

The Illinois Early Learning Guidelines contain seven sections, most of which include several standards. These standards are general statements of what children should know and be expected to do by the time they reach 36 months of age.

## The Newborn Period

Ranging from birth to four months, this is a period when parents and caregivers are working very hard to learn their infant's signals and respond appropriately to their needs. Infants depend exclusively on soothing and appropriate responses from their caregivers in order to thrive and develop.

## Self-Regulation: Foundation of Development

### Physiological Regulation

Children demonstrate the emerging ability to regulate their physical processes in order to meet both their internal needs and external demands in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

### Emotional Regulation

Children demonstrate the emerging ability to identify and manage the expression of emotion in accordance with social and cultural contexts.



### Attention Regulation

Children demonstrate the emerging ability to process stimuli, focus and sustain attention, and maintain engagement in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

### Behavior Regulation

Children demonstrate the emerging ability to manage and adjust behaviors in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

## Social & Emotional Development

### Attachment Relationships

Children form secure attachment relationships with caregivers who are emotionally available, responsive, and consistent in meeting their needs.

### Emotional Expression

Children demonstrate an awareness of and the ability to identify and express emotions.

### Relationship with Adults

Children demonstrate the desire and develop the ability to engage, interact, and build relationships with familiar adults.

### Self-Concept

Children develop identity of self.

### Relationship with Peers

Children demonstrate the desire and develop the ability to engage and interact with other children.

### Empathy

Children demonstrate an emerging ability to understand someone else's feelings and to share in the emotional experiences of others.

## Physical Development & Health

### Gross Motor

Children demonstrate strength, coordination, and controlled use of large muscles.

### Fine Motor

Children demonstrate the ability to coordinate their small muscles in order to move and control objects.

### Perceptual

Children demonstrate the ability to distinguish, process, and respond to sensory stimuli in their environment.

### Self-Care

Children demonstrate the desire and ability to participate in and practice self-care routines.



## Language Development, Communication, & Literacy

### Social Communication

Children demonstrate the ability to engage with and maintain communication with others.

### Receptive Communication

Children demonstrate the ability to comprehend both verbal and nonverbal communication.

### Expressive Communication

Children demonstrate the ability to understand and convey thoughts through both nonverbal and verbal expression.

### Early Literacy

Children demonstrate interest in and comprehension of printed materials.

## Cognitive Development

### Concept Development

Children demonstrate the ability to connect pieces of information in understanding objects, ideas, and relationships.

### Memory

Children demonstrate the ability to acquire, store, recall, and apply past experiences.

### Spatial Relationships

Children demonstrate an awareness of how objects and people move and fit in space.

### Symbolic Thought

Children demonstrate the understanding of concepts, experiences, and ideas through symbolic representation.

### Creative Expression

Children demonstrate the ability to convey ideas

and emotions through creative expression.

### Logic & Reasoning

Children demonstrate the ability to use knowledge, previous experiences, and trial and error to make sense of and impact their world.

### Quantity & Numbers

Children demonstrate awareness of quantity, counting, and numeric competencies.

### Science Concepts & Exploration

Children demonstrate a basic awareness of and use scientific concepts.

### Safety & Well-Being

Children demonstrate the emerging ability to recognize risky situations and respond accordingly.

## Approaches to Learning

### Curiosity & Initiative

Children demonstrate interest and eagerness in learning about their world.

### Problem Solving

Children attempt a variety of strategies to accomplish tasks, overcome obstacles, and find solutions to tasks, questions, and challenges.

### Confidence & Risk-Taking

Children demonstrate a willingness to participate in new experiences and confidently engage in risk-taking.

### Persistence, Effort, & Attentiveness

Children demonstrate the ability to remain engaged in experiences and develop a sense of purpose and follow-through.

### Creativity, Inventiveness, & Imagination

Children demonstrate the ability to use creativity, inventiveness, and imagination to increase their understanding and knowledge of the world.

## Age Descriptors

These describe the progression of development for each of four particular age groups across the birth-to-three age range.

**Indicators for Children** are some of the observable skills, behaviors, and knowledge that children demonstrate to “indicate” progress toward achieving the standard.

**Strategies for Interaction** are specific activities, practices, and interactions in which caregivers can engage with children to support development.

Below is an example for Behavior Regulation.

**Standard:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to manage and adjust behaviors in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

**16 months to 24 months:** Children may be able to demonstrate limited self-control over behavior by responding to cues found in the environment. Children also begin to use more complex strategies to help manage feelings of impulsivity.

### Indicators for children include:

- Communicates “mine” when another child takes a toy away
- Communicates “no” to self when reaching for forbidden objects
- Begins to respond to caregiver’s cues and modifies behavior, e.g., does not touch the forbidden object, once recognizing the caregiver is discouraging the action

### Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with clear limits and provide reminders of them through the day
- Model thoughtful and respectful behavior when interacting with the child
- Encourage the child to express what he or she is feeling, e.g., stomp feet if mad

## Early Learning Guidelines

Children’s experiences in the first three years of life influence how they develop, learn, and interact with their world. This period is marked by an extraordinary amount of growth, and sets the foundation for children’s future learning and ongoing development.

The Illinois Early Learning Guidelines are designed to provide early childhood professionals and policy makers a framework for understanding development through information on what children know and should do, and what development looks like in everyday instances.

The Illinois Early Learning Project’s extensive database provides parents and caregivers access to a wide range of resources about early care and education topics. Visit [go.illinois.edu/IELGresources](http://go.illinois.edu/IELGresources)



IEL is a source of reliable evidence-based information on early care and education for parents, caregivers, and teachers of young children in Illinois. The IEL web site is available in English and Spanish.

The IEL team at the University of Illinois has primary responsibility for the design and updating of the website, in close consultation with the Early Childhood Division of the Illinois State Board of Education.

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*For Children Birth to Age Three*

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