



Growing
Up Strong
Cuchicum



This book is
dedicated to
all Elders, past
and present, for
their valuable
knowledge, wisdom
and loving care
passed on to our
cuchicum.



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Up Strong
Cuchicum

Acknowledgements

Growing Up Strong Cuchicum was published in 2010. This edition has been reprinted with updates to the Contacts and Supports section.

This book was adapted from the Far North Coast Aboriginal parenting book, *Doordarnbee Muggy Jarjums*. We would like to acknowledge and thank the original working party members and agencies that helped to develop *Growing Up Strong Cuchicum*.

Special thanks to all families who gave their time to be photographed for this book.

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Aboriginal
Child, Youth
and Family
Strategy



Proud communities
Strong families

Introduction

This book is a resource for Aboriginal parents and Family Workers in the Northern Sydney region of NSW, which is the traditional country of the Guringai and Darug people.

Cuchicum is the Guringai word for baby and small child. Between the ages of 0 and 5 our cuchicum's brains and bodies are developing and growing fast. This first stage of life is the most important time for parents to spend with their cuchicum and make sure that they get a good start in life.

Our cuchicum need us to love them and to help them feel safe and secure.

This book talks about how we can help cuchicum to grow up strong by spending time with them—cuddling, playing, singing, reading, listening, telling stories and talking.

The book includes:

- information about what cuchicum do at different stages
- ideas about things we can do with our cuchicum
- games and activities
- contacts to help with parenting

Cuchicum are important to the whole community. We need to make sure that our cuchicum grow up healthy, strong and proud.

Being a parent can be hard at times. Don't be shamed to ask for help. There is a contact list in the back of this book with important phone numbers for people you can call if you need help or support.

This book has been developed as part of the Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy which is a NSW Government initiative.



Newborn cuchicum 0-3 months

In the first few weeks of life cuchicum will spend a lot of time sleeping and feeding.

All cuchicum like to be held close, cuddled and rocked.

Cuchicum like to look at faces and listen to voices. They are curious about what they see and hear.

Newborn cuchicum like to feel secure. Cuchicum will get to know you very quickly and rely on you for food and love. Being close to mum is very important for a new cuchicum.

Newborn cuchicum do not cry to 'get attention' or 'get at' their parents. They cry because they are hungry, wet, need a cuddle or need to sleep.

You can't spoil cuchicum by giving it too much attention.

Cuchicum will be upset by loud noises, sudden movement and angry voices.



No matter how tired, angry or frustrated you feel—NEVER shake a cuchicum. If you feel upset tell someone else and get some help.



Between 0 and 3 months
cuchicum will start to:

- smile
- watch faces
- listen to your voice
- lift up their head
when lying on belly
- kick their legs
by 2 months
- laugh by 3 months.



What you can do:

Give cuchicum lots of attention. Cuddle your cuchicum.

Talk, sing and hum to your cuchicum.

Play music to cuchicum.

When cuchicum makes a sound, smile and talk back and say their name.

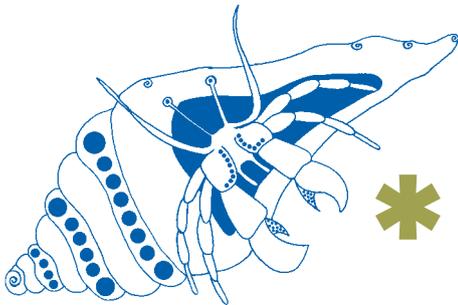
Carry cuchicum in a sling close to your body.

A quiet time before sleep helps cuchicum settle.

Cuchicum like to be touched gently. Play with cuchicum, gently pat and stroke them and move their arms and legs up, down and around.

Cuchicum need time on their belly to make their arms and neck strong. Place cuchicum on their belly and hold a toy in front of their face. Lift it up slowly so cuchicum needs to raise their head to see the toy.

Tie a rattle to the end of the bassinet to encourage cuchicum to move their legs and kick.



*Developing a routine will help—
try to do some things like bathing,
sleeping and feeding cuchicum at
the same time every day.*



Your cuchicum 3-9 months

Cuchicum is growing and you are learning about each other every day.

Cuchicum loves to be with you and is learning that you are the person who provides care and love.

Cuchicum will start to move around more. Playing and moving will help cuchicum grow stronger.

Cuchicum loves to smile and feels safe and happy when the people around are happy.

Never leave cuchicum alone on a bed where they could fall off.



From 6 months cuchicum will start to eat mashed food. Cuchicum needs healthy food to grow strong. Get advice from a Family Worker or Health Centre.

Between 3 and 9 months
cuchicum will start to:

- smile a lot
- make gurgling noises
- reach out to grab things
- hold and shake a rattle
- make sounds and 'talk'
- roll over from front to back
- push up and then sit up
- play with toes
- be interested in animals
- talk in 'baby language' and say short words like "mama", "dada", "no"
- pull up to a standing position.



What you can do:

Talk to cuchicum all the time and tell them about what you are doing.

Repeat simple sounds like “maa” and “daa”.

Make faces and blow raspberries on cuchicum’s belly.

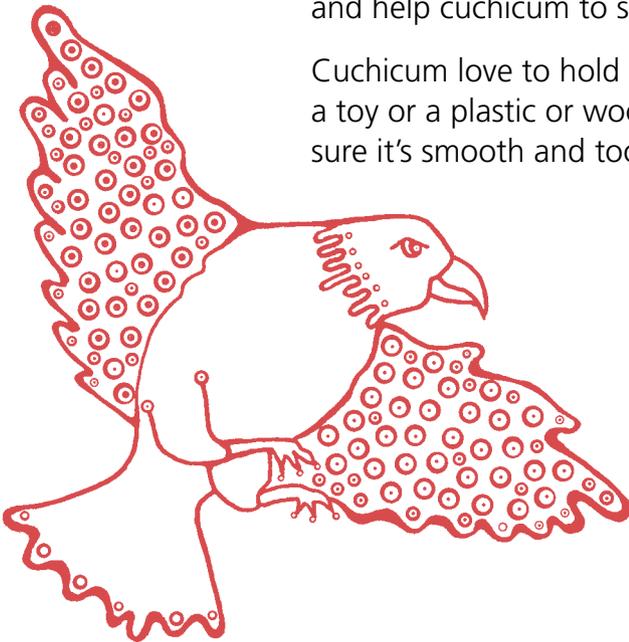
Sing and play music.

Give cuchicum lots of cuddles and hold cuchicum close.

Give cuchicum time on the floor without a nappy so cuchicum can kick and move about.

Put cuchicum on the tummy to make the back strong and help cuchicum to start crawling.

Cuchicum love to hold things—give cuchicum a rattle, a toy or a plastic or wooden spoon to play with. Make sure it’s smooth and too large to swallow.



Cuchicum are happy and settled when life is predictable—try to have a routine for feeding and sleeping. Cuchicum will need regular sleeps throughout the day.

Games for you and cuchicum 3-6 months

Peek-a-boo

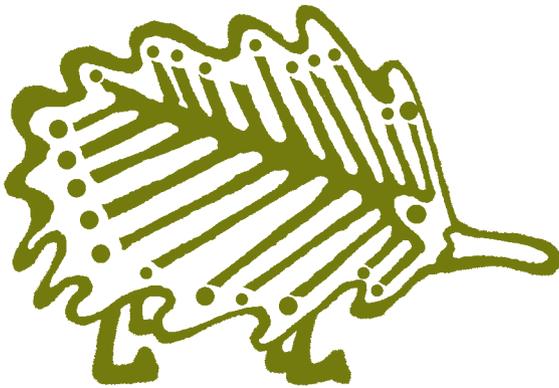
Cover your face with your hands or a scarf and then show your face and say “peek-a-boo”. Cuchicum are happy to do this over and over again.

Mirror game

Let cuchicum look in the mirror. Talk about what you can see—cuchicum, nose, eyes, ears.

Lost & found

Let cuchicum play with a cup or toy and then cover it with a cloth. Cuchicum will look for the missing object. You may need to help cuchicum find it.



All cuchicum are different and develop at their own pace. The thing your cuchicum needs most is your love, care and cuddles.

Games for you and cuchicum 6-9 months

Chasing

Give cuchicum a head start and then crawl after cuchicum. When you catch up, give them a cuddle. You can also help cuchicum to chase balls or rolling toys.

Hide and seek

You can hide under a table or behind a door and call out to cuchicum—can they find you?

Imitation games

Cuchicum love to imitate you—laugh, cough, clap your hands and move your arms and watch cuchicum try to do the same.

Round and round the garden

Trace a path on the cuchicum's palm as you sing:

Round and round the garden, like a teddy bear,

One step, ...two steps ...

(walk your fingers up cuchicum's arm)

Tickle under there.

(and tickle cuchicum's armpit)



Your cuchicum 9-18 months

Cuchicum will be curious about everything—sounds, music, books, household objects.

Cuchicum will start to explore—first by crawling and then by walking.

Once cuchicum starts crawling everything on the floor will end up in the mouth. Make sure there are no small objects around that cuchicum can swallow. Keep things clean.

Being safe is a big issue when cuchicum start to move around. You need to make sure all poisons, sharp objects and dangerous items are locked away up high. Put anything that cuchicum may break out of reach.

Cuchicum may have sudden mood changes and will test their will against others by wanting to get their own way. Cuchicum will also start to learn simple rules.

Between 9 and 18 months
cuchicum will start to:

- crawl
- stand up
- climb
- find out about objects by pushing, pulling and banging
- take their first steps
- look up when you call their name
- imitate sounds
- say a few words
- shake their head and say "no"
- smile and laugh to attract your attention
- play with everything they can get their hands on.



*Cuchicum will
practise these new
skills over and over.*



What you can do:

Cuchicum always needs lots of cuddles and attention.

Play, talk, laugh and sing with cuchicum.

Give cuchicum pots and spoons to bang.

Cuddle and roll on the floor together.

Take cuchicum outside, point to trees and animals and say their names.

Hold cuchicum on your lap and show them books, pictures, photo albums. Point at the pictures and talk about what's happening in them.

Read simple picture books to cuchicum.

Give cuchicum non-toxic pens and crayons and lots of paper to scribble on.

Fill plastic containers that have lids with stones or rice and help cuchicum to shake them and make noises.



Cuchicum don't need toys that cost a lot—they will learn and have lots of fun playing with cardboard boxes, saucepans, pegs...and you!





Games for you and cuchicum

Through the tunnel

Cut the ends off 2 cardboard boxes, line them up and tape them together. You can also use 2 chairs with a blanket. Ask cuchicum to crawl through the tunnel to you.

Fill it up

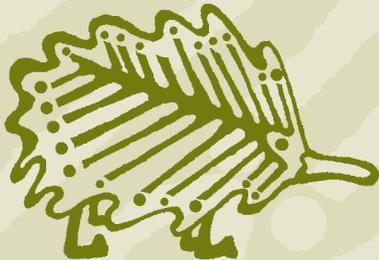
Put objects like pegs, balls or blocks into a box or saucepan. Show cuchicum how to take the objects out and put them in again.

Peg play

Pegs make great toys. Peg them to the top of a saucepan or box and show cuchicum how to take them off.

Singing

You might have a favourite song you like to sing to cuchicum.





Cuchicum

1¹/₂-2¹/₂ years

At this age, cuchicum like to explore and will sometimes fall. They are watching and learning all the time.

They can understand many more words than they can say.

Cuchicum like to make a noise. They are learning to talk. You can help by talking, playing and singing with them.

Cuchicum do not understand 'sharing' or 'waiting'. Now is the time to start helping them to understand how to take turns and how to share.

Cuchicum will enjoy being with older kids, cousins and grandparents who have time to spend playing. Cuchicum still need someone to play with and someone to keep an eye on them.

Start encouraging your cuchicum to use a potty or big toilet.



Between 18 months and 2½ years cuhichum will start to:

- kick and throw a ball
- hold objects
- imitate sounds
- use simple words like “mum”, “milk”, “sore”
- name foods and body parts
- understand questions
- help with simple tasks
- use pencils and crayons
- play alone
- repeat games and words
- feed themselves
- turn knobs and push buttons.



What you can do:

Cuchicum love music—sing, play music and dance with them.

Take cuchicum exploring—a garden or a park can be an exciting place.

Sit cuchicum on your lap to look at books.
Help cuchicum to point at the pictures and name things: “look—a big brown dog”. Let cuchicum turn the pages.

At this age, cuchicum love to pretend and imagine—a box of old clothes and shoes, towels and hats can be hours of fun. A sheet over a couple of chairs can be a place to hide.

Talk to them and repeat the words they have said.
Tell them the name of objects and then ask “what’s that?”.

Cuchicum love to help—involve them in daily routines like hanging out the washing or washing the floor.



All cuchicum need cuddles and hugs so they know you care about them and that they are loved.

Games for cuchiaicum 1¹/₂-2¹/₂ years

Cardboard boxes

Cardboard boxes are great toys. They can be taped together, painted and decorated to become cars, towers and tunnels. Cut windows and a door into a large box and you have a house.

Chase me

Cuchiaicum will start to run and they will love to be chased and caught. They also like to hop 'like a kangaroo' or run 'like the wind'.

Sand or water play

Cuchiaicum love to play in sand and water. Give them some plastic containers like mugs, buckets, spades and a funnel with a tray of water or sand. Never leave a cuchiaicum alone with water.



Games for cuchicum 1¹/₂-2¹/₂ years

Word games

Touch and talk—say “this is your nose” and touch cuchicum’s nose, “this is your ear” and touch their ear.

While dressing—“where do your shoes go?”

As you cook—“what will I use to mix the cake?”

Toy libraries

Most libraries have toy libraries where you can borrow toys. Cuchicum love puzzles and any toys that link together like trains with carriages. Toys that can be pushed or pulled are also very good. Talk to your Playgroup Coordinator or Family Worker about where you can borrow toys.

Playgroup

Playgroups are a great place for cuchicum to go to meet with other kids, learning through play and activities. They are also a great place for mums, dads, aunties, uncles and grandparents to talk to other parents or early childhood specialists for advice and support.

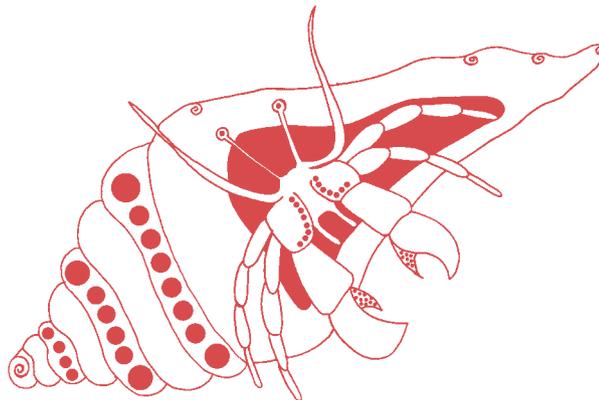


Growing up fast 2¹/₂-3¹/₂ years

Your cuchicum is growing up fast, learning new things everyday. They can say more words, ask more questions, follow simple directions and do more things by themselves.

Cuchicum learn through play. They don't need expensive toys but they need you to spend time with them—get down on their level and join in the fun.

Your cuchicum is also learning to be independent and this can mean tantrums, not wanting to share and fighting with other children. They can be bossy and start giving orders like “go away”.





Between 2½ and 3½ your cuhicum will:

- use words together. For example: “go potty now”
- run around and fall over a lot
- walk up stairs
- jump with two feet
- help dress themselves
- ask lots of questions
- know their full name
- start to understand ‘sharing’
- copy words and actions
- make music, sing and dance
- like stories and books.

What you can do:

Spend time with your cuchicum—play and talk with them.

Yarnin' (telling stories)

Share your stories and listen to your cuchicum's stories. They are learning about you and the world around them.

Learning skills

Cuchicum are learning every day—show them how to put on clothes the right way, do up and undo buttons and zips. Try lacing up shoes and tying bows. Let them have a try at doing some of the things you do and encourage them when they have a go. Let them help with getting a feed.

Going walkabout (exploring)

As cuchicum get older you can take them on longer walks. Show them the local area and tell them stories about people and places or just describe what you can see.

 *It's important that we keep our cuchicum safe. Make sure you know where they are and that there is always someone looking after them.*

Learning about feelings

If your cuchicum is upset, angry or fighting with another child the best thing you can do is distract them. Take them away and do something else like reading a book or playing a chasing game. Help them understand their feelings. For example: say “you are really angry but you must not hit your brother”.

Goin’ wild (tantrums)

Little tantrums are best ignored. Make sure you notice and talk to your cuchicum when they stop their tantrum. Sometimes feelings get more and more out of control until you end up with a big tantrum. Try to step in before the tantrum gets out of control. Distract your cuchicum, help them relax and talk about why they are upset.

- It never helps to punish or hit a child when they are having a tantrum.
- Never use ‘put-downs’, bad names or swear at cuchicum.
- If you start to feel angry, WALK AWAY until you calm down.

Games for cuchicum 2¹/₂-3¹/₂ years

Making music

Cuchicum can have lots of fun with home made instruments. Make clapping sticks from pieces of wood. Fill a tin or plastic container with rice or stones to shake. Nail bottle tops to a stick that you can rattle. Put paper over the top of a tin to make a drum. Don't be shame. Get up and dance with your cuchicum.

Painting

Paint with fingers, brushes, sponges, toothbrushes onto just about anything—paper, cloth, newspaper, wood, paper bags and plates, bark, rope. Do it outside because it will be messy. Children also love to paint with water—give them a brush and let them paint the outside doors, windows and walls.

Making a feed (cooking)

3-year-olds usually love cooking. Start with simple things like a Vegemite sandwich, pouring drinks, damper, biscuits and popcorn. Be very careful with things that are hot or sharp.

Collage

Cardboard, coloured paper, straws, string, leaves, wool, egg shells, sand and small sea shells can all be used to make a collage. Stick on the materials using glue and see what interesting pictures you can make. Flour and water mixed together makes a good glue.



Your cuchicum 3¹/₂-5 years

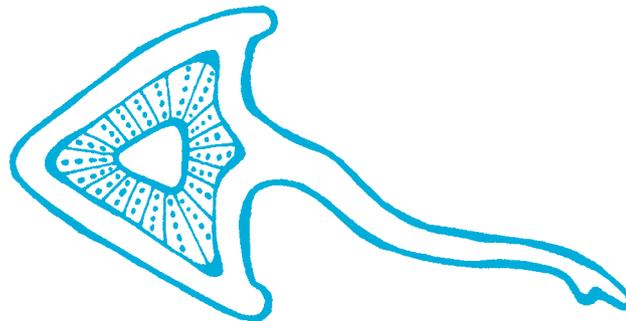
Cuchicum are learning so much—talking, playing, getting along with others, sharing and taking turns.

Cuchicum are more independent but they still need an adult around to care for them and keep them safe.

Cuchicum can understand problems, follow simple rules and will enjoy helping you. They will show affection and understand when someone has been hurt.

Pre-School

This is a good age for your cuchicum to attend pre-school as it helps them get ready for school.



Between 3½ and 5
your cuhicum will:

- have a longer attention span
- ask a lot of questions
- use words together to make sentences
- run smoothly and easily
- dress without help
- use paste, scissors, pencils and crayons
- climb ladders and trees
- tell stories
- sing and dance
- enjoy playing with other children
- enjoy jokes and rhymes.



*If cuhicum are not
talking much, they
may need their ears
'checked' by a nurse or
doctor.*



What you can do:

Proud Kooris

Cuchicum need to know they are loved. Even when they are naughty tell them: “I don’t like it when you do something wrong BUT I always love you.”

Let’s teach cuchicum to be proud of who they are and let them know they belong to one of the oldest surviving cultures in the world.

That’s deadly!

Cuchicum need to be told when they are doing the right thing. Let them know when they do something good. Tell them how deadly they are.

Read books together, tell stories and sing songs.

At this age, cuchicum love to tell stories and you can help them to make their own books. Let them draw the pictures and paste or staple the pages together.

Housework can be fun and children can learn skills by helping you—get them to help you with cooking, bringing in the washing or sweeping the floor.



Encourage cuchicum to help you and make it fun.

Games for cuchiaum 3¹/₂-5 years

Masks

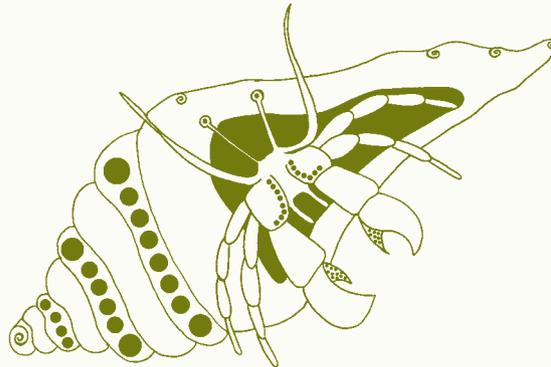
Paper bags or paper plates make great masks. Cuchiaum can cut out the shapes for eyes, nose and mouth and decorate the mask with crayons or paint. Make masks for different characters or animals.

Gamin

Cuchiaum love to pretend—they can be wild animals, superheroes and fairies. These pretend games and stories help them learn and grow and are an important part of being a healthy little Koori.

Growing things

If you have space for a vegetable garden you can grow simple foods like carrots, potatoes, beans and tomatoes. It's fun to plant and grow and makes eating healthy food fun too. You can also try growing flowers and sprouting seeds for salad.



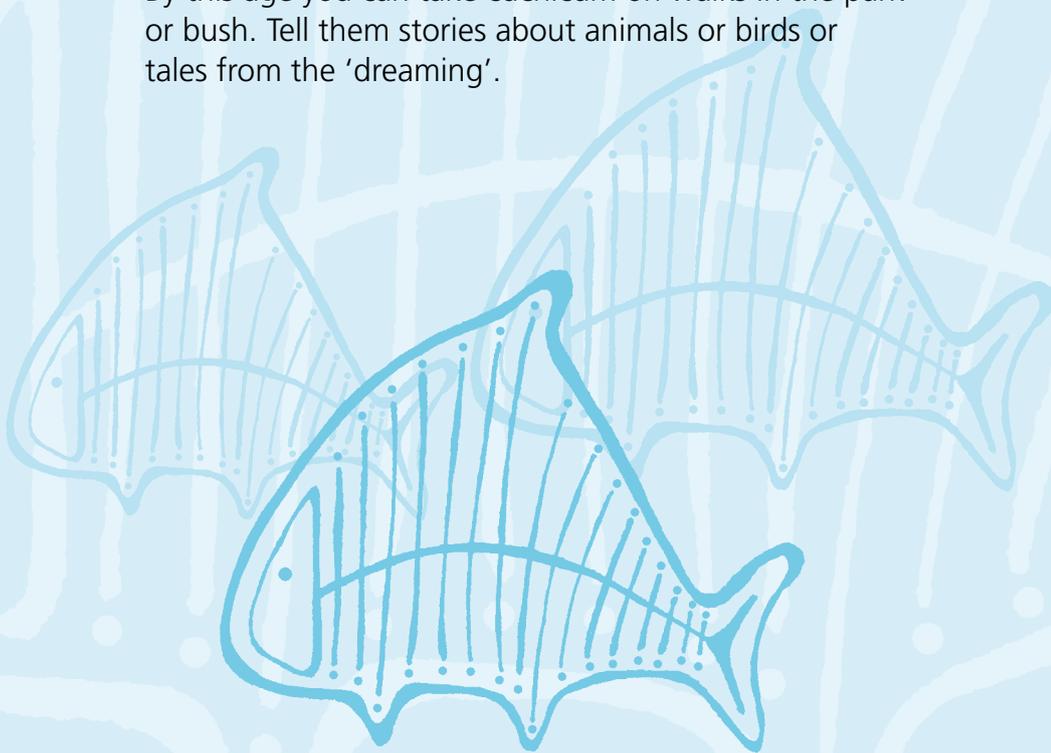
Games for cuchiaum 3¹/₂-5 years

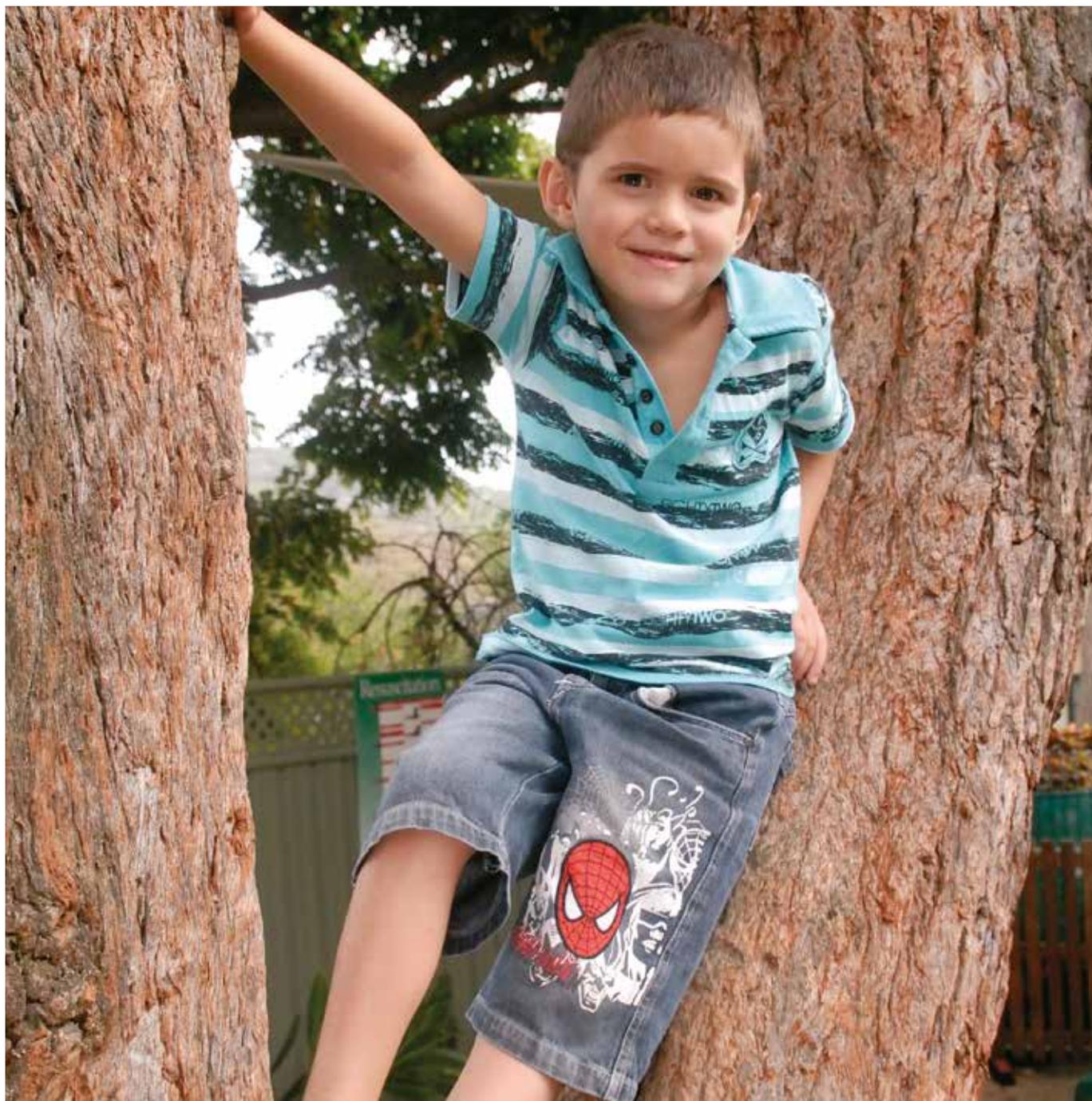
Sorting

Cuchiaum at this age love to sort things into different groups. Try using coloured pegs, stones, shells, pasta, big buttons or food. Sort the pegs by colour, shells by size, buttons by shape or whatever way you decide. Pasta, shells and buttons can also be threaded onto string to make necklaces.

Going bush (bushwalking)

By this age you can take cuchiaum on walks in the park or bush. Tell them stories about animals or birds or tales from the 'dreaming'.





Good food for cuchicum

Cuchicum need good food to grow healthy and strong.

Breast milk or formula is the most important food for cuchicum until they are 12 months.

When should I start feeding my cuchicum solids?

Around 6 months is the best time to start cuchicum on solid food.

Introducing solids too early can increase the risk of food allergies and choking.

What solids should I feed my cuchicum?

Cuchicum needs well mashed food. Start by mixing cuchicum rice cereal or mashed potato with breast milk or formula to make a smooth paste.

Then try mashed vegies—potato, pumpkin, carrots, peas and sweet potato.

Get cuchicum used to vegies and then try mashed fruit—ripe bananas, well cooked apples and pears.

Do not give adult or kids' breakfast cereals to cuchicum—these are harder to digest.

How much should I feed my cuchicum?

Start with a teaspoon and increase the amount slowly to a few tablespoons. The cereal or potato can be thickened as cuchicum eats more.

Cuchicum is learning how to eat so don't worry if cuchicum doesn't eat much at first.

Give baby a breast milk or formula feed before solids.

Avoid pieces of raw vegetables or hard fruit as these can make cuchicum choke.

Feeding cuchicum 6-9 months

Start with rice cereal, mashed vegies and fruit.

Then try small servings of:

- rice and pasta
- tender well cooked meat
- fish without bones
- well cooked egg.

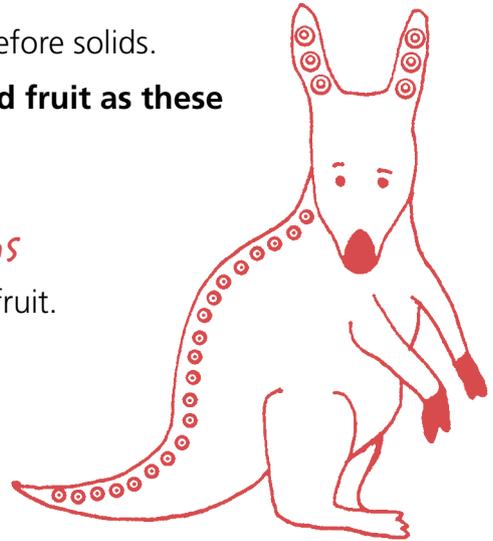
Cuchicum can start to drink from a cup with a lid.

Try boiled water that has been cooled, formula or breast milk.

As cuchicum gets used to eating solids, you can start to give solids first and then formula or breast milk.

Make sure cuchicum's food is not too hot.

Test it on your own lips first.



Feeding cuchiaum 9-12 months

Cuchiaum can now eat mashed food from the family meal—meat, pasta, fish, beans, rice, noodles, vegies and fruit are all good foods for cuchiaum.

Finger food will help cuchiaum learn how to feed themselves.

Try:

- boiled pieces of carrot, potato and pumpkin
- ripe banana or pear
- cheese
- stewed or grated apple.

Don't add salt or sugar to cuchiaum's food.

Cuchiaum will still need 3-4 breastfeeds or bottles per day.

**Try to cook one meal for cuchiaum every day.
Take-away is not a healthy food for cuchiaum.**

12 months to 5 years

Cuchiaum need a good mix of healthy fresh food.

Feed your little Koori fresh fruit and vegies, meat, fish, eggs, beans, wholegrain bread, pasta and rice.

Meals made at home are cheaper and healthier.

Put limits on take-away meals and junk food like sweets, chips and soft drinks.

Drinks

The best drinks for cuchiaum are breast milk, formula or water.

Cows milk is too strong for cuchiaum to drink before they are 12 months old.

Do not give fizzy drinks or soft drinks to cuchiaum.

Cordial and soft drinks are full of sugar and can cause weight gain and tooth decay.

Cola and other soft drinks also contain caffeine, which can make cuchiaum hyper.

Encourage cuchiaum to drink water or mix fruit juice with water.

Storing food

You can save time by cooking up a large amount of food for cuchiaum and storing it.

Mashed cuchiaum food can be frozen in clean ice cube trays. Spoon it into the tray, put the tray in a clean plastic bag and freeze. Do not keep for more than 30 days.

You can reheat one or two ice cubes as you need them.

Once food has been warmed and given to cuchiaum, throw out any left in the bowl.

Words

Kindly provided with permission from Guringai Tribal Link Aboriginal Corporation and Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation.

Guringai	English	Dharug
Cuchicum	Small child	Guring
Wallering	Head	Gabara
Merrong	Shoulder	Tarung
Beeyang	Knee	Gurug
Jenna	Foot/toe	Manuwi
Migay	Eyes	Maya
Bina	Ears	Guri
Coolla	Mouth	Walan
Nuko	Nose	Nugara

Song in Guringai language

Head, shoulders, knees & toes

Wallering, merrong, beeyang, jena

Head, shoulders, knees, toes

Beeyang, jena

Knees, toes

Wallering, merrong, beeyang, jena

Head, shoulders, knees, toes

Beeyang, Jenna

Knees, toes

Migay, bina, coolla, nuko

Eyes, ears, mouth, nose

Wallering, merrong, beeyang, jena

Head, shoulders, knees, toes



Song in Dharug language

Head, shoulders, knees & toes

Gabara, tarung, gurug, manuwi

Head, shoulders, knees, toes

Gurug, manuwi

Knees, toes

Gabara, tarung, gurug, manuwi

Heads, shoulders, knees, toes

Gurug, Manuwi

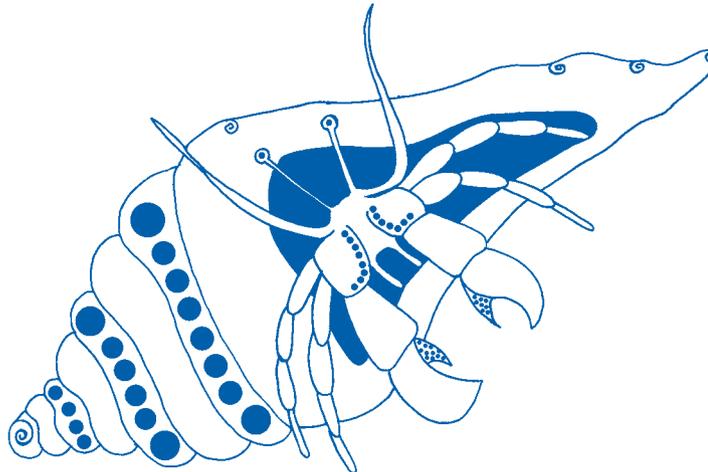
Knees, toes

Maya, guri, waalan, nugara

Eyes, ears, mouth, nose

Gabara, tarung, gurug, manuwi

Head, shoulders, knees, toes



Contacts and support

ABORIGINAL FAMILY SUPPORT

Aboriginal Early Years Project	9814 5100
Early Intervention Program (Brighter Futures)	9889 1418

NSW GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Community Services (Epping)	9815 0700
Community Services (Chatswood)	9406 9777
Ageing, Disability and Home Care (Metro North)	9841 9350
Housing NSW Contact Centre	1300 468 746
Department of Education and Communities (DEC)	9987 3900
TAFE NSW Northern Sydney Institute – Gamarada Aboriginal Education and Training Unit	9942 3577
Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service – Nunyarra Aboriginal Health Service (Northern Sydney)	4320 2698
Northern Sydney Local Health District – Aboriginal Health	9462 9044

Contacts and support

OTHER KEY AGENCIES/ ORGANISATIONS

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)	9550 5666
Aboriginal Medical Service (Redfern)	9319 5823
Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Centre (Wyang)	4351 1040
Aboriginal Home And Community Care (HACC)	9847 6061
Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre	9569 3847
(Free call)	1800 686 587

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Chatswood Community Early Childhood Centre	9448 3155
Queenscliff Community Health Centre	9466 2500
Hornsby Child and Family Health Centre	9987 3044

Contacts and support

HELP, ADVICE AND SUPPORT – CALL CENTRES

Emergency 24 hours (Ambulance, Fire, Police)	000
Breastfeeding helpline (24 Hours)	1800 686 268
Centrelink – family and parenting payments	13 61 50
Child Abuse Prevention Service	1800 688 009
Child Protection Helpline (24 Hours)	13 21 11
Domestic Violence Line (24 Hours)	1800 656 463
Early Childhood Intervention Info Line	1300 656 865
Karitane Care Line (24 Hours)	1300 227 464
Gowrie Child Care & Family Info Line	8594 4244
Parent Line NSW	1300 1300 52
Playgroup NSW	1800 171 882
Tresillian Parents Helpline (24 Hours)	1800 637 357 9787 0855
Women's Information and Referral Service	1800 817 227

