skills as his independent walking improves. Your child will also show more independence with feeding himself and communicating as he continues to add words to his vocabulary.

### What your baby can do:

#### *Twelve—Fifteen Months*

- I use at least 2 words purposefully such as "hi," "bye," or names of objects such as "ball."
- I walk well and move around my home environment independently.
- I can bend over and pick up a toy from the floor and return to standing without losing my balance.
- I like to imitate others including facial expressions, sounds and words, and actions such as clapping hands or activating toys.
- I feed myself at mealtimes with my fingers and show interest in trying to use a spoon.
- I will point to a body part that is named.

### To encourage development, parents and caregivers can:

- Keep reading to your child consistently. Encourage him to point to and name pictures.
- Keep talking to your baby. Tell him what is going on and what is going to happen. This will build his vocabulary and increase his understanding of day to day activities.
- Encourage your child to explore safe environments on his own with supervision. Provide opportunities to walk on a variety of surfaces such as grass, carpeting, and hard flooring.
- When playing with your child encourage imitation such as pushing a car while making motor sounds. Other activities may include feeding a doll a bottle while making an eating sound or taking turns scribbling with a crayon.
- During mealtime, provide your child with opportunities to feed himself as much as possible using finger foods. Also give your child a spoon of his own to place in his mouth with foods that require utensils. Giving your child a chance to use the spoon with sticky foods such as oatmeal, yogurt, pudding or mashed potatoes will encourage him to be successful with a spoon.

## Your Baby's Language and Cognitive Development

Early in this stage your child should consistently be using at least two to three words such as "hi" "bye" or common object words such as "ball." As this stage continues his vocabulary should continue to expand. He should be trying to imitate sounds and words he hears throughout his day. That is why it is very important to talk to your child. Tell him what he is doing, for example, "blocks go up, up, up" when he is stacking blocks. Also tell him what you are doing "I am pouring your milk." During bath time tell him what body parts you are washing to help him learn his body parts. For example, "First let's wash your nose, next let's wash your ears. Show me where your ears are?"



Asking questions and waiting for your child to respond will encourage him to use words, imitate you, and pay attention to what is going on. He will start to use words in response to you, a favorite word for toddlers tends to be "no."

Following simple directions will improve during this stage. Your child should be able to bring you a toy when asked, give a hug or kiss, and eventually start to help put a toy or two away when asked. It is important to have expectations for your child to start to follow directions so that his cognitive development continues to progress. He may need physical cues at first to understand what you are asking but after a few repetitions he will start to understand without being shown.

Reading continues to be very important for development. Exposure to pictures and written words promotes language and cognitive development. Encourage him to name pictures on his own or in imitation as you point to them. He may listen to a story but do not expect him to attend to a long story book.



## Your Baby's Motor Development

Your child is now walking independently throughout your home. Encourage him to walk whenever possible so that he can practice maintaining his balance and start to move faster. When your child walks from one type of flooring to another, such as from tile to carpeting in your home, this will challenge his balance and coordination skills. As he masters this skill indoors encourage walking independently outside on a variety of surfaces such as grass, sand, and sidewalks. Also provide your child with opportunities to go up and down stairs with close supervision so that he continues to gain independence in his mobility skills. Another fun activity at this age is ball play. Rolling a ball back and forth is a fun game to engage in with your child. Bending to pick up a ball or other object and return to standing is also a skill that will promote your child's balance and coordination.

During mealtimes, encourage your child to feed himself as much as possible. Provide opportunities for using his fingers and utensils. Toddler-sized utensils will enable him to be more successful in getting food to his mouth especially with thick, sticky foods such as oatmeal or mashed potatoes.

When reading to your child encourage him to turn the pages of a book independently. Support your child's interest in books by having durable books available for him to look at and page through on his own whenever he wants to.

**Every parent wants their child to start on the RIGHT TRACK...**

**FREE SCREENINGS are available for  
all children in North Dakota from birth to age three.**

If you have a concern or just want to be sure your child is developing as he/she should, schedule a developmental specialist to come to your home and provide a screening by calling (701) 252-2131 or mail this form to your regional office address listed on the back page of this brochure.

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_