Milestones

Milestones: Parents are a child’s first and most important teachers and it is through everyday routines that great learning opportunities happen. Your home is your child’s first school and your child learns from you. Supporting your child’s healthy development by paying attention to her developmental milestones and doing activities together that foster her growth will help prepare her for school, whether it be child care at 1 year of age or kindergarten at 4 or 5 years old.

This information is meant to be a source of simple and fun ideas and to be a reminder to make the most of every minute! It is important to keep in mind that each child is unique and develops at his or her own pace. If you have concerns about your child’s development, speak with your family doctor.

Children thrive and grow when their parents, family members and caregivers talk, read, and play with them.

Talk, Read, Play is an initiative of Countdown to Kindergarten that aims to support families of young children in Boston with resources and information to help every child be ready for school. This guide was developed in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to help you understand and nurture your child.

The city of Boston believes that families play an important role in getting children ready for school:

- Ready Families
- Ready Educators
- Ready Systems
- Ready City

Children Ready for Sustained School Success

For more information about Boston’s Thrive in Five initiative, please visit www.thrivein5boston.org
How to Use this Guide

Each page of this guide features typical developmental milestones (things that often happen) for given age ranges, along with activities and tips to support your child’s healthy growth. The activities are simple yet important, and will help your baby learn and grow.

It’s important to note that not all milestones happen at the same time. Babies develop at their own rate and your child may reach some milestones earlier or later than noted here. This is normal. However, if you find that several milestones are not occurring or if you are worried about your baby’s health, speak to your pediatrician—and use this guide as a starting point for that conversation.

HELP AND RESOURCES

The last few pages of this guide provide you with information about resources for everything from parenting support to medical assistance, from securing quality child care to finding family fun activities around Boston that are either free or low cost.

For additional information and resources, please visit our website: www.talkreadplay.org.

Talk Read Play is a project of Countdown to Kindergarten Boston, sponsored by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Boston Public Schools Superintendent Carol R. Johnson, the Boston School Committee and nearly thirty organizations and agencies across Boston.

SOURCES


• The Ounce Scale, copyright 2003 by Pearson Education Inc., by Samuel J. Meisels, Amy Laura Dombro, Dorothea B Marsden, Donna R. Weston, and Abigail M. Jewkes.


• Learn and Grow Together, copyright 2008 by Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.
Birth to 15 Months

If you have questions or concerns about your child's growth or development, use this guide to talk with your child's caregiver, pediatrician, or a teacher at your child's school.

Infant development is amazing! At the end of 12 months, your baby can be three times his birth weight and twice his birth length. Babies follow a similar path of development, yet each is unique. Here is what you can expect to see during the first 15 months of life:

Babies first gain control over their heads and then their bodies in the early months of life.

1–4 Months: Holds her head up and steady when you hold her on your shoulder
5–8 Months: Uses his arms to pull his body along on the floor

Rolling over, sitting, crawling, walking, and moving with a purpose can happen over the course of the first 12–15 months.

5–8 Months: Rolls from her back onto her stomach
6–8 Months: Sits up with minimal support
8–12 Months: Crawls, easily switching from crawling to sitting and back again
10–15 Months: Pulls to stand at the edge of a low table and may “cruise” around the edge

ACTIVITIES:

- Play with simple toys: Your baby can drop, roll, and chew soft and colorful toys, such as stacking cubes, rattles and soft blocks
- Hold a brightly colored object, such as a plastic cup or rubber ducky, above the baby’s face when he is lying on his back. Move it around slowly, so that he can follow it with his eyes. Move it to the side to encourage him to roll over and reach it. When he reaches it, praise him and let him have the cup.
- Play “peek-a-boo” with objects. Cover a ball with a blanket and encourage baby to scoot or crawl to uncover it, by saying, “What’s under the blanket? It’s the red ball!” or, “Where did your teddy bear go? Here it is!” Let baby have a turn hiding under the blanket and being “found.”
- Use toys at bath time that float or sink. Splash and play with these water toys and always keep one hand on your baby during bath time. Kitchen items, such as funnels, measuring cups and spoons, and plastic containers, are all great bath toys!
- Babies love to look at themselves in the mirror: Provide child-safe mirrors for the car, stroller, changing area or in the play space. Point and say, “Here is your nose, there is your mouth, I see your eyes…”
- Make use of “tummy time:” When your baby is on her belly, hold the mirror in front of her and talk about what she sees. This will encourage her to lift her head in order to see herself.

BABY WANTS TO MOVE:

Help her get ready for walking, but don’t rush her. Keep safe objects within her reach to use for pulling up. Put a toy on a sturdy chair or the couch so she will want to pull herself up to reach it. Later, give her a push and pull toy or even a cardboard box to push in front of her to help her practice walking.
Babies are like sponges, soaking up all of the talk around them. Thus, talking, singing, reading, and interacting with your baby become critical to the development of language. Television and videos are not a substitute for face-to-face interaction with a loving caregiver.

1–4 Months: Pays attention to what is happening around him by looking around the room when held on someone's shoulder
3–5 Months: Makes babbling or cooing sounds or waves her arms or legs when someone speaks to her or smiles at her
6–8 Months: Looks toward the sound of a familiar voice calling from another room
8–15 Months: Follows a direction, such as, “Please give me the cup.”

Babies coo and babble, but the main way they communicate is by crying. Babies' cries can change when they are hungry, tired, wet, frightened, or overwhelmed. Responding to crying and holding your baby often develops a sense of trust.

1–4 Months: Fusses or cries to gain attention of familiar adults
1–4 Months: Snuggles and relaxes when rocked
4–8 Months: Understands emotions from your tone of voice
8–13 Months: Reaches to a familiar adult to be picked up when a stranger says hello
8–15 Months: Looks for his caregiver's reaction before deciding if he should act hurt after falling down
8–36 Months: Actively clings, cries or tries to follow when her parent starts to leave from another room.

SING THROUGH ROUTINES:
- Repeat lullabies, finger plays and games like pat-a-cake and peekaboo to help build language skills. Your baby loves the sound of your voice!
- Read to your baby: Look at chunky board books with colorful pictures. Let baby hold the book and turn the pages. This builds a solid foundation for learning to read.
- While reading, point out objects, shapes, and colors and ask your baby what he thinks is happening in the book. Give him time to think about what he sees and to respond with his own sounds. You can borrow board books from your Boston Public Library neighborhood branch!

PARENTING TIPS

- Have a daily routine: Provide a predictable schedule for your baby, with regular meal, bath, nap and bedtimes. This gives your baby a sense of security and safety.
- During routines, talk about what you are doing: “When your bath is over, we’ll put on your pajamas and then read a book before bed.” “Let’s make sure you are buckled in safely before we start the car.”
- Respond to your baby’s cries: Immediately tuning in to your baby’s needs develops attachment and trust. You cannot spoil your baby by responding right away.
- Make sleep–time safe: Avoid toys, blankets, and pillows in your baby’s sleeping area and always put your baby to sleep on her back.
15 to 36 Months

Toddlers are busy and eager explorers with small bodies and big feelings!
Toddlers are trying to do things for themselves but still need to be reassured by the adults in their lives. They are experiencing the world and trying to make sense of it all at the same time. Here is what you can expect to see in the toddler years:

Vocabulary takes off. Toddlers are learning many new words and putting them together.

15–18 Months: Uses several single words, such as “bye” or “nite—nite”
18–24 Months: Points to several body parts when you name them
24–32 Months: Puts several words together, such as “More cookie” or “Go out now”
24–32 Months: Uses personal pronouns such as “we,” “they,” and “us”
30–36 Months: Uses sentences that are three or four words long
30–36 Months: Answers questions such as “What’s this?” when looking at books

Toddlers start using words to interact with parents and other people in their lives. This stage is marked by the frequent use of favorite toddler words: “No,” “Mine,” and “I do it!”

18–24 Months: Points to appropriate pictures in a book when asked, “Where’s the ____?”
24–32 Months: Starts asking questions about the story you are reading or the things she sees as you go on walks together
30–42 Months: Talks about something that happened and waits for your response

If you have questions or concerns about your child’s growth or development, use this guide to talk with your child’s caregiver, pediatrician, or a teacher at your child’s school.

CAN YOUR CHILD SHARE YET?

One year-olds are not ready to “share,” but you can help your child learn to wait and take turns, which will help him prepare for true sharing when he’s older. Help your child learn how to ask for a turn and wait for his turn. Encourage him to say, “May I have a turn?” and then offer to help him pass the time while he waits, by suggesting another toy or offering to read a short book.

TURN A WALK INTO LEARNING TIME:

Talk about things such as the colors of the leaves or cars, or count the number of dogs you see. Talk and listen. Here’s how: Ask questions about what you see, wait for her reply, and then respond with more information. Your enthusiasm will encourage her to ask her own questions, while introducing her to new words.

- Repeat his words and add to them. If he says, “Bird,” you can say, “Yes, that is a little bird in the tree.”
- Visit your local public library: Check out new books to take home and look at together. Children’s librarians can help you find books and they often host special story times for toddlers. Library cards are free for everyone!

SING A SONG!

- Sing songs that help your child learn his body parts, such as “Head, shoulders, knees and toes.” Touch your own head, shoulders, knees, and toes and have your child follow your lead.
- Sing your way through routines: Take a familiar tune, such as “Row, row, row your boat,” and change the words to match your activities, such as “Brush, brush, brush your teeth.”
- Sing to get through boredom or frustration. Waiting for a bus or getting bundled up goes more quickly if you’re singing a favorite tune or making up a silly song. Try, “This is the way we put on our coats, put on our coats, put on our coats, this is the way we put on our coats early in the morning.” You can use it for “brush our teeth, put on our hats, wait for the bus, climb the stairs,” etc. Your child loves repetition, so it’s okay if you only know a few songs and sing them again and again!
ABOUT YOUR CHILD FROM AGE 15 TO 36 MONTHS:

ON THE MOVE!

Crawling, dancing, rolling, and running all contribute to a toddler’s growth.

12-18 Months: Walks upright more often than he crawls
18-24 Months: Can squat down and stand up again with little difficulty
24-30 Months: Enjoys climbing on furniture or small climbing structures
24-36 Months: Throws a ball or rolls it back and forth with a partner
24-36 Months: Runs with ease, and can stop and start easily

Although they often get frustrated, this is a temporary stage. As toddlers develop more language, and an understanding of how things work, their frustrations melt away rather than lead to a melt down.

12-18 Months: Cries when another child takes a toy from her
18-24 Months: Stacks a set of cardboard boxes, knocks them down, and then stacks them up again
18-24 Months: Runs to get her favorite book for you to read at predictable times such as naptime or bedtime
24-36 Months:Knows that the rectangle shape belongs in the rectangle-shaped hole in the box and turns it until it fits
30-36 Months: Calls for help, instead of hitting, after another child grabs a toy away from him

Toddlers are straightforward, concrete thinkers who truly believe a kiss and hug can make things all better!

18-24 Months: Looks worried or sad when another child is crying
24-36 Months: Pats another child on the back and says, “It’s all right,” when the other child cries because his mommy just left

NEW WAYS FOR YOUR CHILD TO MOVE:

- Hold her under the arms and “jump” her off the bottom step. Then hold her hand as she tries to do it. In the beginning she may just step off, but eventually she will really jump.
- You can play “catch” with your toddler! Both of you sit on the ground facing each other with your legs apart and toes touching. Roll a ball back and forth to each other.
- Toddlers love to climb! On a walk, stop at a playground and help your child climb safely on the toddler structure.
- Let him finish: Encourage your child to finish tasks you start for him. For example, start to wash his hands, but let him finish rinsing. He can finish zipping his coat, putting a few toys away and so on.

PARENTING TIPS

- Be patient with your little explorer: Toddlers need to repeat activities many, many times.
- Acknowledge feelings: Give your child words for what he is feeling. “I know you are sad.” He has to know you understand before he can listen to you. Help your child understand how others feel: “Edney feels sad when you take his blocks. Let’s use these ones instead so you can both play.”
- Redirect: Head off a tantrum by offering another activity when you see your child is getting frustrated.
- Choose your words: Your toddler will repeat everything you say. In her presence, use only words you want her to learn and say only things that you don’t mind being repeated to others.
- Get her ready: Before you start a new routine, tell your child what will happen so that she can prepare herself. Use simple words, such as, “Tomorrow we’re going to visit the library for story time.” Keep it simple and be ready to answer her questions.
3 to 4 Years Old

Preschoolers are active and more confident in how their bodies move. Here is what you can expect at this stage:

Children this age like to use their fingers to build with blocks, use crayons, and do puzzles.

3–3.5 Years: Alternates between a whole hand grasp and a thumb and fingertips grasp when using crayons or markers
3–3.5 Years: Tries to zip up his jacket and asks for help when the zipper gets stuck
3.5–4 Years: Fits together manipulatives such as large legos or pop beads and/or can dress a doll

You will see great growth in your child’s language, imagination, and ability to play with other children.

3–3.5 Years: Describes actions in a book when you ask, “What is happening?” or “What’s the dog doing?”
3–3.5 Years: Chooses an activity or place to play because a special friend is there
3–4 Years: Speaks clearly enough that adults and children can usually understand what he is saying
3.5–4 Years: Answers fairly complex questions, such as, “What is this?” or, “How did you do that?”

They are curious about the world and want to understand how everything works. They often ask questions and share their own stories and experiences.

3–3.5 Years: Shows curiosity about almost everything he sees
3–4 Years: Asks questions in order to keep a conversation going

ACTIVITIES:

• Look at your child’s baby pictures together: Talk about how your child has grown and changed! Let your child tell you about all the things she can do now that she could not do as a baby. Remember that even “big kids” need to cuddle.

• Have an indoor “family picnic.” Plan an easy-to-make menu and select a theme. For a “Winter Wonderland,” you can use sheets for snow and pillows for a snowman.

• Play pretend and dress-up: Your child can learn about the world around him by pretending to cook dinner, go to work or school, or visit the doctor. Fill a bin with old hats, scarves, shoes, bags, and props for your child to use while playing pretend.

• Read books about your child’s interests.

I learn from you.

www.talkreadplay.org
www.countdowntoKindergarten.org
This stage often marks the development of imaginary play and roleplaying, when children create rich and involved fantasies.

3–3.5 Years: Pretends to be a parent by taking care of a doll
3–3.5 Years: Uses a toy as a pretend telephone
3.5–4 Years: Joins in games of dramatic play with other children. For example, playing house and giving roles such as, “You be the mommy and I’ll be the daddy”

Busy preschoolers have a growing interest in playing together with other children. All the time you spent encouraging your toddler to take turns now pays off!

3–3.5 Years: Looks through a story book and giggles with a friend as they “retell” the story together
3.5–4.5 Years: Trades a red marker on the table for the green marker that another child is using

Preschoolers learn concepts of reading, math, writing, and science as part of their play and everyday routines!

3–4 Years: Responds accurately when asked to put her shoes in the closet, or to cover her baby brother with a blanket
3–4 Years: Scribbles on paper and then tells you what he “wrote”
3–4 Years: Holds books right side up and turns the pages starting at the front of the book
3.5–4 Years: Recognizes some letters, particularly those in her name

PARENTING TIPS

- **Let your child see you writing and reading:** You are the best role model for your child—if he thinks you enjoy reading, he will, too!
- **Give your child crayons and paper** to “work” alongside you. Ask her what she drew or wrote and write down what she says.
- **Do chores together:** Develop cooperation and responsibility early by letting your child help out.
- **Be amazed:** Let your child know how impressed you are with his accomplishments and abilities. Be specific. Say, “It’s great how you filled the whole page with color,” rather than, “Great job!”
- **Help her manage feelings:** If your child is angry, help her find safe ways to show that she’s upset. Encourage her to use words or to find a quiet place to calm down, rather than yelling or hitting. She may need your help to find the words for her feelings.
Getting Ready for Kindergarten!

Kindergarten is a big transition for children. The following information should help you and your child get ready for this exciting time in your lives. For information about public and private kindergarten opportunities in Boston see the section on Early Education and Care at the end of this document.

Look for the following milestones as your child gets ready to enter kindergarten:

- Plays cooperatively with other children most of the time
- Uses words suggested by an adult to express feelings, such as “I don’t like it when you push me” or “that makes me mad!”
- Is able to help solve simple problems with adult support
- Follows 2–3 step directions such as, “Wash your hands, go get your lunch, and wait by the door.”
- Shows hand–eye coordination by buttoning her pants or cutting around a large picture with scissors
- Recognizes some letters, particularly the letters in his own name
- Holds a pencil with her thumb and forefinger instead of using a whole hand grasp to draw or write
- Tells a story about a picture and asks an adult to write it down
- Can count 10 or more objects, such as the steps leading up to his home
- Asks questions about everything!

Celebrate the Transition to Kindergarten:

Countdown to Kindergarten offers a number of events throughout the city to help celebrate this important milestone. Learn more about these opportunities at www.countdowntokindergarten.org or call 617.635.LEARN (617.635.3276).

HELPFUL ACTIVITIES:

These activities can help ease the transition for you and your child into the kindergarten classroom.

Spend time with peers: Ensure that your child has lots of opportunities to socialize with groups of children her own age to help her to practice sharing, taking turns, self control and more. If your child is not enrolled in a pre–school program, try joining a free playgroup or library story time, or plan regular visits with friends or neighbors with children of similar ages.

Visit your child’s new school together: This is a great opportunity to meet the principal and kindergarten teacher and tour the school. If you can, visit the school several times during the summer and let your child play in the playground to become familiar with the school before September.

Create routines: Have a set bedtime and wake–up time, and stick to it. This helps children know what to expect and ensures that they get enough rest. Create a morning routine and practice getting ready for school a few times before school starts.

Read books about going to school so he can start thinking about his own big day, but also continue to read other types of books with your child just for pleasure.
TEN STEPS TO GET READY!

1. Create a routine over the summer. Give your child a bedtime (7:30 or 8:00 PM is great!) and stick to it.

2. Have your child practice writing his first name. If he can do this, try his last name, or practice lower case letters.

3. Use counting in your daily activities. Count how many steps it takes to get to the mailbox or the park. Count out fruit, placemats, napkins, and so forth.

4. Take your child with you to the grocery store, post office, library, and other errands. Talk with her about what she’s seeing, hearing and touching. It’s all part of learning!

5. Visit your local library and help your child get a free library card. Then use the card to visit the library each week and borrow a book. Visit www.bpl.org for a list of their 27 locations and hours of operation. Talk about the books you read. Ask questions like:
   - What was your favorite part of the story?
   - Which part did you like the least?
   - Half way through, ask your child what he thinks will happen at the end.

6. Let your child practice her independence by allowing her to make limited choices: “Do you want an apple or a banana?” Encourage her to try new things.

7. Set a limit to the amount of TV your child watches (1–2 hours daily). When possible, watch TV with him and talk about what you see.

8. Prepare a “study spot” for your child in the kitchen or living room and supply it with crayons, paper, scissors and other kindergarten tools. Let your child draw there while you make dinner. Once school starts, this can become the time and place where she does her homework.

9. Help your child know or be able to do the following before he enters kindergarten:
   - His name, address, and telephone number
   - Use the bathroom on her own and button and zip her clothes.
   - Share and play with other children. This will help him to adjust to his new kindergarten classroom.

10. Read, Read, Read! (In English or any native language!)

PARENTING TIPS

Encourage independence: Nurture independence by allowing your child to make certain choices, such as allowing him to choose his clothing. If he is not already doing it, teach him how to open his own drinks or food containers. Children may bring their own lunch to school, and they will have to open their lunch on their own. Also, if your child will be wearing shoes that require laces, teach him how to tie his own shoes.

Plan for the first day of school: If you can, take the morning off from work and take your child to school. If your child will ride the bus, be sure to put a nametag on her (or in her backpack) and include her first name, your phone number, and grade or classroom teacher name.

Dress your child in comfortable clothing. Have him wear elastic waistband pants (zippers, belts and buttons may be too much during the first few days). This way if he waits until the last minute to use the restroom, it will be easier for him. Also, if your child does not know how to tie his own shoes, have him wear Velcro or slip-on shoes.
Resources

If you have questions or concerns about your child’s development:

If your child is younger than 2 years, 9 months, contact your local Early Intervention program (see below) for help determining whether your child might benefit from extra support. Early Intervention Programs serve families with children birth to three years of age who display a developmental delay, have a medical diagnosis, or risk factors that might hinder their development. Call Family TIES of Massachusetts to find an Early Intervention program near you.

If your child is older than 2 years, 9 months, contact the Boston Public Schools Special Education Department (see below) for a screening to determine if your child qualifies for special services.

Early Education Opportunities:

Boston Public Schools
617.635.9000
www.boston.k12.ma.us
Kindergarten registration starts in January for the following September. For information about how, when, and where to register your child for the Boston Public Schools, please contact Countdown to Kindergarten or the Boston Public Schools.

The Boston Public Schools offers the following public school kindergarten programs:

K2: Full school day traditional kindergarten for children who are 5 by September 1. BPS guarantees a school seat for every child who registers for K2.

K1: K1 is full school day prekindergarten for children who will be 4 by September 1. Although BPS has expanded its K1 program, seating in these programs is limited and assignment for K1 cannot be guaranteed.

K0: K0 is preschool for children who will be 3 by September 1. There is a very limited number of K0 seats and most are reserved for children with special needs.

For a special needs evaluation, contact BPS at 617.635.7800.

Early Intervention & Special Needs Contacts

Boston Public Schools, Special Education Department
617.635.7800
Information about how, where, and when to get children over 2 years, 9 months screened for concerns about development or special needs.

Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project
1.877.35.EI.PLP
www.eiplp.org
Information and resources for parents about early intervention

Federation for Children with Special Needs
1.800.331.0688
www.fcsn.org
A parent advocacy organization with numerous programs to support families in areas of education, special education, special health care needs and community resources.

Urban PRIDE
617.989.3929
www.urbanpride.org
Provides direct support, information/referral, and training to families of children with disabilities from birth through 22 years of age. Urban PRIDE helps families understand and negotiate the special education process and assists them in preparation for IEP and transition meetings.
Early Education Opportunities (Continued):

Child Care Choices of Boston
617.542.5437
www.childcarechoicesofboston.org
A resource and referral agency that can connect you, free of charge, to all types of early education and care for your children, including family child care, center based, school age /after school, and camp programs. CCCB can also help with information about financial assistance, special needs concerns, child care transportation, parent training opportunities, and on-line food stamp applications.

Early Head Start/Head Start
617.348.6272
www.bostonheadstart.org
Early Head Start serves low-income pregnant women, infants and toddlers ages birth to three years, providing children with care and stimulation proven to aid brain development in the earliest years. Head Start provides early care and education for low-income children ages 3–5.

Play to Learn Parent-Child Playgroups
617.635.9656
www.countdowntokindergarten.org
Free parent-child playgroups sponsored by Countdown to Kindergarten for Boston residents and their children ages 1–3.

Family Support

Healthy Families
1.888.775.4543
Free Home visiting program for first time parents with children up to three years of age who are under the age of 21 years at the time of the referral.

Healthy Baby Healthy Child
800.711.1180
Free home visits conducted by public health nurses and advocates, who provide health education and case management services for expectant women and parenting families with children up to three years of age living in Boston.

Families First Parenting Programs
617.868.7687
www.families.first.org
Builds positive relationships between parents and their children by educating both families and the professionals who serve them through inspiring, hands-on workshops in multiple languages.

Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts
617.474.1143
www.familynurturing.org
Offers family support and education programs in Boston neighborhoods; a network of family support in Dorchester, Allston-Brighton and Roslindale; and training and technical assistance to communities and organizations interested in offering Nurturing Parenting Programs, Welcome Baby home visits and/or Parent-Child playgroups in their community.

Parent Child Home Program
617.782.7600
www.parent.child.org
Free, literacy based home visiting program for children ages 18 months to 3 years

Parental Stress Line
1.800.632.8188
24-hour support and guidance hotline for parents and caregivers

Parents Helping Parents
1.800.632.8188
www.parentshelpingparents.org
Offers free, confidential, and anonymous parent support groups that meet weekly at several locations in Boston. Call to find a group near you.

Parents’ PLACE
877.471.0980
www.pplace.org
Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center (Parents’ PLACE) is a program of the Federation of Children with Special Needs, which helps parents learn about the rights and options available to their children in education.

Smart from the Start
617.635.4920 x 2155
Smart from the Start is a community engagement and family support initiative of the City of Boston. It promotes school readiness by providing early learning opportunities and family support for families with children, ages 0–5, living in or around Boston Housing Developments in Roslindale, Mattapan, and Charlestown.
Enrichment Activities

All programs listed below offer free or reduced-price opportunities. Please call for more details.

Arnold Arboretum
617.524.1718
www.arboretum.harvard.edu
Located in Jamaica Plain, the arboretum offers 265 acres of walking paths full of a wide variety of plants and trees. Free!

Boston Centers for Youth and Families
617.635.4920
www.cityofboston.gov/bcyf
Supports children, youth and families through a wide range of programs and services in neighborhoods throughout Boston.

Boston Children's Museum
617.426.6500
www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org
Three floors of exhibits designed to engage the whole family in fun, hands-on experiences that teach children about the world in which they live. $1 admission on Friday evenings.

Boston Nature Center
617.983.8500
www.massaudubon.org/Boston
Located in Mattapan, the Center offers two miles of stroller/wheelchair accessible trails and walks that traverse meadows and wetlands where wildlife abounds, including coyotes, pheasants, and many species of birds. Access to the grounds is free! They also offer an Early Explorers program for children 2–5 years of age. Call for price and details.

Boston Public Library
617.536.5400
www.bpl.org/branches
All branches have children’s materials that are available to borrow using your FREE Boston Public Library card. They also offer programs for young children, including preschool story hours and free or reduced-price passes to local museums, cultural events and more.

Franklin Park Zoo
617.541.5466
www.franklinparkzoo.org
Located in Dorchester, the zoo has a wide collection of animals, including lions, giraffes, zebras, and gorillas. Children under age 2 are free!

Museum of Science Discovery Center
617.723.2500
www.mos.org/discoverycenter
Designed for children from birth to eight and their accompanying grownups, the Discovery Center offers hands-on activities that are designed to encourage discovery through play. Children under age 3 are free!

New England Aquarium
617.973.5200
www.neaq.org
Introduces visitors to the world of water and its fascinating inhabitants. The first and third Monday of every month is Aqua Kids Family Day, with activities created especially for young children, including stories, games and live animal presentations. Children under age 3 are free!

Playgrounds and Parks
http://www.cityofboston.gov/parks/openspaces
Search for tot lots, playgrounds and parks in your neighborhood!

ReadBoston Storymobile
617.918.5290
www.readboston.org
The ReadBoston Storymobile visits many sites in Boston during the summer months to provide fun storytelling events and free books for all children in attendance. Free!
Milestones Contributors
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