

Developmental Stages for Young Children

First and foremost, as a Reggio-inspired school, we believe that all children are competent, imaginative, curious, and powerful. We value each child and their individual strengths, cultural differences, and personal experiences which all contribute to creating our diverse school community. While each child is exceptional and unique in his or her own way, we also know that children share many changes and shifts in development. With the support of the Department of Education from Florida, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia and in collaboration with the entire WBCC staff, we have put together a collection of developmental stages that we believe highlight the different aspects of learning all children go through at one time or another. Based on this framework of stages, our school community worked together to identify the ways that, we as educators, support these developmental phases both for individual children and for groups of children. This complete document serves as a guide for teachers and parents to think about the connections between children's learning, teacher's provocations, and developmental theories. This document is also a reflection of how our educational philosophy inspires us and how our school vision guides us to support the children's development throughout each of the stages. We caution the reader to not refer to this as a manual for children's development purely based on age. As all children develop at their own pace, we know that developmental stages need to be flexible in order to be inclusive of all children. Rather through this document, we hope to provide some clarity on how we support these common developmental trends through offering opportunities for discovering, investigating, engaging, and making meaning as individuals within a school community.

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Maryland Guide for Healthy Child Development and Care for Young Children (birth to 3-year-olds) addresses four domains of development and includes Parent Tips and links to the State's school readiness initiative, Ready at Five. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.dhr.state.md.us/cca/pdfs/guidechild.pdf>.

Georgia Early Learning Standards (birth to age 3) identifies the continuum of skills, behaviors, and concepts infants and toddlers typically attain during the first three years of life. The document addresses five domains of development and includes standards, indicators, and sample behaviors. Appendices identify the alignment with Georgia Pre-K, Kindergarten Performance Standards, and Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.decal.state.ga.us/CCS/CCSServices.aspx?Header=67&SubHeader=&Position=18&HeaderName=Georgia%20Early%20Learning%20Standards>.

Stages of Development for Young Infants

(Birth to 8 Months)

Approaches to Learning & Cognitive Development

- **Shows awareness of and interest in the environment.**

Young infants displace interest in their surroundings. They develop natural curiosity about themselves and interact with their immediate environment. Young infants can demonstrate eagerness and curiosity by

- turning in direction of the source of familiar voices and sounds;
- reacting to new objects, voices, and sounds by becoming either more quiet or more active or changing their facial expressions;
- babbling when alone and trying several sounds;
- exploring an object using all their senses;
- responding to someone who is talking to them.

We support this development by:

- ***Frequently speaking to children by describing the characteristics of people or objects and verbalizing actions during daily events.***
- ***Creating a variety of sounds by playing music or instruments or even by changing the rhythm and volume of voice when talking by whispering, singing, and making other sounds.***
- ***Maintaining eye contact and offering interesting objects for children to look at.***
- ***Constantly refreshing the environment and adding new materials to the classroom.***
- ***Encouraging the exploration of objects with all the senses through verbal means, as well as, through modeling.***
- ***Constantly refreshing the environment by adding new materials to the classroom.***
- ***Playing “tracking” games by moving self and interesting objects around the children.***
- ***Placing pictures of children and family members where children can see them at eye level.***
- ***Exposing children to objects that are different colors, shapes, patterns, forms, tones, textures, and sizes.***
- ***Allowing time for children to explore their faces and bodies in mirrors.***

- **Pays attention briefly and tries to reproduce interesting and pleasurable effects and events.**

Young infants depend on parents and teachers for emotional and physical support. They begin to attend to and repeat interactions and behaviors that are pleasurable and that meet their needs. They show persistence by:

- grasping, releasing, re-grasping, and re-releasing an object;
- kicking or swatting a mobile to repeat a sound or motion;
- consistently reaching for toys and objects.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering materials that “react” when manipulated, such as a bottle filled with acorns that will create sound and a visual effect when moved.***
- ***Providing objects for children to bat, grasp, and reach for, such as with a mobile made of natural or recycled materials.***
- ***Placing a variety of materials of different size, color, and shape within reach of children.***
- ***Verbalize actions and direct children’s visual attentions to notice things such as “Look, there’s your daddy”.***
- ***Allowing children repeated opportunities to retrieve toys and objects.***

- **Establishes primary relationships.**

Young infants begin to establish relationships with others and to become interested in objects within their vision. They make sense of their world through interactions with parents and teachers by:

- beginning to smile as a social interaction;
- responding to familiar words like bottle, blanket, teddy bear, etc;
- showing pleasure when presented with a familiar object.

We support this development by:

- ***Looking directly at children and talking with them gently using an animated face throughout the day.***
- ***Holding children in the lap when reading stories.***
- ***Listening and responding to children's non-verbal cues.***
- ***Sharing smiles and laughs with children.***
- ***Being expressive facially and verbally during interactions and allow children time to respond.***
- ***Providing time for children to observe each other interacting within the classroom.***
- ***Calming children by picking them up and holding them close.***
- ***Being responsive to children while carefully modulating voice tone and volume while offering supportive phrases.***
- ***Observing children to determine what they find interesting and following their cues.***
- ***Using familiar names often to reinforce the connection between names and faces.***
- ***Providing time for children to interact with their peers.***
- ***Showing photographs of children and other family members.***

- **Begins to make things happen.**

Young infants are not purposeful in their actions but rather accidentally make things happen. During the first six months, their movements are dominated largely by reflexes. Although many actions are unintentional, young infants quickly learn there are predictable responses to their actions. Discovery evolves as they use their senses to discover the world around them. They inspect their fingers and toes, stare at people's faces, touch and put things in their mouths, follow sounds, and watch moving things. This process of discovery through their senses lays the foundation for cognitive development. Young infants actively inspect their surroundings and explore objects by:

- reaching and grabbing objects within view;
- banging utensils, blocks, and toys on the floor or table;
- reaching for a mobile to make it move;
- touching and mouthing objects.

We support this development by:

- ***Provide opportunities for children to hold and grasp more than one toy or object.***
- ***Observing children to determine what they find interesting and following their cues.***
- ***Offering materials that "react" when manipulated, such as a bottle filled with acorns that will create sound and a visual effect when moved.***
- ***Placing a variety of materials of different size, color, and shape within reach of children.***
- ***Providing time for children to explore bodies and identify parts.***
- ***Creating stimulating environments that the children can independently explore.***
- ***Allowing children repeated opportunities to retrieve toys and objects.***
- ***Providing sound-making toys and musical instruments that infants can use independently.***

Motor Development

- **Gross Motor Development**

- **Demonstrates beginning signs of balance, control, and coordination.**

As young infants grow, they begin to gain control of their bodies. Gross motor development focuses on arm, body, and leg movements. Tone, strength, and coordination improve progressively from head to toe. While the sequence of

development is predictable, there is wide variation in each young infant's timetable. Young infants demonstrate some balance, control, and coordination by:

- turning their head from side to side, kicking their feet, and moving their hands;
- pushing their chest and head off the floor;
- sitting with support and, later, without support;
- rocking back and forth on hands and knees and beginning to crawl;
- standing firmly on legs and bouncing when in standing position;
- pivoting in a circle when on their tummies and using arms to pull their body along on the floor.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering a variety of soft surfaces on the floor for the children to explore gross motor movement.***
- ***Allowing children time to sit with props and without props.***
- ***Providing stable objects or physical support for children to experience standing on legs and bouncing.***
- ***Supporting gross motor activities by describing actions and using encouraging words or phrases.***
- ***Allowing time for children to move arms and legs freely.***
- ***Placing children on stomach when awake so that they may explore rolling back and forth.***
- ***Including movement with music.***

- **Fine Motor Development**

- **Demonstrates beginning signs of strength, control, and eye-hand coordination.**

Although early movements may be reflexive and seemingly random, young infants develop more purposeful actions over time. They use their vision and hands to explore large and small objects that are within their reach. Young infants show initial fine motor development by:

- reaching for and grasping objects such as rattles, soft toys, and blocks;
- looking at and transferring objects from hand to hand;
- grasping their parents' or teachers' fingers;
- playing with their fingers and holding fingers in tight fists.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering a variety of materials of different size, color, and shape and placing them within reach of children.***
- ***Providing opportunities for children to hold and grasp more than one object.***
- ***Offering material that can be manipulated in different ways so that children may experience the actions of turning, shaking, flipping, twisting, sliding, grasping, etc.***
- ***Playing finger games with children and encouraging their interactions.***
- ***Allowing children repeated opportunities to independently retrieve toys and objects.***
- ***Exposing children to a variety of fabrics, papers, toys, etc.***

Language and Communication

- **Responds to frequently heard sounds and words.**

Young infants begin to understand their worlds by listening to the sounds around them and to the language of the parents and teachers who interact with them. They learn to distinguish the voices of the most important and consistent adults in their lives. Young infants show response to sounds by:

- moving their arms and legs when they hear a familiar voice;
- turning their head toward a sound;
- gazing at the faces of their parents and teachers as they talk and make facial expressions;
- paying attention to the language used in their home.

We support this development by:

- ***Frequently speaking to children by describing the characteristics of people or objects and verbalizing actions during daily events.***

- *Finding time through out the day to sing familiar songs to children.*
- *Reading the same books over and over again to children.*
- *Repeating rhymes and songs to children.*
- *Responding to children's vocalizations by making similar sounds, smiling, and attending.*
- *Using children's names frequently during play and daily activities.*
- *Playing interactive games while encouraging expressions by making face, gestures, and sounds.*
- *Label sounds as they are occurring and point to the source of the sound.*
- *Playing familiar games that represents the children's home experiences.*
- *Using familiar names often to reinforce the connection between names and faces.*

- **Uses a variety of sounds and movements to communicate.**

Starting at birth, young infants build connections between sounds, gestures, and meaning. During the first months of life, an infant communicates with gazes, cries, coos, smiles, and frowns to make their interests and their needs known. They use their eyes to direct attention to particular things and enjoy making sounds back and forth with responsive parents and teachers. They begin to use syllables as a way to communicate their wants and needs, along with their bodies. Young infants demonstrate the use of sounds and movements to communicate by:

- Experimenting with different types of sounds;
- Beginning to coo, using vowel sounds like *ahh*, *eee*, *ooo* and other speech sounds that are consistent with their home language;
- Babbling, using repeated syllables such as *ma ma*, *ba ba*;
- Using their bodies to communicate, such as waving and pointing and holding their hands to their eyes to play peek-a-boo.

We support this development by:

- *Allowing time for children to explore their own vocalizations and interacting to extend the children's interest in sound play.*
- *Responding to children's vocalizations by making similar sounds, smiling, and attending.*
- *Describing the environment to children and waiting for children to respond.*
- *Frequently pairing words with gestures.*
- *Responding to children's vocalizations by giving sounds meaning, such as "Oh, did you want to be picked up?"*
- *Singing, humming, and chanting to children as teachers watch for children's cues and signals, such as smiling and reaching.*
- *Making children's productions of the sounds "dada" and "mama" meaningful by repeating the sounds and using them meaningfully.*
- *Playing interactive games while encouraging expressions by making face, gestures, and sounds.*
- *Modeling pointing when obtaining new objects.*
- *Using facial expressions along with words to express emotions.*
- *Describing and commenting on the children's emotions.*

- **Show enjoyment of the sounds and rhythms of language.**

Early experiences sitting on the laps of parents and teachers begin to familiarize young infants with the conventions of reading and talking about stories. These pleasurable experiences have a lasting impact. Young infants can distinguish among different voices, and they learn to respond to facial expressions and various tones of voice. They respond to language and show enjoyment of the sounds and rhythms of language by:

- exploring sounds as they babble and imitate;
- babbling while looking at a book with their parents and teachers.
- focusing their attention on picture books with bold, colorful, and clear images.

We support this development by:

- *Creating a variety of sounds by playing music or instruments or even by changing the rhythm and volume of voice when talking by whispering, singing, and making other sounds.*

- ***Allowing time for children to explore their own vocalizations and interacting to extend the children's interest in sound play.***
- ***Playing soothing music, birds singing, water babbling, etc.***
- ***Holding children and reading books with large, vivid images.***
- ***Observing when children are more talkative and encouraging them to continue.***
- ***Waiting for children to finish speaking before talking.***

- **Develops eye-hand coordination and more intentional hand control.**

Learning to write is a very long journey that begins in infancy. Young infants learn control over their movements as they reach out, grasp, and release objects. They also move their arms across the middle of their bodies, which prepares them to learn to use both sides of the body together. They are able to follow the movements of objects with their eyes, pass objects from one hand to the other, and grasp objects for longer periods of time. Young infants show developing eye-hand coordination by:

- following a moving object with their eyes;
- reaching, grasping, and putting objects in their mouths;
- holding toys with both hands;
- passing objects from one hand to the other.

We support this development by:

- ***Provide opportunities for children to hold and grasp more than one toy or object.***
- ***Placing a variety of materials of different size, color, and shape within reach of children.***
- ***Offer various media to explore, such as clay.***
- ***Offering material that can be manipulated in different ways so that children may experience the actions of turning, shaking, flipping, twisting, sliding, grasping, etc.***
- ***Playing finger games with children and encouraging their interactions.***
- ***Keeping books in many locations and allowing time for children to explore books with all their senses.***

- **Watches activities of others and imitates sounds, facial expressions, and actions.**

Letters and written words are symbols for sounds. Written words are symbols for real objects, people, places, or thoughts and feelings. The idea of one thing representing another is an understanding that children develop as they grow. Young infants begin this process by watching the people around them. Later, they imitate the faces and the facial expressions that they see. Young infants demonstrate imitation of sounds and facial expressions by:

- watching the faces of their parents and teachers during routine activities;
- imitating cooing sounds made by their parents and teachers;
- responding with a smile in response to a smiling face.

We support this development by:

- ***Looking directly at children and talking with them gently using an animated face throughout the day.***
- ***Imitating cooing and gurgling sounds that children make.***
- ***Sharing smiles and laughs with children.***
- ***Provide opportunities for children to explore the human face.***
- ***Being expressive facially and verbally during interactions and allow children time to respond.***
- ***Engaging children by making simple mouth movements, such as opening mouth.***
- ***Holding and talking to children.***
- ***Playing interactive games while encouraging expressions by making face, gestures, and sounds.***
- ***Reading or talking about pictures in books and using an interesting voice.***

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Stages of Development for Older Infants

(8 Months to 18 months)

Approaches to Learning & Cognitive Development

- **Responds in varied ways to people and objects.**

Older infants respond to the environment with a growing sense of independence and understanding. The world becomes much larger as they become mobile. They see something and are able to move toward it, grab it, and explore how it works. Older infants are able to manipulate objects and appear to marvel at what people and objects can do by:

- excitedly rolling a ball to parents and teachers again and again;
- showing a preference for a favorite book and vocalizing when the book is being read;
- finding hidden objects.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering open-ended materials and toys that can be used in a variety of ways.***
- ***Providing toys and activities that encourage children to solve problems.***
- ***Offering a variety of materials that pose challenges and encourage children to figure out how they work.***
- ***Creating a variety of sounds by playing music or instruments or even by changing the rhythm and volume of voice when talking by whispering, singing, and making other sounds.***
- ***Offering materials that support dramatic play as children express their understanding of their environment through role playing.***
- ***Playing hiding games, such as “peek-a-boo”, to reveal hidden objects or people.***
- ***Providing time to explore the natural world.***
- ***Offering children containers for collecting and dumping.***
- ***Constantly refreshing the environment by adding new materials to the classroom.***
- ***Providing materials for sensory exploration, such as sand and water.***

- **Establishes more complex relationships**

Older infants are beginning to notice characteristics of themselves and others. Often they use imitation as a strategy to engage others. Increasingly, they can point, babble, or gesture to make their desires known.

Older infants demonstrate the ability to relate to people and things as they explore and discover:

- showing objects to parents and teachers;
- pointing to pictures of family, body parts, or animals;
- showing preference among play partners;
- imitating their parents and teachers.

We support this development by:

- ***Create provocations that invite groups of children to work near and interact with each other.***
- ***Echoing children and different types of sound play.***
- ***Playing turn-taking games that offer opportunities for children to respond with sounds or actions.***
- ***Providing ample materials, modeling, and responding to children’s play efforts.***
- ***Following children’s body movements and imitating gestures.***
- ***Playing with children by a mirror while identifying face and body parts.***
- ***Encouraging children’s accomplishments with words and facial expressions.***
- ***Labeling children’s emotions and responding appropriately.***
- ***Encouraging children to mimic each other and verbally describe actions.***
- ***Acknowledging children’s awareness of others and verbally discuss their observations.***

- ***Repeating activities when children show that they would like them to occur again.***
- ***Listening and responding consistently to children's needs.***

- **Attends briefly and persists in repetitive tasks.**

As older infants begin to make sense of their environment, they start developing the ability to sustain attention for longer periods of time. They look to their parents and teachers for both emotional and physical support. Older infants show persistence by:

- filling a container with small objects and dumping them out repeatedly;
- wanting to hear the same song or be read the same book over and over again;
- taking turns in back-and-forth sound play with parents and teachers by responding to adults' speech and producing words or babbling sounds trying to imitate the adults' inflections.

We support this development by:

- ***Providing open-ended materials that will "react" in a variety of ways when manipulated, such as instruments and clay.***
- ***Echoing children and different types of sound play.***
- ***Playing turn-taking games that offer opportunities for children to respond with sounds or actions.***
- ***Playing hiding games, such as "peek-a-boo", to reveal hidden objects or people.***
- ***Offering children containers for continuous collecting and dumping.***
- ***Repeating activities when children show that they would like them to occur again.***
- ***Engaging with children in play for extended periods of time.***

- **Initiates more events**

Older infants utilize movement and sensory exploration to learn. Increased motor skills facilitate discovery, as they manipulate, dump and fill, pull, push, and move things around. Actions clearly become intentional as the older infant explores the environment and tries things out by:

- shaking toys to elicit a response or sound;
- filling and dumping sand, toys, and blocks;
- taking things apart;
- enjoying activities, such as painting and working with clay.

We support this development by:

- ***Listening to children as they communicate their needs and interests both verbally and non-verbally.***
- ***Responding to children's communication to support their needs and interests.***
- ***Describing the children's actions as they begin and engage in activities.***
- ***Offering choices to children by using simple questions, such as "Would you like the car or the ball?"***

Motor Development

- **Gross Motor Development**

- **Demonstrates increased balance, control, and coordination.**

Older infants begin to move independently and explore their worlds. They climb and reach for objects on tables. They are preoccupied with controlling their movements and finding new ways to get around in the world. Examples of increased balance, control, and coordination include:

- sitting in a chair without support;
- crawling on hands and knees;
- moving from sitting to standing while holding onto a chair or toy with little difficulty;
- walking sideways along furniture (cruising);
- walking without help;
- climbing up stairs and walking downstairs with one hand held.

We support this development by:

- **Providing stable furniture for children to pull up on.**
- **Offer balls, bean/sand bags, and other small, soft objects for children to throw.**
- **Supporting large movement, such as climbing and crawling with loft and tunnels.**
- **Rearranging and adding to the physical space in classroom, such as adding different surfaces.**
- **Adding toys and materials that can be pushed and pulled.**
- **Using positive words and facial expressions to encourage movement.**
- **Adding large scale items, such as tubes, boxes, and sandbags.**
- **Providing time for children to explore large movement in an outdoor area.**

- **Fine Motor Development**

- **Demonstrates increased strength, control, and eye-hand coordination.**

Older infants are more able to interact with other people and objects. They are beginning to develop plans for how those interactions should occur. Older infants continue to explore their world and demonstrate increased strength, control, and eye-hand coordination by:

- using two objects together, such as moving a spoon around in a bowl;
- picking up a block with thumb and forefinger (pincer grasp and building a tower of two to four cubes;
- turning pages of a large book;
- using two hands in opposition, such as holding a toy telephone in one hand while using the other hand to “dial the number”

We support this development by:

- **Offering stacking materials.**
- **Providing writing and painting tools to explore drawing and painting.**
- **Offering manipulative media, such as clay and playdough.**
- **Providing materials for sensory exploration, such as sand and water.**
- **Encouraging children to feed themselves.**
- **Offering materials that encourage small, delicate movements, such as working with feathers and bubbles.**
- **Using finger play with children by combining words with actions.**
- **Offering books of many different sizes and topics for children to explore.**

Language and Communication

- **Uses consistent sounds, gestures, and some words to communicate.**

Older infants use sounds to capture the attentions of people important to them. They begin to use meaningful sounds that are associated with words and enjoy playing with strings of sounds that may include some words. Older infants start to experience a language explosion and they begin to substitute words for sounds as a way of communicating their needs. They show skills in this area by:

- pointing, gesturing, or making sounds to indicate wants and needs;
- producing the sounds found in their home language;
- saying a few words such as “dada” and “mama”;
- using one-word utterances or short phrases to influence the actions of others, such as “mine”.

We support this development by:

- **Echoing children and different types of sound play.**
- **Creating new sound effects when working with materials.**
- **Listening and being responsive to children as they communicate both verbally and non-verbally.**
- **Encouraging attempts to communicate with words and facial expressions.**
- **Helping children to verbalize their thoughts and needs by labeling their actions.**

- ***Creating a variety of sounds by playing music or instruments or even by changing the rhythm and volume of voice when talking by whispering, singing, and making other sounds.***
- ***Reading books to children and telling stories without using text.***
- ***Offering choices to children by using simple questions, such as “Would you like the car or the ball?”***
- ***Frequently speaking to children by describing the characteristics of people or objects and verbalizing actions during daily events.***
- ***Mimicking and naming sounds in environment.***
- ***Singing simple songs and rhymes.***
- ***Providing soft dolls and toys that will encourage verbal responses.***
- ***Providing an assortment of familiar items for children to point to and hear named by parents and teachers.***

- **Builds and uses vocabulary through direct experiences and involvement with pictures and books.**

Older infants use a variety of sounds to communicate. One way they learn words is as parents and teachers talk to them and look at and read books with them. Their emotional security with these adults enables them to become active participants in “reading”. Older infants begin to mimic the words from the books or point to the pictures they have seen many times and say a word that sounds like the label the adult has been using. They understand much more language than they can reproduce. Babbling becomes consistent, with first words and then phrases beginning to emerge. Older infants build and use vocabulary by:

- enjoying patterns of rhythm and repetition of familiar voices, sounds, rhymes, and songs in their home language;
- exploring a variety of books, including paper, cardboard, vinyl, cloth, etc.;
- pointing to several pictures in books as they are named by parents and teachers.

We support this development by:

- ***Offer a variety of books that use photographs and realistic images of familiar items and those that have repetitive text.***
- ***Using appropriate sounds when reading books or playing with toys, such as “bow-wow” for a dog or “beep beep” for a car.***
- ***Asking simple questions while reading text.***
- ***Describe pictures to children when reading books.***
- ***Making books available and accessible and frequently reading to children throughout the day.***
- ***Starting to turn pages and letting children finish.***
- ***Encouraging children to select books by responding with positive comments and expressions.***
- ***Using intonation when reading to children.***
- ***Pointing to, reading, or identifying signs, such as stop signs, store names, favorite cereal boxes, etc.***
- ***Introducing new words to children through text.***
- ***Allowing for time so that children may explore books independently.***

- **Uses tools to make scribbles.**

Older infants' abilities to hold objects and to direct their hands to reach and grasp for things in their reach advance rapidly. They continue to show preference for one hand, but this is still unstable. They are able to do fairly intricate things with their hands. Older infants can use their thumbs and forefingers to pick up small objects, which reflects continued refinement of their fine motor skills. They enjoy using writing tools and making marks on paper. Older infants show developing pre-writing skills by:

- Holding large crayons and transferring them from one hand to the other;
- repeating motions to make additional marks on paper;
- showing their own marks made on paper to others.

We support this development by:

- ***Providing writing tools for scribbling.***
- ***Offering different materials to make marks, such as clay, paint, and sand.***
- ***Using different surfaces for mark making with some being of large and small scale.***
- ***Encouraging children and valuing work with positive words and facial expressions.***

Developmental Stages for Young Children

First and foremost, as a Reggio-inspired school, we believe that all children are competent, imaginative, curious, and powerful. We value each child and their individual strengths, cultural differences, and personal experiences which all contribute to creating our diverse school community. While each child is exceptional and unique in his or her own way, we also know that children share many changes and shifts in development. With the support of the Department of Education from Florida, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia and in collaboration with the entire WBCC staff, we have put together a collection of developmental stages that we believe highlight the different aspects of learning all children go through at one time or another. Based on this framework of stages, our school community worked together to identify the ways that, we as educators, support these developmental phases both for individual children and for groups of children. This complete document serves as a guide for teachers and parents to think about the connections between children's learning, teacher's provocations, and developmental theories. This document is also a reflection of how our educational philosophy inspires us and how our school vision guides us to support the children's development throughout each of the stages. We caution the reader to not refer to this as a manual for children's development purely based on age. As all children develop at their own pace, we know that developmental stages need to be flexible in order to be inclusive of all children. Rather through this document, we hope to provide some clarity on how we support these common developmental trends through offering opportunities for discovering, investigating, engaging, and making meaning as individuals within a school community.

Resources:

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Georgia Early Learning Standards (birth to age 3) identifies the continuum of skills, behaviors, and concepts infants and toddlers typically attain during the first three years of life. The document addresses five domains of development and includes standards, indicators, and sample behaviors. Appendices identify the alignment with Georgia Pre-K, Kindergarten Performance Standards, and Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.decal.state.ga.us/CCS/CCSServices.aspx?Header=67&SubHeader=&Position=18&HeaderName=Georgia%20Early%20Learning%20Standards>.

Stages of Development for Young Toddlers

(18 months to 24 months)

Approaches to Learning & Cognitive Development

- **Shows more complex responses to people and objects.**

Increased interaction with people and things enables young toddlers to engage in simple games and pretend play, purposefully seek out new experiences, and practice newly learned skills. Young toddlers respond to people and things by:

- stating clear preferences regarding colors, foods, and clothes;
- associating spoken words with familiar objects or actions;
- repeating words over and over;
- matching sounds to pictures of animals;
- using negotiation and language, with the help of parents and teachers, to solve problems when playing with peers.

We support this development by:

- ***Listening attentively to children and responding to their words or actions***
- ***Providing opportunities for children to name pictures in books, photo albums, or in the environment***
- ***Finding time to frequently read books, telling stories without books, and sing songs, especially those with repetitive text and rhyming words***
- ***Offering a variety of materials in the classroom and constantly refreshing the environment***
- ***Providing different media, such as paint and clay, for the children to explore***
- ***Encouraging problem solving by asking questions and supporting conversation***
- ***Asking simple questions***
- ***Providing open-ended materials, such as blocks and fabric, that can be used to represent other objects***

- **Expands relationships**

Young toddlers engage in parallel play, working beside, but not usually with other children. They understand how to use familiar objects and may experiment with new uses for these objects. Language skills are developing, including responding to questions and verbalizing possessives including “me” and “mine”. By being an explorer, the child discovers how different objects work and asks questions. Young toddlers’ increasing ability to relate can be seen by:

- verbalizing “mine” when showing a favorite object;
- beginning to identify with children of the same gender and age;
- playing dress-up and imitating the behaviors of parents and teachers.

We support this development by:

- ***Engaging in play with children and supporting collaborative play.***
- ***Encouraging problem solving by asking questions and supporting conversation.***
- ***Inviting children to join and helping to facilitate a “meeting time” where a large group of children and teachers meet to read books, sing songs, and play finger games***

- **Attends for longer periods of time and persists at preferred activities.**

With refinement of gross and fine motor skills, young toddlers can persist at preferred activities. Parents and teachers may be looked to for assistance, but younger toddlers will want to try many activities themselves. Young toddlers show persistence by:

- trying various shapes in a shape-sorting toy until the shape fits;
- enjoying playing the same music and movement activity over and over again.

We support this development by:

- ***Providing areas where the children can work independently with materials and toys at their level***
- ***Observing children and offering materials or create provocations that support their interests***
- ***Inviting children to join and helping to facilitate a “meeting time” where a large group of children and teachers meet to read books, sing songs, and play finger games***
- ***Providing positive reinforcement and using a tone of voice that shows encouragement and support***
- ***Partnering with children***
- ***Inviting children to join in classroom responsibilities, such as watering plants and bringing lunch to the classrooms***

- **Initiates more complex interactions.**

Young toddlers are able to explore their environment in more complex ways because of growing vocabularies and better motor skills. Because of natural curiosity, daily living is a constant state of discovery. Young toddlers learn how their bodies work by interacting with people and things in their environment. They enjoy activities that involve pushing and pulling as well as concepts of over, under, and around. They make things happen by:

- stacking blocks and knocking them down;
- poking, dropping, pushing, pulling, and squeezing objects to see what will happen;
- using trial and error to fit different shapes into holes or to stack rings in order;
- using materials such as pencils, paints, and clay in different and varied ways.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering a variety of materials in the classroom and constantly refreshing the environment***
- ***Providing materials that can be stacked, sorted, create sound, or other effects or actions***
- ***Offering materials that will “react” when manipulated, such as clay that can be manipulated when poked or squeezed.***
- ***Offering open-ended materials, such as blocks and fabric, that can be used to represent other objects***
- ***Encouraging problem solving***
- ***Encouraging peer support***
- ***Encouraging cooperative play and collaboration***

Motor Development

- **Gross Motor Development**

- **Demonstrates increased balance, control, and coordination.**

As young toddlers become more mobile, they continue to develop their independence through coordinated, purposeful movement. Large muscles are used in abundance to explore their entire universes. Young toddlers will show fearless determination and energy in order to accomplish a task. They show balance, control, and coordination by:

- walking unaided to reach a destination;
- pushing and pulling large objects;
- throwing a ball overhand.

We support this development by:

- ***Encouraging outdoor play and exploration***
- ***Providing opportunities to walk on a variety of surfaces***
- ***Offering a variety of balls in different sizes***
- ***Offering opportunities for pushing, pulling, and lifting materials***
- ***Providing music so children may dance, jump, and twirl***
- ***Offering riding toys (i.e. small scooters)***
- ***Trusting children***

- **Fine Motor Development**

- **Demonstrates increased strength, control, and eye-hand coordination**

As young toddlers' eye-hand coordination improves, they enjoy activities that include smaller arm and hand movement such as crayons and markers. Activities are more purposeful, and numerous ways to do things are explored. Young toddlers demonstrate improved strength, control, and eye-hand coordination:

- emptying and filling containers;
- stacking five to six blocks;
- scribbling using a variety of materials.

We support this development by:

- ***Providing an assortment of objects with which children can build***
- ***Offering children materials that can be sorted on a simple characteristic, such as basic shape or primary color***
- ***Providing a variety of objects and contains to support emptying and filling, as well as tote and carry***
- ***Offering different media for the children to explore, such as paint with brushes and crayons***
- ***Encouraging children to feed themselves using utensils***

Language and Communication

- **Gains meaning through listening.**

Young toddlers understand many words. The language of toddlers begins with naming and pointing to people and objects, and then develops into using two- and three-word sentences. Young toddlers are interested in words and their meanings. The more words they hear, the more words they learn. For young toddlers learning English as a second language, it is important that they are able to maintain their home language while also learning English. As caring and patient parents and teachers talk and make suggestions, young toddlers demonstrate the ability to understand what is said to them by:

- putting toys back on the shelf when prompted and helped by caring parents and teachers;
- finding their shoes when it is time to get dressed.

We support this development by:

- ***Frequently speaking to children by describing the characteristics of people or objects and verbalizing actions during daily events***
- ***Listening attentively as children communicate verbally and help to provide words for their experiences***
- ***Finding time to frequently read books, telling stories without books, and sing songs, especially those with repetitive text and rhyming words***
- ***Encouraging children to sing songs or repeat finger plays***
- ***Highlighting familiar text in the environment, such as drawing attention to their name in print***

- **Uses a growing number of words and puts words together.**

Although language acquisition is very individual and grows at very different rates for each child, vocabulary increases rapidly for most young toddlers. For children learning English as a second language, respecting and using their home language while introducing English is the best way to help support their communication and speaking skills. Young toddlers move from naming familiar objects to using words heard in stories and from other experiences. More and more words come into their vocabularies, until, for most toddlers new words appear at a rate almost too fast to track. Young toddlers learn to use these words with increasing accuracy. They show increasing mastery of words by:

- naming pictures in their books;
- imitating words heard and gestures seen;
- using two-word sentences perhaps alternating between using their home language and English.

We support this development by:

- ***Finding time to frequently read books, telling stories without books, and sing songs, especially those with repetitive text and rhyming words***
- ***Asking simple questions when reading to children***
- ***Naming pictures and describing actions when looking at books***
- ***Encouraging children to sing songs or repeat finger plays***
- ***Talking to children***
- ***Verbalizing and describing actions***
- ***Repeating and reinforcing words***

- **Attends to and takes part in conversations.**

Young toddlers enjoy participating in conversations with the people around them. As their vocabularies increase, they can understand what others are talking about and they want to be involved. They learn that asking questions is one way to keep the attention of parents and teachers. Young toddlers use the language they hear most frequently and they repeat these words and phrases during pretend play. They demonstrate these skills by:

- imitating flow of conversations as they talk with people or during pretend play, perhaps alternating between using their home language and English;
- asking many questions;
- engaging in language turn-taking and responding to parents and teachers.

We support this development by:

- ***Listening attentively to children and responding to their words or actions***
- ***Engaging in pretend play with children and extending their play with conversation***
- ***Frequently speaking to children by describing the characteristics of people or objects and verbalizing actions during daily events***
- ***Asking simple questions when reading to children***
- ***Encouraging problem solving by asking questions and supporting conversation***
- ***Coming together and engaging in easy dialogue***
- ***Encouraging children to share something special during meeting times***

- **Learns that pictures represent real objects, events, and ideas.**

Just as the language of young toddlers begins with naming and pointing to people and objects, they engage with books by pointing and naming the pictures. Parents and teachers read, talk about the pictures in books, and ask and answer the questions of young toddlers. Through this process, young toddlers discover that the words and pictures in books correspond to things in their own worlds, they demonstrate their understanding that pictures represent real objects and events by:

- beginning to make connections between their own experiences and ideas in books and stories;
- repeating portions of familiar and rhythmic text;

- talking about pictures and labeling objects in books.

We support this development by:

- ***Providing books of varying thickness including board books, cardstock, and paper***
- ***Allowing children to explore books independently***
- ***Finding time to frequently read books, especially those with repetitive text and rhyming words***
- ***Asking simple questions when reading to children***
- ***Providing opportunities for children to name pictures in books, photo albums, or in the environment***
- ***Reflecting with children***
- ***Building memory***

- **Makes purposeful marks on paper.**

Young toddlers are fascinated with the tools used for writing. They want to use pencils, markers, paints, and brushes. Young toddlers enjoy watching parents and teachers write, and they like to imitate the process. They create many different kinds of scribbles, some of which are organized. Young toddlers demonstrate early writing attempts by:

- Scribbling spontaneously, often using circular motions;
- Making marks on paper with purpose;
- Using a variety of tools such as pencils, markers, crayons, and paints.

We support this development by:

- ***Provide a variety of drawing and writing tools and opportunities for exploration***
- ***Offering different media, such as paint, for exploration***
- ***Having conversations with children while they are drawing***
- ***Reflecting with children about their work***

- **Uses beginning representation through play that imitates familiar routines.**

As with early reading, early writing develops as young toddlers understand that print gives messages, tells stories, can be read, and can be created by young toddlers themselves. Part of understanding the power of representation is learned as toddlers participate in dramatic play, act out stories, and sing songs that utilize hand motions. Young toddlers imitate those actions they are most familiar with, and those they most often observe. They demonstrate this by:

- Crawling around on hands and knees, pretending to be a dog or cat;
- Climbing into a box and making motor sounds;
- Attempting to feed, dress, or cuddle their dolls and stuffed animals.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering open-ended materials, such as blocks and fabric, that can be used to represent other objects***
- ***Providing opportunities and materials for children to engage in pretend play***

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Stages of Development for Older Toddlers (24 months to 36 months)

Approaches to Learning & Cognitive Development

- **Demonstrating discriminating responses to people and objects.**

Older toddlers' expanded vocabulary and cognitive structures provide more options for responding to the results of their explorations. Older toddlers demonstrate these increasing abilities by:

- asking for help when needed;
- labeling or describing drawings or scribbles;
- finding details in a favorite picture book;
- singing several songs, poems, or finger plays with their parents and teachers;
- enjoying small group activities facilitated by parents and teachers;
- taking on roles during pretend play.

We support this development by:

- ***Providing challenging provocations;***
- ***Working in small groups;***
- ***Practicing conflict resolution with children;***
- ***Walking children through challenges rather than doing it for them;***
- ***Using number words whenever there is an opportunity for counting;***

- **Engages in multiple productive relationships.**

Older toddlers are now interested in details and how things go together. They use objects as tools for learning rather than just exploration, and they use language to express feelings, needs, fears, and relationships. These developmental changes in relating can be seen by older toddlers:

- choosing toys or activities based on who is playing;
- identifying a best friend;
- remembering that their grandparents live far away;
- using words to describe feelings, like being "happy" or "sad";
- comforting crying peers;
- hugging playmates to initiate interactions;
- naming parts of their pictures.

We support this development by:

- ***Embracing friendships;***
- ***Supporting children as they use words to express their emotions;***
- ***Assisting in conflict resolution;***
- ***Having morning meetings;***
- ***Encouraging relationships and caring for others;***
- ***Talking about who came to school today;***
- ***Describing our own feelings;***

- *Reading books and singing songs about emotions;*
- *Making books of our children and their emotions;*
- *Creating opportunities for small group work;*
- *Role playing with children;*
- *Encouraging shared responsibility of the classroom, such as classroom jobs;*
- *Using time in play or songs to involve children's names;*

- **Initiates rich and varied events.**

Exploration is a driving force for curious older toddlers. Constantly on the go, they are true explorers-seeking details and wanting to know what objects can do. Leaps in language allow them to use questions to investigate the world. They make things happen by:

- taking things apart, stacking, sorting, and tracing;
- asking questions such as, "why?", "how many?", and "how much?";
- lining up objects in one-to-one relationships;
- inspecting moving parts of toys such as the wheels and doors of a toy truck;
- pretending to be a character from a story.

We support this development by:

- *Asking children's questions about environment;*
- *Responding to children's curiosity about how the world works by answering questions;*
- *Being partners with children;*
- *Providing multiple opportunities to engage in pretend play;*
- *Demonstrating games with simple rules;*
- *Providing ample opportunities to experience and develop concepts of cause and effect by exposing to games, toys, and materials that allow children to experience the effects of actions;*
- *Read books with different colors, shapes, and pictures to children;*
- *Provide activities and games in which older toddlers have opportunities to pick out of match similar items or items with particular characteristics.*

- **Spends more time engaging in child-initiated activities and seeks or accepts help when encountering a problem.**

With refinement of gross and fine motor skills, young toddlers can persist at preferred activities. Older toddlers pay attention to interesting activities. They enjoy repeating favorite activities, and seek and accept help while persisting with difficult tasks. Older toddlers demonstrate persistence by:

- insisting on feeding themselves;
- requesting that their favorite books be read over and over;
- participating in their parents' and teachers' story book reading by listening to the story, turning the pages, and pointing to pictures.

We support this development by:

- *Encouraging children to tell familiar stories;*
- *Engaging in conversations;*
- *Recognizing their desire to do things on their own and supporting their independence;*
- *Asking children about their intentions;*
- *Providing opportunities to choose activities;*
- *Planning with children;*
- *Encouraging children to explore the environment independently.*

Motor Development

- **Demonstrates advancing balance, control, and coordination.**

Older toddlers continue to develop their independence through coordinated, purposeful activities. Movement now occurs not just for the pleasure it brings, but with a goal in mind. Older toddlers will practice a new skill over and over. Older toddlers demonstrate balance and control by:

- jumping in place and off low objects, such as a step;
- walking on tiptoes for a short distance;
- jumping with both feet together;
- riding a tricycle using pedals.

We support this development by:

- ***Encouraging children to ride bikes;***
- ***Providing time for outdoor play and active indoor play;***
- ***Encouraging jumping, running, and other large body movements;***
- ***Regularly repeat songs, finger plays, and rhymes while sometimes pausing at key times to allow children to fill in missing words, phrases, and movements;***
- ***Exercising with children;***
- ***Providing a variety of toys for catching and throwing;***

- **Demonstrates advancing strength, control, and eye-hand coordination.**

Fine motor development focuses on eye-hand coordination skills that involve reaching, grasping, and manipulating objects. Older toddlers begin to show skills that have a purpose. Their actions are smooth, specific, and more accurate. They display strength, control, and eye-hand coordination by:

- pouring and dumping water, sand, or other materials from container to container;
- using one hand to turn the pages of a book;
- watching lines and squiggles appear as they move their marker or the paint brush over a piece of paper, and learning that their hand is in control of how the marks appear;
- building a tower of ten blocks.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering experiences in the sensory table;***
- ***Encourage use of eating utensils;***
- ***Providing opportunities for children to play drums with pots, pans, and spoons and with buckets and shovels in the sandbox;***
- ***Offering experiences with different tools, such as using scissors;***
- ***Letting children turn the pages in books;***
- ***Using hand gestures for songs and other communication;***
- ***Providing a variety of writing materials;***
- ***Inviting children to use paintbrushes with paint;***
- ***Encourage children to begin dressing themselves.***

Language and Communication

- **Gains meaning through listening.**

Older toddlers are increasingly able to use what they hear to make sense of their worlds. They continue to understand many more words than they can speak. They begin to understand ideas, requests, and references to time. They are very invested in books and reading and ask for books to be

read to them at all times during the day. They have favorites and can listen with understanding, even when the story is being read to a group rather than one-to-one. Older toddlers demonstrate their ability to understand words, conversations, and stories by:

- listening to books and short stories with parents and teachers;
- listening in small groups facilitated by parents and teachers;
- understanding and reacting to gestures;
- singing simple songs or repeating simple finger plays and rhymes with help.

We support this development by:

- ***Fostering conversations between children;***
- ***Giving children the responsibility of inviting friends to meeting time, lunch time, etc;***
- ***Reading books to large and small groups of children;***
- ***Coming together for morning meeting;***
- ***Playing games, such as talking to children about body parts and asking them to point to parts as teachers name them;***
- ***Helping children become familiar with “who” or “where” questions through conversation or when reading books together;***
- ***Incorporating the practice of naming items regularly during routines.***

- **Speaks clearly enough to be understood by most listeners.**

Older toddlers enjoy the power of language because they now realize the words can make things happen. They have the ability to use words to indicate needs, make demands, or share experiences. They are beginning to use some of the rules of grammar as they speak, sometimes making errors when using words that are exceptions to the rule. For older toddlers learning English as a second language, errors are quite common, as they have different sets of rules that they are learning. Older toddlers speak in sentences more often. They demonstrate the ability to speak clearly and be understood by:

- using language with increasing clarity;
- using words to describe activities in picture books or to describe the function of an object;
- enjoying repeating songs and rhymes;
- beginning to add descriptive words;
- beginning to use rules of grammar in their speech, using personal pronouns, plurals, and an increasing number of position words, such as “up”, “under”, “on” and “behind”.

We support this development by:

- ***Engage in conversations often with children;***
- ***Encouraging children to ask for things using words and phrases;***
- ***Fostering conversations between children;***
- ***Asking questions to keep the conversation going;***
- ***Giving children opportunities to ask for items before providing them;***
- ***Regularly repeat songs, finger plays, and rhymes while sometimes pausing at key times to allow children to fill in missing words, phrases, and movements;***
- ***Using varied and rich descriptions when talking with children and asking them for descriptions in return;***
- ***Reading often to children while asking questions about pictures or text.***

- **Participates in conversations.**

Older toddlers love to engage in conversation. They enjoy asking “why” questions to keep a conversation alive. They are more able to converse with peers, and conversations become more focused. Older toddlers show they can participate in conversations by:

- using experiences, toys, books, or pretend play to engage others in conversation;
- recognizing that a pause means it is their turn to talk;
- asking questions as a way to keep a conversation going;

We support this development by:

- ***Asking questions to keep conversations going;***
- ***Encouraging children to share and reflect on experiences;***
- ***Creating opportunities for children to participate in conversations with adults and other children by retelling stories, holding conversations at meal time about food, etc;***
- ***Facilitating conversations between children when resolving conflict;***
- ***Inviting children to talk during “meeting time”;***
- ***Pause when reading to ask children to talk about what they notice in pictures.***

- **Shows growing interest in print and books.**

Older toddlers use words to tell stories, share feelings and ideas, recall events, and give instructions. New words are learned through stories, songs, games, and adult-child conversations. During adult-to-child reading experiences or in small groups, older toddlers talk about the pictures, retell parts of the story, and request multiple readings. It is the talk and joint attention that surrounds reading that helps older toddlers connect the story to their lives. They learn that the pictures in a book are symbols for real objects and that the writing represents spoken language. Older toddlers show that they are building full vocabularies and an appreciation for print and books by:

- showing enjoyment and engagement in stories, songs, and rhymes;
- retelling familiar stories in their own words;
- commenting on characters in books;
- pointing to pictures and asking questions or adding information;
- demonstrating book-reading skills, such as holding a book upright and turning pages right to left.
- requesting favorite books to be read over and over.

We support this development by:

- ***Having books in all areas of the classroom;***
- ***Commenting on the elements of a book cover to draw children’s attention to titles and illustration when reading a book;***
- ***Pointing to the words in a book as we read;***
- ***Asking children to anticipate what is coming next based on illustrations;***
- ***Having a classroom calendar;***
- ***Having labels in the classroom;***
- ***Encouraging children to recognize letters when reading;***
- ***Reinforcing the importance of books and modeling their proper care.***

- **Shows motivation to read.**

While they are powerfully self-motivated to learn with their whole bodies, older toddlers’ understanding of literacy concepts emerges from interactions with parents, caregivers, and teachers that focus on oral and written language. The motivation and interest they develop through these joint language activities promote positive feelings about reading and literacy experiences. It is the love of books and excitement of reading that will make them ready to do the hard work of decoding symbols or reading on their own. Older toddlers show the motivation to read by:

- asking parents and teachers to read a book over and over;
- retelling favorite stories;
- using “reading” in play activities.

We support this development by:

- ***Encouraging children to retell stories;***
- ***Refreshing books in classroom;***
- ***Inviting children to tell their stories and show interest in the information;***
- ***Asking children if they have had similar experiences or how they would feel in a similar situation when reading stories;***
- ***Going to the library;***
- ***Asking families to bring books from home to share;***
- ***Asking parents to read to groups of children;***

- **Uses scribbles and unconventional shapes to convey messages.**

The scribbling of older toddlers begins to resemble understandable print. They are able to distinguish between writing words and drawing pictures, and they begin to purposefully use symbols and drawings to express their thoughts or represent experiences or objects in their environments. They call attention to their own writing attempts, and they recognize common signs found in their environments. Older toddlers begin to distinguish letters of the alphabet from other types of symbols, and they demonstrate understanding of the writing process by:

- calling attention to their own scribbles;
- rolling, pounding, squeezing, and controlling clay;
- telling parents and teachers about their drawings and asking the adults to write their stories.

We support this development by:

- ***Valuing children's work;***
- ***Offering different writing instruments and creating opportunities for exploration;***
- ***Introducing symbols in the environment;***
- ***Encourage writing play by asking questions and discussing their work;***
- ***Revisiting work and sharing meanings with parents;***

- **Uses more complicated imitative play as symbolic thought processes and mental concepts or pictures are developed.**

Older toddlers' imaginative play takes on new dimensions during this stage. They are beginning to use play materials as symbols for things they have observed and experienced. They re-enact these experiences and can play for short periods of time in their own world of imagination. "Storytelling" is enhanced when parents and teachers join the pretend play. Older toddlers may pretend many activities they see in their lives, such as:

- pretending to cook food using housekeeping props;
- stacking several blocks and then calling it "my house";
- making scribbles on paper and wanting to mail the letter to someone;
- bringing a "cake" from the sand area and asking parents and teachers to "eat it".

We support this development by:

- ***Modeling for children;***
- ***Engaging in pretend play with children;***
- ***Inviting children to tell their own stories aloud;***
- ***Providing open-ended materials, such as big boxes and baskets;***
- ***Asking questions and engaging in dialogue about children's work.***

Developmental Stages for Young Children

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Pre-Kindergarten Language & Literacy **and Mathematic Standards** (3 years to 4 years)

Language & Literacy Standards

Language Development

- **Gains meaning by listening.**

Three-year-olds learn about their world through watching and listening. They may find it easier to listen with understanding in one-on-one situations than in a group. The ability to listen in a group emerges and develops with practice. Three-year-olds show their understanding by:

- Listening to other people's conversations and responding to the content;
- Conversing with a parents, teacher, or peer and responding appropriately;
- Listening to stories read aloud and showing understanding through body language or facial expressions.

- **Speaks clearly enough to be understood by most listeners.**

Three-year-olds usually speak in short sentences. When three-year-olds are given many opportunities to talk, the length and complexity of their sentences increase. Speaking clearly for three-year-olds includes:

- Initiating and/or extending conversations with peers and adults, using multiple exchanges.
- Requesting information and being understood;
- Describing recent events and answering questions about it;
- Retelling stories.

- **Uses expanded vocabulary and language for a variety of purposes.**

Children this age are often fascinated with language and enjoy experimenting with sounds and expressions. Their vocabulary is developing rapidly. Although three-year-olds understand that they are expected to respond when someone speaks to them, they are only beginning to acquire other conversational rules (taking turns, staying on topic, etc.). They are gaining and understanding of the power of words and the excitement of communicating. Examples of their emerging skills include:

- Asking questions to get information, ask for help, and clarify something that is not understood;
- Using words to describe concrete objects, actions, and feelings;
- Making up dialogue for a role-play in dramatic play;
- Relating an event to something being read aloud from a book.

We support this development by:

- ***Encouraging children to tell stories;***
- ***Inviting children to share their experiences at "meeting time";***
- ***Fostering conversations between children;***
- ***Singing songs;***
- ***Asking questions to keep conversations going;***
- ***Encouraging conversation in pretend and dramatic play;***

- *Supporting children as they describe their emotions with words;*
- *Playing word games;*
- *Inviting children to share their plans with a group;*
- *Discussing classroom responsibilities and jobs;*
- *Supporting children when developing sets of rules for the classroom, such as rules for operating class meetings and then engaging in the class meeting;*
- *Rhyming games;*
- *Revisiting past experiences with children;*
- *Facilitating conversations when engaging in small group work;*
- *Encouraging parents participation, such as reading books with children;*
- *Facilitating lunch time conversations;*
- *Encouraging children to ask each other for help.*

Beginning Reading

- **Shows appreciation for books.**

Three year olds can become very excited about books, especially if they are exposed to literature before coming to school. Children's interest in a specific story or topic, the appropriateness of the text and illustrations, and the size of the group are key factors in their ability to sit still and stay focused during story reading. Children can learn during preschool that books are handled in particular ways. Three-year-olds show their developing appreciation of books by:

- Knowing that spoken words can be written and read and written words can be spoken aloud;
- Recognizing a favorite book by its cover and asking that it be read to them;
- Holding a book right side up and turning pages one at a time starting at the front of the book;
- Choosing to join a small group that is listening to a story.

- **Shows beginning phonological awareness.**

Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and discriminate the sounds of language. Three-year-olds spontaneously play with the sounds of words and show some awareness of rhyming sounds. Examples of phonological awareness include:

- Identifying words that rhyme in songs, nursery rhymes, poems, and stories;
- Beginning to make letter-sound connections;
- Experimenting with sounds to invent new words.

- **Shows interest in letters and words.**

By the age of 3, children are beginning to become aware of how letters and words look and sound. They may show interest in letters, especially the letters in their names. They notice labels and signs in their environment and ask parents and teachers what the signs say. Examples of their interest and participation in reading-related activities include:

- Naming letters in own name and in familiar words;
- Identifying 10 or more letters;
- Finding specific letters in words in the environment;
- Asking "What does it say?" when they see a sign, label, or other print;

- **Comprehends and responds to stories read aloud.**

Three-year-olds are actively engaged in understanding stories. They begin to follow what characters say and do in a story. Frequently, children memorize some of the words of the story or can finish sentences in books that have repetitive patterns of phrases. Examples of their growing comprehension of stories include:

- Questioning, comparing, and predicting story events;
- Relating book experiences to own life;
- Labeling pictures in familiar books;
- Using pictures in books to recall details about a story.

We support this development by:

- ***Making a classroom calendar;***
- ***Identifying and sharing sight words;***
- ***Reading books to children in large and small groups;***
- ***Playing word games;***
- ***Adding resources to Communication Center, such as cards with upper and lowercase letters and sight words;***
- ***Offering children booklets to create their own stories;***
- ***Having books in all areas of the classroom;***
- ***Working with children to create labels in the classroom;***
- ***Labeling each child's personal space, such as their cubby and mailbox, with the child's picture and name.***
- ***Having sign in/out sheets with children's name and picture;***
- ***Identifying and naming colors with children;***
- ***Sharing stories aloud, as well as encouraging children to tell stories of their own.***
- ***Reading books to children with repetitive phrases and rhymes;***
- ***Supporting children's use of the computer to type words, letters, etc.;***
- ***Adding stamps to the Communication Center for children to stamp letters and words;***
- ***Inviting parents into the classroom to share stories and read books;***
- ***Create sign in sheets for computer use;***
- ***Create labels for the classroom and identify words in the environment;***
- ***Support children when attempting to spell and write other children's names;***
- ***Encouraging children to "read" text and pictures, such as for recipes and in books;***
- ***Create letter and word mobiles;***
- ***Playing word and letter games, such as challenging children to look for words which start with the same letter;***
- ***Creating a word board;***
- ***Offering children globes, maps, and atlases.***

Writing

- **Represents ideas and stories through pictures, dictation, and play.**

One of the first tasks in writing is to understand that letters are symbols that can be used to represent words, thoughts, and ideas. Three-year-olds are actively engaged in learning that symbols and pictures represent real things. For example, they understand that dolls can represent real people or that a play phone represents a real phone. They show their developing understanding of representation and symbols by:

- Dictating ideas and stories;
- Covering a paper with large swirls of paint and giving their marks meaning, such as "This is my house";
- Making up a funny animal story by using toy animals to act out the story;

- **Uses scribbles and unconventional shapes to write.**

Three-year-olds are beginning to understand that print can tell stories and express ideas. Although their initial attempts at writing may not be conventional, they often make scribbles that begin at the top of the paper and move from left to right, showing their beginning understanding of how print works. Their first attempts at writing are shown by:

- Writing to convey meaning;
- Making clear attempts to convey a message in writing;
- Printing own name;
- Using letter(s) to represent an entire word; use letter strings to represent phrases and sentences.

We support this development by:

- *Encouraging children to write dates and plans for the day in notebooks/calendar;*
- *Inviting children to write signs, invitations for classroom events, classroom parties, etc;*
- *Challenging children to write and draw plans before building;*
- *Having sign in/out sheets with children's name and picture;*
- *Supporting children making lists, such as a grocery list during their dramatic play;*
- *Adding writing materials to block area so that children may label work or make signs;*
- *Offering daily journals so the children may record important events by drawing and teacher's transcribing their words;*
- *Adding materials such as paper, postcards, envelopes to the Communication Center;*
- *Encouraging children to write invitations to birthday parties, personal notes to other children, and thank you notes;*
- *Adding and refreshing resources in writing center, such as adding upper and lowercase letters, sight words, etc.*
- *Creating word mobiles with children;*
- *Encouraging the children's invented stories by listening and transcribing;*
- *Creating a word board for the classroom;*
- *Offering different media for children to represent letters and words;*
- *Making word cards with children to add to the Communication Center;*
- *Playing word and letter games;*
- *Making notice and pointing out to children symbols in the environment;*
- *Writing and reading instructions, such as for recipes when cooking.*

Mathematic Standards

Number Concept and Operations

- **Shows curiosity and interest in counting and numbers.**

Most three-year-olds are interested in numbers and counting. They may ask, "How many?" and begin to say numbers in order, counting verbally up to 3, 6, or even 10 with help. They can count small sets of one, two, or three objects with one-to-one correspondence. Most three-year-olds can identify a group of one, two, or three objects without counting, visually recognize whether two sets have the same or one has more, and make sets of up to three items. Examples include:

- Using one-to-one correspondence.
- Counting with understanding to at least 10.
- Using numbers to tell how many (number quantity).
- Using numbers and counting as a means to solve problems, predict, and measure quantities.
- Using ordinal numbers and positional words in everyday activities.
- Demonstrating the idea of adding and subtracting by using concrete objects.

We support this development by:

- *Counting with children at "meeting time";*
- *Adding materials and measuring tools to sensory table;*
- *Making board games with children;*
- *Facilitating conversations about sharing materials by dividing, time limit, etc.;*
- *Singing counting songs;*
- *Supporting pretend play, such as children making purchases from a grocery store or buying tickets for the airplane.*
- *Offering stamps with numbers;*
- *Inviting children to set up a table for snack or lunch;*
- *Making a classroom calendar;*

- ***Supporting children voting on various issues throughout year;***
- ***Challenging children to compare weight of classroom objects, building ramps, timing a car;***
- ***Supporting children when counting pages in a book or identifying numbers within the text;***

Patterns, Relationships, and Functions

- **Sorts objects into subgroups that vary by one attribute.**

Three-year-olds are intrigued and fascinated with their emerging ability to order their environment. As they begin to see how objects can be grouped together by single attributes or characteristics, they gain a sense of control in a new area. They show their ability to construct order by:

- Noticing a common attribute and commenting on it.
- Sorting and classifying objects by more than one attribute – color, shape, size, number, etc.
- Recognizing, describing, and copying simple patterns.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering open-ended materials for children to sort;***
- ***Inviting children to create patterns with manipulatives;***
- ***Asking children to assist with cleaning the classroom and sorting materials;***
- ***Challenging children to identify characteristics of objects that are similar and different in their environment;***
- ***Providing different shaped blocks to create patterns;***

Geometry and Spatial Relations

- **Identifies several shapes.**

Three-year-olds become aware of shapes in their world when they are taught to identify geometric shapes that have been labeled by the teacher. Although they focus initially on circles, they can be expected to match and identify squares and triangles as well. They begin to look at common objects with a new focus and gain mastery when encouraged to observe, explore, and name various shapes. They demonstrate this new skill by:

- Recognizing, naming, creating, and describing simple two- and three- dimensional shapes.
- Finding shapes within written text;
- Beginning to identify and label shapes in their environment.

We support this development by:

- ***Playing shape games with children;***
- ***Offering clay to children in different geometric shapes;***
- ***Providing different shaped materials for children to explore, such as triangular pieces of paper and round buttons;***
- ***Offering different shaped blocks in block area;***
- ***Providing different shaped manipulatives at light area;***
- ***Identifying and sharing with children different shapes in the environment;***

- **Shows understanding of several positional words.**

Three-year-olds tend to describe things in relation to their own position in space, but show understanding of common positional words when asked to place objects on top of or below something, or when asked to point to the bottom, or to indicate up and down. They can understand such positional words as “over”, “under”, “above”, “on”, and “next to”. They show awareness of position by:

- Describing, naming, and interpreting distance and position in space;
- Understanding and using positional words as they work, play, and perform routine tasks;

We support this development by:

- ***Using positional words in conversations with children;***
- ***Playing games with using positional words;***
- ***Supporting children by giving direction by using positional words, such as “the scotch tape is on the shelf next to the paper”;***
- ***Challenging children to describe the location of objects or people using positional words;***

Measurement

- **Participates in measuring activities.**

Three-year-olds enjoy using cups and measuring spoons in the dramatic play corner and are just beginning to understand the teacher’s use of measuring cups for a cooking project. Children this age show awareness of measuring activities by:

- Make use of nonstandard and standard units for measurement to obtain information.
- Show awareness of time concepts and sequence.

We support this development by:

- ***Offering measuring tools, such as measuring cup and rulers, in the sensory table, dramatic play, and/or in block area;***
- ***Working with children to follow recipes when cooking;***
- ***Adding maps to the classroom environment and supporting children when drawing maps;***
- ***Supporting children when writing stories with numbers;***
- ***Offering children a scale with manipulatives;***
- ***Inviting children to measure their heights with a chart;***
- ***Using the overhead projector with projects;***
- ***Offering games with patterns;***

Developmental Stages for Young Children

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Kindergarten Language & Literacy and Mathematics Standards (Five- year-olds)

Language & Literacy Development

- **Speaks clearly and conveys ideas effectively.**

At 5, most children's speech is easily understood by listeners. During kindergarten, children begin to understand how to express their ideas coherently in group discussions as well as in one-to-one conversations. Their sentences become longer and more complex as their language becomes richer and more detailed. Five-year-olds show emergent skills in this area by:

- Sharing information, opinions, and questions, speaking audibly in coherent sentences during meeting time
- Participating in conversations around the snack table or on the playground, speaking loudly enough to be heard by the group.
- Reciting, describing people, places, things, location, size, color, shape, and action.

- **Uses expanded vocabulary and language for variety of purposes.**

During kindergarten, children's expanding vocabularies provide them with a larger knowledge base that will assist them as they begin to read. They are acquiring words to name or describe many different things, and they are refining their social use of language by initiating conversations, taking turns in group discussions, and asking questions and making comments related to topics being discussed. Five-year-olds continue to use language for many purposes.

Five year olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Poems, rhymes, and songs, and retell stories in a logical sequence.
- Giving directions, explaining events, and describing objects.
- Telling a joke to a friend or making up new jokes
- Asking questions relevant to an event reported by another child.
- Initiating a conversation with a visitor to the classroom.
- Listening to a story and guessing what the word means from how it is used.
- Trying out a new word learned at meeting time and using it during play.

We support this development by:

- ***Encouraging children to share stories***
- ***Encouraging children to retell stories, making inferences***
- ***Sharing experiences at meeting time (e.g., vacations, outside activities, special events)***
- ***Fostering conversations between children***
- ***Asking questions to keep conversations going.***
- ***Dramatic play/suggesting roles for themselves***
- ***Talking through emotions***
- ***Practicing sight words***
- ***Playing word games***
- ***Sharing and discussing plans with the group***
- ***Discussing classroom responsibilities and duties***

- *Discussing nutrition at lunch*
- *Rhyming games, singing songs at meeting time, walks, music time, classroom transitions*
- *Manipulating phonemes*
- *Talking about professions, parents jobs*
- *Celebrating holidays, communicate cultural diversity*
- *Revisiting past experiences*
- *Small group work*
- *Independence, self- help skills*
- *Project work*
- *Parent experiences and participation*
- *Planning field trips*
- *Self- portrait work*
- *Conversations during lunch time*
- *Encouraging language to help a peer, for sharing*

- **Shows some understanding of concepts about print.**

Five-year-olds are beginning to understand how print is organized and read. They realize that print conveys meaning, spoken language can be written down and read, and certain words are always written the same way. They begin to notice spaces between words, distinguish letters from drawings and numerals, recognize different types of text (storybooks, poems, newspapers, signs, letters, labels), label the different parts of a book (front cover, title, back cover), and track print from left to right and top to bottom, pointing to the words as they are.

Five year olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Telling a teacher a story and asking her to write it down for them.
- Sweeping a finger from left to right across print on a page as they “read” a favorite story from memory.
- Listening to an audiotape and following along in the book, turning the pages at the correct time.
- “Writing” a story from left to right using letter strings.

- **Knows letters, sounds, and how they form words.**

By the end of Kindergarten, children acquire knowledge about the systematic relationship between letters and sounds. They understand that a group of letters represents a sequence of sounds that combine to form a word (the alphabetic principle). Kindergartners can identify and name uppercase and lowercase letters, understand that letters stand for sounds, and associate the correct sound with many letters. They begin to sound out simple words and can develop a limited sight vocabulary. Five year olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Picking out their names on classroom lists and beginning to recognize their friends’ names.
- Occasionally sounding out simple words as they write in journals or make captions for pictures.
- Beginning to “read” a favorite book using the picture cues and gradually recognizing words that are repeated in text.
- Using letter and picture cues to sound out simple words in familiar stories.

- **Comprehends and responds to fiction and informational text read aloud.**

Kindergartners expand their vocabulary and general background knowledge as they listen to fiction and non-fiction texts read aloud. They demonstrate understanding of what they hear by answering questions about the text, prediction what will happen next using pictures and content for guides, and retelling information from a story in sequence. After children comprehend a text, they begin to relate their own experiences to what they have read. Five year olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Making predictions about the characters or setting for a story using illustrations and titles.
- Recalling events in a story and beginning to add ways in which the story relates to their own experiences.
- Retelling a story in sequential order.
- Answering questions and adding their own comments about a story while it is being read.
- Drawing or painting pictures about a character or event from one of their favorite stories.

- Thinking about the intent of a character in a story.

We support this development by:

- ***Practicing sight words***
- ***Reading books***
- ***Playing word games***
- ***Resources in writing center (alphabet, upper and lowercase letters, sight words, etc.)***
- ***Making books***
- ***Words we know***
- ***Having books in all areas of the classroom***
- ***Having labels in the classroom***
- ***Recognizing letters***
- ***Sign in/out sheet***
- ***Naming colors***
- ***Retelling stories***
- ***Making rhymes***
- ***Tracing***
- ***Typing words/ stamping words***
- ***Computer***
- ***Flash cards***
- ***Labeling silent language***
- ***Looking for words which start with the same letter***
- ***Making up stories***
- ***Parents invitation for foreign language***
- ***Sign in for computer use***
- ***Environmental words***
- ***Personal notes for our friends***
- ***Spelling other friends' names***
- ***Recognizing symbols***
- ***Making new songs***
- ***Write/read instructions, recipes***
- ***Word mobiles***
- ***Titling work***
- ***Inventing new stories***
- ***Word board***
- ***Representing letters/words in different media***
- ***Making flash cards***
- ***Creating Save Signs***
- ***Reading globe, maps, creating maps***

- **Represents stories through pictures, dictation and play.**

Many 5-year-olds understand that words represent things, ideas, and events, and that letters make up words. They enjoy telling and “writing” stories. Well before they use conventional forms of writing, they willingly describe their drawings, use drawings to tell stories with a beginning, middle and end, and represent stories during play. They can focus on an idea for a story and make a simple plan for expressing it. Five year olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Dramatizing a story in different areas of the classroom (e.g., kitchen, block, sensory table areas).
- Dictating to a teacher a friendly letter or story about an experience.
- Sharing their drawing with a friend.

- Drawing a character or event in a story and adding more details after talking about it with a teacher.

- **Uses letter-like shapes, symbols, letters, and words to convey meaning.**

As children begin to understand that writing communicates a message, they become motivated to produce words, even if they do not possess conventional writing and spelling skills. They begin by using drawings to convey ideas, adding letters or words randomly. With experience, they begin to form words by using letters from their names, copying words, seeking help, sounding out words using letter-sound relationships, and using invented spelling. Five year olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Making marks that resemble letters.
- Writing labels, notes and captions for illustrations.
- Using invented spelling to form words with initial and final consonants.
- Sounding out a word to write in their journals with the teacher's assistance.
- Writing their name on their artwork.

We support this development by:

- ***Writing date and plans for the day in notebooks/calendar;***
- ***Writing signs, invitations for classroom events, classroom parties, etc; Writing and drawing plans before building,***
- ***Sign in/out sheet***
- ***Making list (Father's Day Brunch, ingredients for cooking, etc.);***
- ***Labeling work in block area; creating signs for work,***
- ***Writing in daily journals***
- ***Writing letters and postcards to each other***
- ***Communication center***
- ***Writing invitations to birthday parties and thank you notes***
- ***Resources in writing center (alphabet, upper and lowercase letters, sight words, etc.)***
- ***Word mobiles***
- ***Title the work***
- ***Inventing new stories***
- ***Word boards***
- ***Representing letters/words in different media***
- ***Making flash cards***
- ***Safe signs***
- ***Personal notes to each other***
- ***ABC games/ spinning wheel***
- ***Recognizing symbols***
- ***Making new songs***
- ***Write/read instructions, recipes***
- ***Word mobiles***

Mathematical Development

- **Shows understanding of the concept of number and quantity.**

Kindergartners can count objects to at least 20, many learn to count verbally to 100. They can count using one-to-one correspondence, use objects to represent quantities. With experience, they can begin to understand that a set of objects equals the same number regardless of position, shape, or order of the objects. They continue to learn about ordinal numbers (1st through 10th) and understand that the last number named in a collection represents not only the last object, but the total number of objects. Five-year-olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Explaining the number of people in a circle, after counting them aloud with their peers.
- Counting five red blocks to four blue blocks and identifying nine blocks in all.
- Identify positions of objects in sequences (e.g. naming correctly the 6th, 7th, 8th child in line).
- Continuing counting pennies to 10 after a friend stopped at a certain number.
- Using a calendar to count the number of days until a special event.

- **Begins to understand relationships between quantities.**

Five-year-olds begin to explore the relationships of one quantity to another. They can compare two sets with up to 10 objects and use such vocabulary as “more,” “less,” “equal,” “the same number as,” “none.” They are beginning to understand how quantity changes when they combine sets to make larger ones or decrease the size of sets by removing items. Five-year-olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Counting two groups of blocks, noting whether one group has more, less, or the same number of blocks as the other.
- Recognizing that five large objects are the same as five small objects in terms of number.
- Knowing that five is closer to one than it is to 20.
- Understanding that a group of objects (up to 10) is smaller after taking away two objects from the group.
- Placing eight blocks in a group, adding two, giving the sum, and explaining that the group is larger than before.

We support this development by:

- ***Counting children at the meeting time***
- ***Sensory table***
- ***Making board games***
- ***Conflict resolution/solving problems through sharing materials***
- ***Counting songs***
- ***Buying/selling train/bus tickets***
- ***Grocery store***
- ***Stamps w/ numbers***
- ***Setting up a table for snack***
- ***Making classroom calendar***
- ***Voting on various issues throughout year***
- ***Comparing weight of classroom objects, building ramps, timing cars (which is faster?)***

- **Recognizes and describes some attributes of shapes.**

As children play with small and large blocks, patter blocks, shape sorters, peg boards and geoboards, they gain a concrete understanding of shape and form. At five, children can identify, describe, label, and create 2-D shapes and solid shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, cube, sphere) and begin to describe their features (corners, curves, edges). Five-year-olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Creating models of circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles by drawing, folding and cutting using a variety of materials.
- Describing characteristics of shapes, sort and classify objects by attributes, and identify objects that do not belong to a particular group.

- **Shows understanding of and uses direction, location, and position words.**

Children learn positional vocabulary as they develop spatial awareness and recognition of symmetry and balance. Through discovery, experimentation, and experience, children form early understandings of direction (Which way?), distance (How far?), and location (Where?)

Five-year-olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Placing an object inside and outside, behind and front, under and above, beside and on a box, and describing its changing location.
- Commenting that an object is nearer to me and farther from you.
- Giving directions to a peer in the block area to place the curved block on top of the long rectangle block

- Using direction, location, and position words spontaneously as they participate in play.

We support this development by:

- ***Light table: part/whole relationships, creating patterns with manipulatives***
- ***Working with money***
- ***Cooking projects***
- ***Meeting time, conversations regarding travel***
- ***Voting on various issues throughout year***
- ***Shape games***
- ***Shapes and sorting at light table***

- **Estimates and measures using non-standard and standard units.**

When children begin to measure objects, they first select a unit of measurement, compare that unit to the object, and count the number of units required to represent the object. Five-year-olds use such units as a foot, hand, paper clip, or block to measure objects. They explore estimations with length, size, and volume.

Five-year-olds demonstrate these skills by:

- Estimating whether or not a container they have is big enough to hold a particular material.
- Estimating that a bird's nest weighs the same as five counting bears.
- Measuring the length of a table by connecting cubes.
- Stating that the road they just built is seven unit blocks long.
- Using a common measuring stick to compare how long or tall things are.

We support this development by:

- ***Using ruler to measure parts of the castle, block construction, and woodworking projects***
- ***Science experiments***
- ***Drawing maps***
- ***Part/whole relationships, creating patterns with manipulatives***
- ***Writing stories with numbers for younger friends***
- ***Counting pages in a book***
- ***Scale***
- ***Height/Growth charts***
- ***Project work (e.g., clay experiences)***
- ***Clean-up time/sorting***
- ***Overhead projector projects/shadow exploration***
- ***Table games with patterns***