

1.2 GROWTH —

Growth refers to the **quantitative changes** in an individual's physical structure — increase in height, weight, size of organs, and body proportions. It is one part of the broader concept of development and is generally **measurable in specific units** (centimeters, kilograms).

Key Characteristics of Growth:

- Growth is **quantitative** — it can be measured objectively.
- Growth is **limited to the physical dimension** of an individual.
- Growth generally **stops after physical maturity** is reached (usually by early adulthood).
- Growth follows the **cephalocaudal** (head-to-toe) and **proximodistal** (center-to-periphery) directions.
- The rate of growth is **not uniform** — some periods show rapid growth, others slow, steady growth.

Real-Life Examples of Growth:

1. A newborn baby weighing about 3 kg grows to nearly 10 kg by the age of one year — a clear quantitative, measurable change.
2. A child's height increasing from 90 cm at age 2 to 120 cm at age 6, tracked on a growth chart during regular pediatric check-ups.
3. The dramatic **adolescent growth spurt**, where a teenager may grow several centimeters in height within a single year due to hormonal changes.
4. Increase in **head circumference** of an infant, measured by doctors at each vaccination visit to monitor brain growth.
5. Eruption of milk teeth in early childhood, followed by their replacement with a larger set of permanent teeth.

Growth is thus a **necessary but not sufficient** part of the larger, lifelong process of development, which also includes qualitative changes in thinking, emotion, and social behaviour.