



For Children Birth to Age Three

Illinois Early Learning Guidelines

**Standards, age descriptors, indicators
for children, and strategies for interaction**

Definitions Found in Glossary

Note: Definitions for highlighted words or terms in the tables are included in the Glossary on pages 129–133. Clicking on the highlighted words will take you directly to the page in the Glossary in which they appear. Then click on “Back” at the bottom of the page to return to your previous page.

Standard: 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.

Birth to 9 months: Children’s **biological rhythms** are supported and impacted by their caregiver(s) in order to establish their sleep/wake, feeding, and elimination patterns. Children also begin to develop awareness of **stimuli** in their environment.

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the **Ounce**

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Physiological Regulation

Standard: 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.

Birth to 9 months: Children's **biological rhythms** are supported and impacted by their caregiver(s) in order to establish their sleep/wake, feeding, and elimination patterns. Children also begin to develop awareness of **stimuli** in their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Begins to demonstrate a pattern in sleep-wake and feeding cycles
- Signals for needs, e.g., cries when hungry, arches back in discomfort
- Disengages when overstimulated, e.g., turns head, glances away, falls asleep, spits up
- Uses sucking to assist in sleeping

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide consistent routines in caring for the child
- Follow the child's cues and respond thoughtfully
- Use touch to help the child regulate, e.g., swaddle, hold, cuddle, rock to help soothe the child
- Minimize stimuli in the child's environment, e.g., limit colors, sounds, and objects

Emotional Regulation

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

Birth to 9 months: Children are developing the ability to manage their own emotional experiences through co-regulation, as they communicate needs to caregivers.

Indicators for children include:

- Signals needs by sounds and movement
- Able to use cues to signal **overstimulation**, e.g., turns head, gaze aversion
- Begins to use self-soothing strategies, e.g., sucks on hands, grasps an object in order to calm self
- Vocalizes and uses facial cues to get caregiver's attention, e.g., cries, gazes, initiates eye contact

Strategies for interaction:

- Remain emotionally available for the child; respond thoughtfully to their needs, e.g., hold, rock, and cuddle the child when distressed
- Respond to the child's signals in order to meet their needs
- Pay attention to subtle cues from the child in order to prevent overstimulation and discomfort
- Recognize and control own emotions in challenging instances, e.g., a crying child who will not calm down

Attention Regulation

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

Birth to 9 months: Children are attempting to process an abundance of new stimuli every day. Children are also building their internal capacity for sustained attention and regulation through interactions with their co-regulating other.

Indicators for children include:

- Focuses on objects in the environment during alert states
- Initiates and briefly maintains social interactions with adults, e.g., establishes eye contact, coos to receive attention
- Explores environment through senses, e.g., touches and mouths objects
- Focuses attention on novel objects and familiar caregiver(s)
- Plays with one object for a few minutes before focusing on a different object

Strategies for interaction:

- Engage face to face with the child during the day; smile, coo, and laugh
- Ensure the child is in a relaxed and alert state when interacting
- Provide interesting toys, books, and other objects for the child to explore
- Always provide a variety of options during exploration, e.g., three or four different toys on the blanket
- Join child in exploration to help expand and sustain attention

Behavior Regulation

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

Birth to 9 months: Children respond to **internal and external states** and have little or no self-control over their behavior. Children depend on caregivers to **co-regulate** their behavior.

Indicators for children include:

- Cries when hungry, tired, uncomfortable, or bored
- Uses physical movements to disengage from interaction, turns head, averts gaze
- Physically explores environment through touch, e.g., sucking, gnawing, hitting, pulling, banging
- Shows curiosity and limited restraint when exploring the environment, e.g., reaches for objects that adults or other children are holding

Strategies for interaction:

- Be emotionally available and sensitive to the child's needs
- Provide consistency and routines for sleeping, eating, and diapering
- Respond promptly and thoughtfully to the child's cues
- Manage own expectations with the understanding that the child cannot control his behavior
- Create a safe environment for the child to actively explore

Attachment Relationships

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to build trust, initiate interaction, and seek proximity with one (or a few) primary caregiver(s).

Indicators for children include:

- Establishes, maintains, and disengages eye contact
- Responds to caregiver(s) by smiling and cooing
- Seeks comfort from a familiar caregiver
- Imitates familiar adults' gestures and sounds
- Demonstrates preference for familiar adults
- Exhibits **separation anxiety**, e.g., does not want to be held by another person when being held by primary caregiver

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide prompt, responsive, and sensitive care to the child's needs
- Hold, cuddle, smile, and interact with the child
- Follow the child's cues; allow the child to socially disengage when ready
- Provide a loving and nurturing environment with trustworthy adults, and assign a primary caregiver to consistently take care of the child's needs

Emotional Expression

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to express a wide range of feelings through verbal and nonverbal communication, and begin to develop emotional expression with the assistance of their caregiver(s).

Indicators for children include:

- Uses facial expressions and sounds to get needs met, e.g., cries, smiles, gazes, coos
- Expresses emotions through sounds and gestures, e.g., squeals, laughs, claps
- Demonstrates discomfort, stress, or unhappiness through body language and sounds, e.g., arches back, moves head, cries

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond and comfort the child in order to meet needs; act as a **co-regulator** for the child, e.g., feed the child when hungry, rock the child when tired
- Describe the emotion the child is expressing, e.g., “I can see you are so excited about reaching that toy!”
- Model facial expressions to match emotions, e.g., widen eyes and open mouth to express surprise

Relationship with Adults

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

Birth to 9 months: Children develop the ability to signal for caregivers. By the end of this age period, children begin to engage in playful communication with familiar adults.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses signals to communicate needs, e.g., crying, body language, and facial expressions
- Attempts to engage both unfamiliar and familiar adults
- Engages in social interactions with adults through smiles, coos, and eye contact
- Demonstrates preference for familiar adults, e.g., reaches hands out to signal for caregiver(s)
- Cautious of unfamiliar adults
- Begins to engage in simple, back-and-forth interactions with a familiar adult, e.g., plays “peek-a-boo,” babbles in response to an adult speaking and repeats this interaction

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide prompt, responsive, and sensitive care to the child’s needs
- Provide a loving and nurturing environment with trustworthy adults, and assign a primary caregiver to consistently take care of the child’s needs
- Engage with the child through everyday, loving interactions
- Comfort the child when upset, frightened, or overwhelmed, e.g., gentle hugs or using a soothing voice
- Follow the child’s lead when interacting and playing

Self-Concept

Standard: Children develop identity of self.

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to recognize themselves as individuals, separate from others. At first, young infants are not aware that they are separate beings. However, between six and nine months of age, the realization that they are separate people emerges.

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates interest in faces and voices of others
- Explores his or her own hands and feet
- Recognizes own name, e.g., looks up, or turns head toward a person who is saying his/her name
- Recognizes and prefers familiar adults and siblings, e.g., leans toward caregiver when being held by someone else
- Initiates interactions with others, e.g., imitates actions, plays peek-a-boo
- Begins to display the beginning of joint attention, e.g., points to objects and people
- Demonstrates separation anxiety, e.g., cries when caregiver leaves the room

Strategies for interaction:

- Cuddle, nurture, and respond thoughtfully to the child's signals
- Use the child's name during interactions
- Provide mirrors for the child to look at self
- Read books together that reflect the child's culture
- Acknowledge the child's efforts to initiate and engage, e.g., look toward where the child is pointing and name what he or she is pointing at

Relationship with Peers

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to interact with their environment and people around them; an interest in other young children emerges.

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates effort to interact and engage, e.g., uses eye contact, coos, smiles
- Observes other children in the environment
- Shows interest in both familiar and unfamiliar peers
- Cries when hearing another child cry
- Reaches out to touch another child
- Attempts to imitate actions, e.g., bangs a toy

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond positively to the child's coos and vocalizations with both verbal and facial expressions
- Hold, cuddle, smile, and interact with the child
- Imitate the child's sounds and actions in a positive manner
- Read and **play** with the child often; if possible, use books that reflect the home culture
- Engage with the child in exploration and play; follow the child's lead

Empathy

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to build awareness of others' feelings by observing and reacting to sounds that others make. Toward the end of this age period, infants understand that they are individuals and separate from their caregiver(s), a crucial milestone in interpreting the feelings of others.

Indicators for children include:

- Watches and observes adults and other children
- Cries when hearing another infant cry
- Responds to interactions from caregiver(s), e.g., smiles when caregiver smiles, looks toward a caregiver when he or she shakes a rattle
- Shows signs of separation anxiety, e.g., protests when a caregiver leaves the room
- Begins to share in simple emotions by reading facial and gestural cues, e.g., repeats activities that make others laugh

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide emotional caring and consistency; respond quickly and thoughtfully to the child's sounds and cries
- Describe what the child may be feeling with words; label the child's sounds and coos
- Provide opportunities for the child to see different facial expressions: baby board books with pictures of other infants, or the use of a mirror during play
- Use more than one manner to express and share in feelings with the child, e.g., body movement, words, facial expressions, and voice inflection

Gross Motor

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

Birth to 9 months: Children are beginning to develop and coordinate the large muscles needed to purposefully move their bodies.

Indicators for children include:

- Lifts head while on tummy
- Brings feet to mouth while lying on back
- Rolls from back to stomach and from stomach to back
- Brings both hands to midline, i.e., center of the body
- Begins to gain balance, e.g., sits with and without support
- Scoots body to attempt to move from one point to another

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide plenty of **tummy time** when the child is awake and alert
- Provide a dedicated area on the floor where the child can safely explore, roll, and work on additional skills
- Support the child when mastering a new skill, e.g., keeping arms out to the side for a child who is working on keeping balance while sitting
- Place objects so that they are visible but out of reach for the child, to encourage movement; watch the child's cues carefully to prevent frustration

Fine Motor

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to reach for, grasp, and move objects.

Indicators for children include:

- Opens hands when in a relaxed state
- Reaches for objects
- Grasps, holds, and shakes objects
- Transfers an object from one hand to the other
- Uses raking motion with hands to bring objects closer, e.g., uses all fingers to bring small objects closer to body
- Holds a small object in each hand; bangs them together

Strategies for interaction:

- Strategically place objects around the child where he or she will have to reach for them
- Provide opportunities for the child to grasp toys and other small objects
- Model different ways of how to use objects, e.g., bang two objects together, shake a sensory ball, stack blocks

Perceptual

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to use their senses to explore and become aware of their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Responds to changes in the environment, e.g., startles when hearing a loud noise, turns head toward light
- Explores objects through senses, e.g., mouths, touches objects
- Attempts to mimic sounds heard in the environment
- Has a range of vision that extends to several feet, which in turn leads to seeing colors and seeing objects from a distance
- Feels the sensation of being touched and looks around to identify the source of the touch, e.g., person or object
- Recognizes familiar objects and begins to demonstrate favoritism for certain toys

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide an environment where the child can observe and explore
- Place mirrors and attractive toys in the child's line of sight, e.g., a mobile over the crib
- Interact with the child by singing songs and manipulating toys together
- Provide objects and experiences that encompass different colors, sounds, textures, e.g., music box, a toy that lights up, a book with different textures

Self-Care

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

Birth to 9 months: Children have a growing awareness and interest in their own needs.

Indicators for children include:

- Signals to indicate needs, e.g., cries when hungry, arches back when in pain or uncomfortable, turns head to disengage from object or person
- Starts to develop self-soothing skills, e.g., sucks fingers for comfort and regulation
- Attempts to feed self with a bottle

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide sensitive and responsive care giving
- Watch for the child's cues and respond accordingly
- Nurture and cuddle the child

Social Communication

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

Birth to 9 months: Children demonstrate effort in engaging others in both verbal and nonverbal communication and interactions.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses sounds, cries, facial expressions, and body language to convey needs
- Attempts to engage in early forms of turn-taking with caregiver, e.g., coos and stares at caregiver
- Smiles and uses other facial expressions to initiate interactions with caregiver
- Participates in back-and-forth communication, e.g., babbles back and forth and/or plays peek-a-boo with caregiver

Strategies for interaction:

- Communicate with the child from the very beginning, e.g., narrate what is happening throughout the day
- Pay close attention to the child's nonverbal cues and respond thoughtfully
- Provide opportunities for uninterrupted play with the child
- Acknowledge and respond to the child's communication attempts

Receptive Communication

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to respond to verbal and nonverbal communication through the use of sounds and physical movements.

Indicators for children include:

- Responds to sounds found in the environment, e.g., cries if hears a loud bang, will turn toward a familiar voice
- Calms down when crying after hearing a soothing and familiar voice or receiving physical reassurance, e.g., a hug or gentle pats on back
- Looks or turns toward the familiar person who says his or her name
- Responds to gestures, e.g., waves hello after a familiar person waves to him or her

Strategies for interaction:

- Narrate what is happening in the child's environment, e.g., "I am going to pick you up and then we will go change your diaper"
- Consistently respond to the child's verbal and nonverbal cues in a thoughtful manner
- Name familiar people and everyday objects found in the child's environment through verbal and nonverbal communication, e.g., verbally label, point to, touch, and gesture

Expressive Communication

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to experiment with sounds and other various forms of communication to show interest in and exert influence on their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Cries to signal hunger, pain, or distress
- Uses smiles and other facial expressions to initiate social contact
- Coos and uses physical movements to engage familiar others
- Babbles and experiments with all types of sounds (two-lip sounds: “p,” “b,” “m”)
- Combines different types of babbles
- Begins to point to objects in his/her environment

Strategies for interaction:

- Engage in simple turn-taking, e.g., make a cooing sound after the child has made a similar noise
- Repeat the babbling sounds that the child makes; encourage the child to make more sounds
- Create a language-rich environment; communicate with the child throughout the day about what is happening
- Take into account the home language of the child and try to use familiar words in that particular language

Early Literacy

Standard: Children demonstrate interest in and comprehension of printed materials.

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to build the foundation for early literacy by exploring printed materials and building a capacity for reading printed materials.

Indicators for children include:

- Shows awareness of printed materials, e.g., stares at a picture in a book
- Reaches out to grasp and mouth books
- Uses multiple senses to explore books, e.g., explores books with different textures
- Uses hands to manipulate printed materials, e.g., attempts to turn pages of a board book, grasps objects in hands
- Points or makes sounds while looking at picture books
- Focuses attention while looking at printed materials for brief periods of time

Strategies for interaction:

- Introduce books from diverse cultures and incorporate them into the child's daily routine
- Allow the child to explore books by mouthing and turning the pages
- Share different types of printed materials with the child, e.g., board books, magazines, cereal boxes
- Name and point to objects in the child's environment
- Spend time with the child reading and looking at books together

Concept Development

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to receive and organize information through social interactions and sensory exploration.

Indicators for children include:

- Turns head toward sounds
- Begins to focus on objects, sounds, and people
- Actively explores the environment through the five senses
- Attempts to repeat an action, e.g., pats the table and tries to pat it again
- Focuses and begins to distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar objects, sounds, and people

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide responsive and nurturing care; read infant's cues
- Provide objects that the child can manipulate, mouth, and grasp
- Imitate actions the child attempts to make
- Engage in play with the child; follow the child's lead

Memory

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to form memories from their experiences and will begin to anticipate certain patterns for occurrences.

Indicators for children include:

- Turns toward familiar voices, sounds, and/or objects
- Anticipates familiar events, e.g., reaches for bottle and brings to mouth
- Finds an object that is partially hidden
- Remembers that objects and people still exist even when they are no longer physically present, e.g., looks around for parent when parent leaves the room

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide interesting and age-appropriate toys and objects for exploration
- Engage and interact with the child frequently during the day
- Hide toys under blankets and wait for the child to respond
- Play games such as peek-a-boo, or play with a jack-in-the-box

Spatial Relationships

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

Birth to 9 months: Children use observation and sensory exploration to begin building an understanding of how objects and people move in relationship to each other.

Indicators for children include:

- Observes objects and people in the immediate environment, e.g., looks at own hands and feet, tracks caregiver with eyes, turns head toward sounds
- Reaches and grasps for objects
- Explores through the use of different senses, e.g., begins to mouth and/or pat objects
- Focuses attention on an object in motion and follows it, e.g., watches a toy roll away after it falls

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide interesting and age-appropriate toys and objects for exploration
- Engage and interact with the child frequently during the day; follow the child's lead during play

Symbolic Thought

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

Birth to 9 months: Children use observation, exploration, and social interaction to learn about objects, actions, and people.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses senses to explore objects, e.g., observes, mouths, touches
- Interacts with caregiver(s) and the environment
- Physically manipulates objects, e.g., twists and turns toys, drops items
- Combines objects in play
- Locates an object that has been partially hidden

Strategies for interaction:

- Create an inviting environment for the child to explore; change materials and toys in the child's environment on a regular basis
- Interact and socially engage the child often throughout the day, e.g., use diapering and feeding times to playfully communicate with the child
- Follow the child's lead during play
- Provide toys and experiences that have a variety of colors, textures, sounds, and smells

Creative Expression

Standard: Children demonstrate the ability to convey ideas and emotions through creative expression.

Birth to 9 months: Children build the beginnings of creative expression through everyday interactions with their caregivers.

Indicators for children include:

- Actively explores sensory objects in the environment
- Participates in interactions with caregiver(s), e.g., observes, smiles, coos
- Demonstrates interest in sounds, songs, music, and colors
- Listens and moves to music
- Manipulates objects, e.g., turns, shakes, bangs

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with choices for exploration; follow his or her lead
- Interact in a meaningful manner with the child throughout the day
- Make music part of every day; sing songs with the child
- Provide toys and activities that encourage movement, e.g., a toy drum, a tunnel to crawl through

Logic & Reasoning

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to build awareness and use simple actions to have an impact on objects and people in their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses nonverbal and verbal communication to generate responses from caregiver(s), e.g., coos, reaches, laughs
- Repeats similar actions on different objects, e.g., shakes stuffed animal in the same manner as a rattle to hear noise
- Looks for and finds an object that has fallen

Strategies for interaction:

- Participate in social interactions the child initiates
- Provide interesting toys that can be easily manipulated, e.g., squeezed, shaken, rattled
- Play turn-taking games with the child, e.g., peek-a-boo

Quantity & Numbers

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

Birth to 9 months: Children are developing an understanding of quantity and number concepts as they explore and interact with objects and people in their everyday environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses sounds and body language to signal for more, e.g., begins to cry when finishing a bottle of milk and is still hungry
- Explores objects one at a time, e.g., mouths one toy and drops it to grab hold of another, or drops toys in a container
- Expresses desire for more through facial cues, sounds, gestures, and actions, e.g., bangs, opens mouth, points, reaches
- Holds on to more than one object at a time, e.g., grasps a rattle in one hand, and reaches for block

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond promptly and thoughtfully to the child when he or she signals needs
- Provide multiple objects and/or materials for the child to explore
- Encourage the child to explore objects one by one, e.g., hand them one block and say “one”
- Play with the child; count out loud as you hand him or her objects
- Engage in simple finger plays with the child

Science Concepts & Exploration

Standard: Children demonstrate a basic awareness of and use scientific concepts.

Birth to 9 months: Children use social interactions along with their five senses to discover and explore the world around them.

Indicators for children include:

- Observes people and objects in his or her environment
- Engages in social interactions with familiar adults
- Actively explores new objects found in the environment, e.g., mouths, pats, grasps
- Uses all of his or her senses to explore and discover new things, e.g., reaches out to touch rain or snow

Strategies for interaction:

- Create an inviting environment for the child to explore; change materials and toys in the child's environment on a regular basis
- Follow the child's lead during play
- Provide toys and experiences that have a variety of colors, textures, sounds, and smells
- Allow the child to explore his or her outdoor environment, e.g., go on stroller walks, have the child crawl on grass

Safety & Well-Being

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

Birth to 9 months: Children first rely on their natural reflexes to signal basic survival needs to their caregiver(s). Toward the end of this age period, an emerging awareness in their own bodies and trust in their caregiver(s) support children in meeting needs and protecting them in uncertain and potentially unsafe situations.

Indicators for children include:

- Signals needs through reflexes and sounds, e.g., demonstrates rooting reflex when hungry, cries when uncomfortable
- Actively observes and explores environment
- Demonstrates interest in own body, e.g., stares at hands, mouths feet, pokes at belly button
- Uses physical movements to explore environment, e.g., reaching, sitting, rolling
- Demonstrates trust in caregiver(s), e.g., reaches for adult, comforted when soothed, looks for caregiver in novel situations

Strategies for interaction:

- Meet the child's needs in a prompt and sensitive manner
- Respond thoughtfully when interacting with the child
- Provide a safe, child-proof environment, while providing constant supervision
- Soothe and comfort the child as needed, e.g., hold, cuddle, rock
- Interact with the child; sit on the floor with the child and engage in exploration and play

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Curiosity & Initiative

Standard: Children demonstrate interest and eagerness in learning about their world.

Birth to 9 months: Children are discovering the world through exploration and social interaction. Children react with special interest to new objects, people, and experiences.

Indicators for children include:

- Observes the environment and people; tracks a toy as it moves from one point to another
- Shows interest in him- or herself, e.g., gazes at hands, places feet in mouth
- Actively explores new objects found in the environment, e.g., touches, pats, and mouths
- Attempts to initiate interaction with others, e.g., smiles, reaches for a caregiver
- Participates in joint attention with caregiver(s), e.g., focuses on the same object

Strategies for interaction:

- Create an inviting environment for the child to explore; change materials and toys in the child's environment on a regular basis
- Create opportunities in which the child can explore his or her outside environment; talk with the child about what is happening
- Provide a variety of sensory materials, e.g., books that incorporate different textures, toys that shake or rattle
- Respond thoughtfully and promptly to the child's attempts for interaction

Problem Solving

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

Birth to 9 months: Children are building the foundation for problem solving through active exploration and social interaction.

Indicators for children include:

- Focuses on getting a caregiver's attention through the use of sounds, cries, gestures, and facial expressions
- Enjoys repeating actions, e.g., continues to drop toy from highchair after it is picked up by a caregiver or sibling
- Communicates the need for assistance through verbal and/or nonverbal cues, e.g., pointing, reaching, vocalizing

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond thoughtfully and promptly to the child's attempts for attention
- Provide interesting and age-appropriate toys and objects for exploration
- Engage and interact with the child frequently during the day

Confidence & Risk-Taking

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

Birth to 9 months: Children begin to build confidence through the everyday interactions they experience with their caregivers. These interactions form special relationships, which in turn build the “secure base” for children to take risks and try new experiences.

Indicators for children include:

- Cries and/or uses body language to signal and get needs met, e.g., averts gaze, arches back
- Explores new objects with eagerness, e.g., squeals and/or squeezes a toy
- Uses different approaches for accomplishing a simple task, e.g., reaching, kicking, vocalizing
- Attempts new skills on his or her own while “checking in” with a familiar adult, e.g., a new crawler begins to move, then turns toward the caregiver for reassurance before crawling away

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide nurturing and consistent care in order to build the child’s self-confidence
- Create an environment where the child has access to age-appropriate toys
- Use nonverbal and verbal cues to encourage and support the child as he or she engages in a new activity, e.g., smile, nod, clap
- Provide support in new situations, while allowing the child room to explore new objects

Persistence, Effort, & Attentiveness

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

Birth to 9 months: Children observe, explore, attend and interact with the world around them.

Indicators for children include:

- Establishes and sustains eye contact with caregiver(s)
- Focuses attention on sounds, people, and objects
- Repeats interesting actions over and over
- Indicates preferences by using nonverbal cues, e.g., turning head, kicking feet

Strategies for interaction:

- Engage and play with the child often
- Provide interesting and age-appropriate toys and objects for exploration without overstimulating the child; limit the number of toys, colors, and sounds found in the environment
- Acknowledge and respond thoughtfully to the child's communication efforts

Creativity, Inventiveness, & Imagination

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

Birth to 9 months: Children observe and interact with their surrounding environment and begin to build the skills needed to manipulate objects and materials in different ways.

Indicators for children include:

- Observes materials, objects, and people with curiosity
- Actively explores new objects found in the environment by touching, patting, and mouthing
- Reaches for objects in close proximity
- Imitates sounds, movements, and facial expressions, e.g., moves body up and down after caregiver initially moves in that manner

Strategies for interaction:

- Create an inviting environment for the child to explore; change materials and toys in the child's environment on a regular basis
- Follow the child's lead during play
- Engage with the child while he or she is exploring, e.g. demonstrate what the object or toy does
- Provide toys and experiences that have a variety of colors, textures, sounds, and smells

Physiological Regulation

Standard: 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.

7 months to 18 months: Children, through the responses and support of their caregiver(s), become increasingly organized in and begin to adapt their sleep/wake, feeding, and elimination patterns. Children are also beginning to organize and habituate to stimuli in their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates consistent sleeping and feeding times throughout the day
- Increasingly organized and consolidated internal schedule for sleep/ wake, elimination, and feeding, e.g., decreases the number of naps but extends the length of the naps
- Communicates with a wide range of signals as crying diminishes, e.g., smiles, gestures, uses words
- Begins to exhibit certain behaviors when overstimulated and/or unfocused, e.g., becomes aggressive, lashes out, bites
- Increased desire for independence and control

Strategies for interaction:

- Establish a routine for sleeping, eating, and diapering
- Recognize the child's sensitivity to sensory exposure and adjust accordingly
- Minimize stimuli in the child's environment, e.g., limit colors, sounds, and objects
- Provide redirection and be consistent in helping the child regulate in overwhelming situations, e.g., use distraction by sharing a different toy or object
- Allow the child to express emotions through newfound movements, e.g., jumping for joy
- Provide the child with some responsibility and choices, e.g., ask the child for help building a tower with blocks

Emotional Regulation

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

7 months to 18 months: As children continue to depend on and learn from caregivers, they begin to use more purposeful and complex skills in managing their emotions.

Indicators for children include:

- Communicates needs to an adult, e.g., points, shakes head
- Able to self-soothe more effectively, e.g., sucks thumb, holds on to stuffed toy
- Uses **social referencing** in uncertain situations, e.g., looks at a caregiver's face for reassurance in the presence of a new person
- Prefers physical proximity to familiar adults in unknown situations, e.g., follows caregiver when he or she leaves the room
- Seeks out caregiver through physical actions, e.g., reaches for the caregiver's hand or moves closer to them when frightened
- Uses comfort objects, e.g., a stuffed animal or blanket, to help calm down

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond thoughtfully to child's needs, e.g., reassure child who is feeling uncertain through facial expressions, voice, and touch
- Model appropriate expression of emotions for the child
- Be aware and responsive to the child's needs; read the child's facial cues and body language to help gauge what he/she may be feeling
- Match the child's emotional state through facial expressions and body language, e.g., widen eyes and move up and down when the child starts to laugh and clap
- Provide child with comfort objects when upset, or during difficult times such as transitions, e.g., a blanket, favorite stuffed animal
- Ensure to always say good-bye when separating from the child

Attention Regulation

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to have shared interests with others and are building a capacity for purposefully **attending** to objects and people. Children also begin to hold sustained attention for increasing amounts of time as they are quicker to organize and **habituate** to stimuli in their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Engages in **joint attention** with a caregiver, e.g. joins in looking at the same object or shifts gaze to where someone is pointing
- Maintains more advanced levels of engagement, e.g., repeats actions over and over when enjoying the reaction and result of the experience
- Focuses on one object or activity for a brief period of time, even with other objects close in proximity; still easily distracted
- Shifts attention from adults to peers
- Relies on routines and patterns to maintain an organized state in order to focus

Strategies for interaction:

- Spend quality time with the child sharing in activities such as reading and playing with toys
- Support and extend interactions, e.g., demonstrate different ways an object can be used; limit distractions
- Provide uninterrupted time for the child to play and explore his or her surroundings
- Create an environment that does not overwhelm the child with too many colors, sounds, and objects; limit choices
- Provide predictable routines within the day, e.g., story time right after lunch

Behavior Regulation

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

7 months to 18 months: The use of social referencing emerges and supports children in developing an internal capacity to modify some of their behaviors. Children still depend heavily on the use of their caregiver to help co-regulate their behaviors.

Indicators for children include:

- Explores environment while unaware of boundaries and limits, e.g., crawls toward a shelf and attempts to climb it
- Reads cues and body language of caregiver(s) and familiar others to guide reactions and behaviors in novel and uncertain situations
- Demonstrates frustration, e.g., cries, bites
- Has difficulty channeling excitement, e.g., screams, jumps, squeezes, bites
- Chooses between two options, e.g., “You can have the red ball or the blue ball”
- Completes a forbidden action regardless of referencing a caregiver’s reaction, e.g., looks toward their caregiver before touching the forbidden object and then touches it anyway

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with plenty of warning in between transitions; use picture cards to help
- Guide the child with both nonverbal and verbal communication, e.g., use facial expressions that match what is being said
- Establish routines for everyday activities
- Manage own expectations with the understanding that the child cannot control his behavior
- Use redirection and distraction to avoid power struggles

Attachment Relationships

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

7 months to 18 months: Children trust in, engage with, and seek reassurance from their primary caregiver(s). Children can confidently explore their environment when in close physical proximity to an attachment figure.

Indicators for children include:

- Distinguishes between primary caregivers and others
- Attempts to change the situation when separation anxiety occurs, e.g., follows caregiver(s) when he or she leaves the room
- Uses social referencing with caregiver(s) when in uncertain situations, e.g., will glance at caregiver's face for cues on how to respond to an unfamiliar person or new situation
- Uses key adults as a "secure base" when exploring the environment
- Exhibits stranger anxiety and concern in presence of an unknown person or a new situation
- Seeks comfort from caregiver(s) and/or a familiar object, e.g., blanket, stuffed animal
- Initiates and maintains interactions with caregiver(s)

Strategies for interaction:

- Talk and sing to the child often; use opportunities such as diaper changes and feeding time
- Comfort and reassure the child as needed
- Follow the child's lead and read the child's cues when engaged in interactions
- When separating from a child, gesture and say good-bye, reassuring the child that you will be returning; in childcare settings, comfort and reassure the child once the primary caregiver has left
- When reuniting with a child after separation has occurred, allow the child the necessary time to reconnect

Emotional Expression

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to express some emotions with **intention**, and with the help of their caregiver(s) children can increase their range of emotional expression.

Indicators for children include:

- Expresses wants with intentionality, e.g., pushes an unwanted object out of the way, reaches for a familiar adult when wanting to be carried
- Expresses fear by crying or turning toward caregiver(s) for comfort
- Shows anger and frustration, e.g., cries when a toy is taken away
- Recognizes and expresses emotion toward a familiar person, e.g., shows emotion by hugging a sibling

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond to child's display of fear or distress; reassure and comfort the child
- Model emotional expression for the child by making facial expressions and using words to name the emotion
- Reciprocate actions and gestures the child initiates, e.g., wave hello, blow kisses, give hugs

Relationship with Adults

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

7 months to 18 months: Children use familiar adults for guidance and reassurance. Children also initiate and engage in back-and-forth interactions with familiar adults.

Indicators for children include:

- Looks for caregiver's response in uncertain situations
- Engages with adults during play, e.g., bangs on a toy drum and repeats action after an adult completes the same action
- Uses key adults as a "secure base" when exploring the environment
- Uses "social referencing" when encountering new experiences, e.g., glances at a caregiver's face for cues on how to respond to an unfamiliar person or unknown object
- Draws a familiar adult into an interaction, e.g., hands a book or toy to engage in together

Strategies for interaction:

- Follow the child's lead in play; respond genuinely while interacting
- Respond to the child consistently; this helps build trust
- Offer support through reassuring behaviors such as smiles, hugs, and cuddles
- Provide dedicated periods of time to play and engage with the child with limited interruptions

Self-Concept

Standard: Children develop identity of self.

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to have a greater awareness of their own characteristics and begin to express themselves with their own thoughts and feelings.

Indicators for children include:

- Shows awareness of significant people by calling them by name, e.g., “papa”
- Engages in joint attention with familiar others, e.g., shares in looking and engaging with objects and people
- Responds with vocalizations or gestures when hears name
- Demonstrates interest in looking in mirror
- Uses gestures and some words to express feelings, e.g., “no”
- Uses social referencing to guide actions and begins to test limits
- Points to and identifies body parts on him or herself, e.g., points to eyes when asked, “Where are your eyes?”

Strategies for interaction:

- Use names when referring to significant people in the child’s life
- Use affective attunement to match the feelings of the child, e.g., use facial expressions and body language to express the same emotions the child is vocalizing
- Allow child to express wants and desires; provide choices in order to allow him or her some control
- Provide limits and boundaries for the child
- Use songs and finger plays that help the child identify the names of different body parts

Relationship with Peers

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

7 months to 18 months: Children will begin to observe and imitate other children's behaviors.

Indicators for children include:

- Shows interest in another child by moving closer, e.g., rolls, crawls, or walks toward the child
- Imitates actions of another child, e.g., rolling a car
- Engages in a simple, reciprocal game such as "pat-a-cake"
- Begins to engage in parallel play, in closer proximity to other children but no interaction is attempted

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide opportunities for the child to play and interact with other children
- Model positive interaction while playing and spending time with the child
- Provide activities that can be done in a group setting, such as singing, movement activities, or reading a story
- Provide a variety of toys for children to explore and play with

Empathy

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

7 months to 18 months: Children have more experience with a wide range of emotions as they begin to recognize and respond to different facial and emotional expressions. Children also begin to demonstrate the understanding of how behavior brings out reactions and emotions from others.

Indicators for children include:

- Smiles with intention to draw out a smile from a familiar other
- Uses social referencing with caregiver(s) when in uncertain situations, e.g., glances at a caregiver's face for cues on how to respond to an unfamiliar person or new situation
- Reacts to a child who is upset by observing or moving physically closer to the child
- Shares in both positive and negative emotions with caregiver(s), e.g., shares in wonders, amazement, delight, and disappointment
- Begins to have a greater awareness of own emotions, e.g., says or gestures "no" to refuse, squeals and continues to laugh when happy

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond to the child's attempts to seek emotional responses; try to use facial expressions to match the child's tone of voice, sounds, and body language
- Model empathetic behavior and control own emotions, e.g., avoid over-control and power struggles; instead, use redirection
- Name emotions and recognize behaviors that the child is exhibiting, e.g., saying, "I can see you are mad by the way you are stomping your feet!"
- Respond thoughtfully and genuinely to the child's attempts to socially engage and interact

Gross Motor

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

7 months to 18 months: Children develop mobility as they purposefully move from one place to another with limited control and coordination.

Indicators for children include:

- Moves from hands and knees to a sitting position
- Rocks back and forth on knees
- Crawls from one point to another
- Pulls to a stand using help from furniture or caregiver
- Moves objects with large muscles, e.g., pushes a toy car with legs, rolls a ball
- Cruises while holding on to furniture, e.g., walks around crib, holding on to railing
- Briefly maintains balance when placed in a non-supported standing position
- Takes steps independently
- Gets into a standing position without support

Strategies for interaction:

- Create a safe environment for the child to move around in
- Encourage the child to move by placing novel objects out of reach
- Introduce objects that the child can crawl or walk through
- Encourage new skills by demonstrating enthusiasm and pride as the child begins to attempt the skill
- Play interactive games with the child, e.g., roll a ball back and forth
- Support the child as he or she masters new skills, e.g., provide physical support by lightly holding child who is attempting to take his or her first steps

Fine Motor

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to gain control of their small muscles and purposefully manipulate objects.

Indicators for children include:

- Picks up objects
- Uses pincer grasp, e.g., picks up a Cheerio with thumb and forefinger
- Begins to use simple baby signs (if exposed to baby sign language), e.g., moves hands toward each other to signal more
- Uses hands in a purposeful manner, e.g., turns the pages of a board book, drops objects into a bucket
- Coordinates increasingly complex hand movements to manipulate objects, e.g., crumples paper, connects and disconnects toy links, flips light switch on and off
- Participates in finger plays, e.g., moves hands to imitate caregiver's hands when singing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide art materials, e.g., crayons and paper, for the child to scribble on
- Allow the child to explore books on his or her own
- Provide the child with finger foods they can grasp and bring to mouth, e.g., dry cereal
- Encourage the child to participate in finger plays, e.g., "Itsy, Bitsy Spider"
- Provide different materials for child to explore, e.g., books and toys with different textures, cloth toys, water play

Perceptual

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to use sensory information received from their environment to alter the way they interact and explore.

Indicators for children include:

- Begins to manipulate materials, e.g., pounds at play dough, squeezes finger foods
- Begins to show a preference for or aversion to particular sensory activities, e.g., pulls hand away from unfamiliar objects or unpleasant textures
- Becomes aware of obstacles in the environment, e.g., crawls around the table to get the ball
- Adjusts manner of walking depending on the surface, e.g., walks carefully across gravel

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with choices for experimenting with sensory objects
- Observe the child's reactions to objects and experiences in order to note what he or she enjoys
- Expose the child to different textures, smells, sounds, and sights

Self-Care

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

7 months to 18 months: Children signal caregivers about their needs through nonverbal and verbal communication and increase their ability to complete some self-care tasks on their own.

Indicators for children include:

- Grasps and drinks from a cup
- Shakes head to demonstrate no; pushes objects away
- Feeds self with foods that he or she can pick up
- Improves ability to calm self, may fall asleep on own

Strategies for interaction:

- Establish routines throughout the day and create a nighttime routine
- Provide consistent and predictable care for the child
- Provide opportunities for the child to feed self, e.g., use finger foods, allow the child to hold a spoon

Social Communication

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

7 months to 18 months: Children are participating in interactions with familiar others. Children also begin to demonstrate simple turn-taking skills while interacting.

Indicators for children include:

- Communicates and responds by grunting, nodding, and pointing
- Demonstrates understanding of a familiar sound or word, e.g., looks toward a caregiver after hearing name
- Responds with “yes” or “no,” using sounds, words, and/or gestures to answer simple questions
- Uses facial expressions, vocalizations, and gestures to initiate interactions with others
- Participates in simple back-and-forth communication, using words and/or gestures

Strategies for interaction:

- Name objects in the child’s environment
- Use words that are found in the child’s context and culture
- Respond thoughtfully to the child’s attempts to interact, e.g., physically move closer to a child who is holding out his arms, smile and nod to the child who is smiling and clapping
- Provide opportunities for the child to communicate with other children and adults

Receptive Communication

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to understand and respond to the meaning of actions and sounds.

Indicators for children include:

- Engages in **joint attention** with a caregiver, e.g., joins in looking at the same object or shifts gaze to where someone is pointing
- Follows a one-step, simple request when a gesture is used
- Responds appropriately to familiar words, e.g., hears the words “so big,” and puts arms in air
- Understands approximately 100 words relevant to their experiences and cultural context

Strategies for interaction:

- Spend quality time with the child sharing in activities such as reading and playing with toys
- Play games where the child can point to objects, e.g., “Where is the cup?”
- Sing songs that are culturally meaningful to the child and encourage him or her to follow along, e.g., “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”
- Continue to name objects that the child is familiar with, e.g., family members, favorite toys and books

Expressive Communication

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

7 months to 18 months: Children’s language progresses from babbling to utterances and to first words. Toward the end of this age period, babbling decreases as children begin to build their vocabulary.

Indicators for children include:

- Babbles using the sounds of the home language
- Creates long, babbled sentences
- Uses nonverbal communication to express ideas, e.g., waves bye-bye, signs “more” when eating
- Utters first words; these words are for familiar objects and people, e.g., “mama,” “bottle”
- Names a few familiar objects in his/her environment
- Uses one word to convey a message, e.g., “milk” for “I want milk”

Strategies for interaction:

- Acknowledge and respond to the child’s communication attempts
- Expand on what the child is saying, e.g., “Milk? You want to drink milk?”
- Show appreciation when the child is attempting to use new words
- Talk and read with the child often; use words and books that reflect the home culture
- Narrate what is occurring throughout the child’s day, e.g., “Let’s sit down and have lunch”

Early Literacy

Standard: Children demonstrate interest in and comprehension of printed materials.

7 months to 18 months: Children become participants as they actively engage in literacy activities with printed materials.

Indicators for children include:

- Points to pictures in a book and reacts, e.g., smiles when sees a picture of a dog
- Initiates literacy activities, e.g., gestures toward a book or attempts to turn pages of a paper book or magazine
- Imitates gestures and sounds during activities, e.g., hand actions during singing, babbles as caregiver reads book
- Increases ability to focus for longer periods of time on printed materials
- Grasps objects and attempts to scribble, e.g., makes a slight mark with a crayon on a piece of paper

Strategies for interaction:

- Use songs and word rhymes; sing finger-play songs such as “pat-a-cake”
- Point and name pictures in books
- Read or sign stories that repeat words or phrases; ensure to say or sign these words or phrases in the child’s primary language if possible
- Create designated areas in the classroom or at home where books are easily accessible to the child
- Provide the child with opportunities to hold different types of writing utensils in his/her hands, e.g., large crayon or thick paint brushes

Concept Development

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to recognize object characteristics and build awareness of simple concepts through interactions and exploration.

Indicators for children include:

- Develops object permanence, aware that an object still exists even when it is not physically visible, e.g., pulls the blanket off the pacifier, cries when caregiver leaves the room
- Uses physical actions while exploring objects, e.g., rolls a ball back and forth on the floor, purposefully throws object repeatedly onto floor to be picked up
- Identifies and indicates objects and people in pictures, e.g., points
- Focuses attention on objects, people, and sounds for increasing amounts of time

Strategies for interaction:

- Use play to hide objects from the child and encourage the child to find them
- Demonstrate how to make different objects move, e.g., roll a ball gently toward the child
- Name objects found in the child's environment
- Talk to the child about objects and their characteristics, e.g., "Both of these are red"
- Name objects and pictures the child points to

Memory

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

7 months to 18 months: Children remember familiar people, routines, actions, places, and objects.

Indicators for children include:

- Finds hidden objects, e.g., lifts a blanket to uncover a toy after seeing the caregiver hide it
- Shows awareness of non-present, familiar adults, e.g., while in childcare, asks for mom and dad throughout the day
- Searches for objects in their usual location, e.g., finds their favorite book on the bookshelf
- Anticipates what event comes next in his or her daily routine, e.g., sits down for a morning snack after a music activity

Strategies for interaction:

- Play with the child using various objects which they can explore
- Set routines; create picture cards with the daily routine so the child can begin to understand what his or her day will consist of
- Play simple games that include hiding a toy in a nearby location
- Respond to the child in a sensitive manner when he or she asks for someone who is not currently there, e.g., “I know you miss your Mommy; she will be back soon to pick you up.”

Spatial Relationships

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to use trial and error in discovering how objects and people move and fit in relationship to each other.

Indicators for children include:

- Puts objects in a bucket and then dumps them out; repeats this action
- Begins to identify physical obstacles and possible solutions when moving around, e.g., crawls around a chair instead of under it
- Drops objects such as toys and watches them move
- Discriminates between small and large objects, e.g., uses one hand or two hands in a variety of ways

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide different types of objects that the child can move around, e.g., toy cars, balls, nesting cups
- Create safe play spaces in which the child can crawl, climb, and move around
- Provide time outside for the child to explore and interact

Symbolic Thought

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

7 months to 18 months: Children use social interaction to continue to gather meaning from objects, actions, and people. Children move from exploring objects to learning how to play with objects in ways they are intended to be used. Toward the end of this age period, children begin to use one object to represent another object.

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates **object permanence**, e.g., realizes objects and people still exist, even when they are not physically visible
- Imitates adult's actions, e.g., bangs a drum with a rattle, after observing an adult complete the action
- Engages in simple pretend play, e.g., pretends to drink tea from a pretend tea cup, pretends to feed baby doll with toy bottle, uses a toy block as a phone, pretends to talk to mama
- Recognizes familiar people and/or objects in photographs

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond enthusiastically when the child demonstrates new uses for objects he or she has discovered
- Play with the child often; follow his or her lead
- Imitate the child during play, e.g., hold up a pretend phone to ear
- Name objects and people found in the child's environment

Creative Expression

Standard: Children demonstrate the ability to convey ideas and emotions through creative expression.

7 months to 18 months: Children increasingly engage with their caregiver(s) and show enjoyment in activities and interactions that focus on music, movement, building, and play.

Indicators for children include:

- Enjoys familiar songs and word rhymes
- Begins to use symbolic play while interacting, e.g., holds a play phone to ear and has a “conversation” with grandma
- Begins to stack large blocks with or without support
- Participates in music activities by performing some accompanying hand movements
- Engages in art activities such as coloring or finger painting

Strategies for interaction:

- Sing songs with the child and model any accompanying gestures
- Provide the child with different options for creating artwork
- Demonstrate enjoyment of music and actively participate with the child as he or she sings
- Encourage the child to explore different materials while playing

Logic & Reasoning

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

7 months to 18 months: Children combine specific actions to have an effect on people and objects, and interact with people and objects in different ways to discover what will happen.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses objects as they are intended, e.g., pretends to drink milk out of a toy bottle
- Attempts different ways to move an object to see what happens, e.g., rolls a ball gently at first and then hard to see how fast and far it will move
- Uses different actions for an intended result, e.g., builds tower with blocks and then knocks it down with his or her hand, repeats the activity and uses his/her head to make the tower tumble
- Imitates adult's body language and simple actions, e.g., puts hands on hips or pretends to brush crumbs off table

Strategies for interaction:

- Allow the child to explore a variety of toys.
- Narrate the child's play: "Look how hard you rolled that ball!"
- Allow the child freedom to try new things with some support
- Demonstrate and explain the relationship between objects and/or people

Quantity & Numbers

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to identify that there are different quantities of objects and people, and may attempt to match quantities with numbers through the use of words, symbols, and gestures.

Indicators for children include:

- Understands the concept of “more” in regard to food and play; signs or says “more”
- Imitates counting, e.g., climbs stairs and mimics “one, two”
- Uses nonverbal and verbal communication to express more complex concepts, e.g., “some,” “again,” “all done”
- Begins to understand descriptive words and apply **attributes** to people, e.g., points to himself when asked, “Who’s a big boy?”
- Begins to use number words to label quantities, even though incorrect

Strategies for interaction:

- Model counting and sequencing for the child through everyday interactions, e.g., “First, we are going to sit you in your chair, and then we are going to put your bib on.”
- Narrate as the child gestures, e.g., “so big” as he or she raises arms in air
- Sing songs that incorporate numbers

Science Concepts & Exploration

Standard: Children demonstrate a basic awareness of and use scientific concepts.

7 months to 18 months: Children use all of their five senses to purposefully collect and act on information received through interactions with their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Actively explores objects and experiences their properties through the different senses, e.g., color, texture, weight, taste
- Repeats actions that attract his or her attention, e.g., drops object onto floor to hear the sound it makes
- Experiments with different textures found in the outside environment, e.g., runs fingers through dirt, crumbles dry leaves

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide opportunities for the child to explore and play outside
- Engage in conversations with the child about nature, animals, and other living things; introduce books that cover those topics
- Provide the child plenty of opportunities for sensory play, e.g., pudding, shaving cream, water, sand

Safety & Well-Being

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

7 months to 18 months: Children’s increasing physical abilities allow them to explore new ways of interacting with the environment around them. Motivated by these new skills, children take risks to explore and learn, and demonstrate through nonverbal and verbal communication trust in their caregiver(s) to keep them safe.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses **social referencing** to assess uncertain situations, e.g., looks at a caregiver for social cues as to whether or not to proceed
- Actively climbs to reach for wanted objects during play
- Responds to cues from caregiver in uncertain and unsafe situations
- Hesitates and demonstrates caution in new and/or changing situations, e.g., stops crawling when reaches the edge of an uneven surface
- Responds to warnings and changes in tone of voice; needs assistance and redirection to stop unsafe behavior, e.g., looks up after hearing a stern “no” but does not necessarily stop the behavior or action

Strategies for interaction:

- Use facial clues and gestures to communicate to the child in uncertain situations, e.g., nod head yes and smile to encourage the child to crawl toward the new toy
- Establish boundaries and limits; remain consistent and firm
- Provide a safe, child-proof environment while providing constant supervision
- Explain to children why certain rules are in place

Curiosity & Initiative

Standard: Children demonstrate interest and eagerness in learning about their world.

7 months to 18 months: Children's newly acquired physical control allows them to explore and initiate interactions in a more purposeful and meaningful manner.

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates an interest in new objects by manipulating and turning the object
- Uses familiar objects in new ways, e.g., places a toy basket on head
- Moves toward a new activity by crawling or walking
- Begins to demonstrate preferences for objects and/or materials, e.g., selects a book to read when given options
- Engages familiar adults in meaningful interactions, e.g., points to favorite toy, brings a book over to be read

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide an environment that allows the child to pick and choose what activity or toys he or she would like to play with
- Provide materials and objects that can be used in more than one way
- Encourage activities that are meaningful to the child, e.g., a favorite book or a favorite song

Problem Solving

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to discover that certain actions and behaviors can be solutions to challenges and obstacles they encounter. Children also recognize how to engage their caregiver(s) to assist in managing these challenges.

Indicators for children include:

- Repeats actions over and over again to figure out how an object works
- Begins to recognize that certain actions will draw out certain responses, e.g., laughing and smiling will often result in an adult responding in the same manner
- Attempts a variety of physical strategies to reach simple goals, e.g., pulls the string of a toy train to move it closer or crawls to get a ball that has rolled away

Strategies for interaction:

- Demonstrate how to try things in different ways and encourage the child to do the same, e.g., using a plastic bucket as a drum
- Gently guide the child in discovering and exploring, while allowing him or her enough independence to try new things
- Respond thoughtfully and promptly to the child's communication attempts

Confidence & Risk-Taking

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to use their developing confidence to engage in simple risk-taking behavior as they physically explore their environment in the context of a secure relationship.

Indicators for children include:

- Begins to take great risks with little regard for danger, e.g., lunging off a couch to reach for an object
- Becomes more intentional and confident when playing and interacting, e.g., grabs, pushes, throws
- Uses trial and error to solve a problem, e.g., tries different angles when attempting to place a shape in a shape sorter

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide an interesting and safe environment for the child to explore; remain watchful and intervene when needed to keep the child safe
- Recognize that the child needs time to adjust to new skills, e.g., the child can suddenly become frightened by his or her expanding capabilities
- Encourage the child to try new ways of doing things

Persistence, Effort, & Attentiveness

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

7 months to 18 months: Children begin to become more persistent in interacting with people, exploring objects, and accomplishing tasks. While their ability to sustain attention increases, they are still easily distracted by other objects and events in the environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Participates in back-and-forth interactions, e.g., plays peek-a-boo with an adult
- Repeats activities over and over, e.g., successfully inserts all the shape sorter's pieces, dumps them out, and starts again
- Begins to attempt assisting in self-help activities, e.g., feeding, grooming
- Demonstrates preferences, e.g., gestures to the bean bag and says "no" when presented with something else

Strategies for interaction:

- Share in the accomplishments of the child; encourage him or her throughout the process of working through tasks
- Engage and play with the child on a daily basis
- Follow the child's lead when engaging in activities
- Allow the child to help in self-help activities when he or she demonstrates an interest
- Acknowledge when the child demonstrates a preference, e.g., "You want the blue cup, here it is." Or "I can see that you want to read a book, but now it is time to eat."

Creativity, Inventiveness, & Imagination

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

7 months to 18 months: Children first begin using most objects and materials for their intended use. As they develop, children begin to experiment with using these objects and materials in new and unexpected ways.

Indicators for children include:

- Imitates a peer's actions, e.g., bangs on table with cup
- Uses objects as they're intended to be used, e.g., rolls a toy car
- Spends increasing amounts of time exploring and learning about objects, e.g., will attend to a new toy for longer periods of time in order to make sense of it
- Begins to use objects in new and unexpected ways, e.g., places a basket on head
- Imitates actions of other people in a playful manner, e.g., wags finger at baby doll and says "no, no, no"

Strategies for interaction:

- Respond enthusiastically when the child demonstrates new uses for objects he or she has discovered
- Provide materials that can be used in more than one way
- Change objects and toys frequently for the child
- Play with the child often and encourage creativity
- Imitate the child in a genuine manner during play

Physiological Regulation

Standard: 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.

16 months to 24 months: Children have established basic, consolidated patterns in sleep/wake, feeding, and elimination functions. Children use nonverbal and verbal communication to signal needs to caregiver(s) for support in regulating. Children also begin to manage internal and external stimuli.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses gestures and symbolic actions to demonstrate feelings and needs, e.g., lays head on caregiver’s lap when tired
- Becomes frustrated and displays regressive behaviors when overstimulated, e.g., temper tantrums
- Communicates needs with one or two words, e.g., says or gestures “milk” for “I want milk”
- Begins to have an awareness of bodily functions and begins to demonstrate an interest in toileting, e.g., recognizes a “potty”

Strategies for interaction:

- Recognize and respond to the child’s communication efforts
- Establish a schedule throughout the day that includes sufficient time for feeding and resting
- Provide sensory play for the child who is having difficulty remaining regulated due to lack of sensory input, e.g., play dough, water play
- Read the child’s cues to determine how to support the child during challenging instances, e.g., use of a soothing voice or gentle touch; or ensure the child is safe and allow them to express their emotions through a more physical manner (lying on the floor, stomping feet)

Emotional Regulation

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to recognize a specific range of emotions and manage their emotions through both the use of advanced soothing strategies and the use of their caregiver.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses caregiver’s facial cues and body language to assist in novel and uncertain situations, e.g., sees a dog for the first time and uses the adult’s smile as a cue to cautiously pat the dog
- Uses play to sort out feelings and gain control over them, e.g., projects feeling onto an object, grasps a ball and hugs it tightly to chest when excited
- Uses verbal and nonverbal communication to signal the need for their caregiver, e.g., calls by name, crawls into a familiar adult’s lap
- Names some emotions, e.g., “me sad”
- Begins to use “private speech” in order to assist in regulating their emotions, e.g., utters “bear, where is bear” to self

Strategies for interaction:

- Remain physically and emotionally available for the child; respond thoughtfully to their requests
- Describe feelings when interacting with children
- Use books that illustrate different emotions that children may experience
- Provide sensitive guidance and reassurance to the child when he or she is having difficulty managing and expressing emotions

Attention Regulation

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to focus and attend for longer periods of time, in particular while engaged in self-created and goal-directed play. Children also have an increased internal capacity to organize and plan while attending and focusing.

Indicators for children include:

- Works to find solutions to simple problems and/or obstacles, e.g., attempts to climb onto a piece of furniture in order to retrieve a toy
- Works on solving increasingly difficult activities, e.g., attempts to solve a simple, three-piece puzzle
- Remains focused for longer periods of time while engaged in self-initiated play
- Attends and stays engaged to often reach a goal, e.g., places all the shapes in the shape sorter

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide uninterrupted time for the child to work on activities that interest him or her, e.g., avoid interrupting or intervening when the child actively engages with an object, person, or activity
- Remain available for the child and respond promptly if he or she asks for help
- Create an environment that does not overwhelm the child with too many colors, sounds, and objects; limit choices
- Help expand attention through extending interactions that are interesting to the child

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

Attachment Relationships

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to use nonverbal and verbal communication to connect and reconnect with their attachment figure.

Indicators for children include:

- Shows an emotional connection with familiar adults other than the primary caregiver
- Uses imitation and pretend play to make sense of relationships, e.g., uses a toy to “brush” hair, or feeds and rocks a doll
- Plays physically farther away from primary caregiver with increasing confidence; moves closer as needed
- Seeks physical closeness when distressed
- Actively seeks emotional responses from caregiver(s) by waving, hugging, and crying

Strategies for interaction:

- Comfort and acknowledge the child’s feelings of distress; provide words for the emotions the toddler is exhibiting
- Set appropriate and consistent limits; ensure to take realistic expectations into account
- Provide ample opportunities for play and interaction with nurturing adults
- Be physically and emotionally available for the child, especially after reuniting after a separation has occurred
- Respond to the child’s attempts to seek out a response, e.g., blow a kiss back after the child blows a kiss
- Model appropriate behaviors, e.g., how to emotionally react in situations, how to speak to peers

Emotional Expression

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

16 months to 24 months: Children continue to experience a wide range of emotions (e.g., affection, frustration, fear, anger, sadness). At this point in development, children will express and act on impulses, but begin to learn skills from their caregiver(s) on how to control their emotional expression.

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates anger and frustration through a wide range of physical, vocal, and facial expressions, e.g., temper tantrums
- Expresses pride, e.g., smiles, claps, or says, “I did it” after completing a task
- Attempts to use a word to describe feelings to a familiar adult
- Expresses wonder and delight while exploring the environment and engaging others

Strategies for interaction:

- Use words to describe the emotion; this helps the child associate the feeling with the name
- Pay close attention to the cues the child is expressing
- Model appropriate ways to express different feelings
- Acknowledge and validate the emotions the child is feeling, e.g., “I can see you are so excited by the way you are jumping up and down.”

Relationship with Adults

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

16 months to 24 months: Children actively seek out familiar adults and begin to show an interest in adult tasks and roles.

Indicators for children include:

- Builds emotional connections with other familiar adults, in addition to primary caregiver(s)
- Seeks adult assistance with challenges but may refuse help and say “no”
- Responds to guidance, e.g., places the shape into the shape sorter after caregiver demonstrates how to
- Imitates a familiar adult’s actions, e.g., waves hands around while pretending to talk on the phone after seeing caregiver make those same actions

Strategies for interaction:

- Comfort child and acknowledge her or his feelings of distress; provide words for emotions the child is exhibiting
- Set appropriate and consistent limits; ensure to take realistic expectations into account
- Provide choices for the child, e.g., “Would you like the blue cup or the yellow cup?”
- Establish everyday routines and rituals
- Allow ample time for pretend play

Self-Concept

Standard: Children develop identity of self.

16 months to 24 months: Children become aware of themselves as distinct from others both physically and emotionally. During this period, children often struggle with the balance of being independent and needing nurturing from their caregiver(s).

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates awareness of self, e.g., touches own nose in the mirror
- Able to express his or her name
- Refers to self with gestures and language
- Demonstrates understanding and use of concepts through words such as “mine,” “me,” and “you”
- Points to self in images and other types of media
- Frequently tests limits
- Asks for help from familiar adults but may begin to attempt to complete tasks autonomously

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide words to the emotion the child is expressing; validate his or her feelings
- Provide nurturing care, especially when the child is seeking comfort
- Engage in conversations with the child often; provide opportunities for child to talk about him- or herself in a meaningful context
- Set boundaries with the child and provide the child with choices throughout the day.
- Use redirection, e.g., hand an object to a child who is about to start crying because another child has an object he or she wants

Relationship with Peers

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

16 months to 24 months: As play and communication matures, children begin to seek out interactions with peers.

Indicators for children include:

- Gestures in order to communicate a desire to play near a peer
- Demonstrates enthusiasm around other children
- Expresses frustration when another child takes something away from him or her, e.g., a toy
- Begins to engage in simple reciprocal interactions, e.g., rolls a ball back and forth
- Demonstrates a preference for parallel play, e.g., plays next to other children with similar toys with little or no interaction

Strategies for interaction:

- Recognize and respond thoughtfully to the child's verbal and nonverbal communication
- Create a special time when two or three children read a book with a caregiver
- Acknowledge sharing and thoughtful behaviors, e.g., a child who pats another child who is upset, or when a child hands over a toy to another child
- Provide more than one of the same toy for the child and his or her peers to play with
- Use distraction and redirection to help limit conflicts among children

Empathy

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to notice different emotions that other children are expressing and may begin to respond to these emotions.

Indicators for children include:

- Imitates comforting behaviors from caregiver(s), e.g., pats or hugs a child when upset
- Recognizes some of his or her own emotions, e.g., grabs a comfort object when sad
- Demonstrates awareness of different emotions and feelings during play, e.g., rocks a baby doll and whispers “shhh”
- Shares in and communicates simple emotions of others, e.g., “mama sad”, “papa happy”

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide words for feelings as often as possible throughout the day
- Recognize and respect individual and cultural emotional responses, e.g., a child who does not want to be hugged when upset
- Help the child recognize certain emotions by describing and naming what the child is feeling
- Help the child to develop an understanding of feelings of others by using pictures, posters, books, and mirrors
- Allow plenty of time for pretend play and interact with the child while modeling empathy

Gross Motor

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

16 months to 24 months: Children now have gained more control over their movements and begin to explore different ways they can move their bodies.

Indicators for children include:

- Attempts to climb objects, e.g., furniture, steps, simple climbing structures
- Holds objects or toys while walking, e.g., pulls a car by a string while walking around the room
- Kicks and attempts to catch a ball
- Rides a toy by using his or her hands or feet

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide opportunities for the child to run, climb, and jump outside
- Create safe places for the child to climb; remain with the child in order to prevent falling and injury
- Use movement games to promote balance, jumping, and hopping, e.g., “follow the leader”
- Engage in games with the child that encourage the use of large muscles, e.g., roll a ball with the child, create simple obstacle courses to maneuver

Fine Motor

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to coordinate their movements when using their small muscles and begin to manipulate various types of objects.

Indicators for children include:

- Attempts to fold various types of materials, e.g., paper, baby blanket
- Uses baby sign to communicate various concepts, e.g., “all done,” “more,” “water”
- Uses simple tools, e.g., scooper to scoop sand or water, crayon for scribbling
- Begins to imitate lines and circles when drawing
- Controls placement of objects in a more effective manner, e.g., stacks blocks in a more orderly fashion

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child opportunities to scribble with crayons or use chalk on sidewalks
- Encourage the child to experiment with tearing paper, popping bubbles (bubble wrap), and completing puzzles
- Use sensory experiences for children to engage in, e.g., water table with objects to pour, move, and squeeze water; play dough

Perceptual

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

16 months to 24 months: Children continue to work on using perceived sensory information to decide how to interact with their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Plays with water and sand tables; explores by pouring, digging, and filling
- Enjoys physical play, e.g., wrestling, tickling
- Recognizes situations that need to be approached cautiously, e.g., walks slowly with a cup of water or with food on a plate
- Adjusts approach to environment, e.g., changes volume of voice to adjust to noise level in the environment

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide opportunities for the child to experience sensory play, e.g., play dough, water, sand
- Follow the child's lead during play; ensure to proceed cautiously with a child who needs time before getting involved
- Engage in activities that encourage using different sounds and movements, e.g., read a book that incorporates both whispering and loud voices

Self-Care

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

16 months to 24 months: Children become active participants in addressing their own self-care needs with the support of the caregiver.

Indicators for children include:

- Feeds self with assistance
- Starts to indicate needs with gestures or a word, e.g., tugs diaper when wet, says “milk” when thirsty
- Assists in undressing and dressing
- Attempts to brush teeth with support

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide support and independence as the child learns new skills
- Provide the child with opportunities to work through mastering self-help skills
- Allow the child time to begin to master some self-help skills, e.g., do not rush the child who is trying to put on a t-shirt

Social Communication

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

16 months to 24 months: Children increase their capacity for complex interactions as they use a greater number of words and actions, in addition to better understanding the rules of conversational turn-taking.

Indicators for children include:

- Engages in short back-and-forth interactions with familiar others using verbal and nonverbal communication, e.g., says or signs “more” after each time a caregiver completes an action the child is enjoying
- Initiates and engages in social interaction with simple words and actions
- Connects gestures and/or sounds to comment about a familiar object, e.g., makes a crying sound after the caregiver hugs a baby doll and says, “Hush, baby”
- Pays attention to the person communicating for a brief period of time
- Demonstrates an understanding of turn-taking in conversations, e.g., asks and answers simple questions

Strategies for interaction:

- Engage in conversations with the child during the day; follow the child’s lead in order to inform the conversations
- Describe the child’s play, e.g., “You are pushing that car so fast!”
- Respond thoughtfully while interacting and communicating with child, e.g., say “You did it” and clap after the child shares an accomplishment
- Listen and respond to what the child is communicating
- Model turn-taking through everyday interactions

Receptive Communication

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to demonstrate a complex understanding of meaning in words, facial expressions, gestures, and pictures.

Indicators for children include:

- Recognizes and demonstrates understanding of familiar pictures, people, and objects, e.g., says “mama” while pointing to mother
- Understands simple commands and questions and can follow two-step requests with the support of gestures and prompting
- Demonstrates understanding of familiar words or phrases by responding appropriately, e.g., sits in chair after hearing it is snack time
- Points to body parts when prompted
- Responds to personal pronouns, e.g., me, her, him

Strategies for interaction:

- Continue labeling the child’s environment for him or her; name or use sign language when introducing new objects or people
- Use gestures while asking the child to complete actions, e.g., point to the car and point to the toy basket while saying, “Put the car in the basket.”
- Ask the child questions while engaged in interactions and activities, e.g., “Can you point to the picture of the kitty?”
- Engage in movement activities that have the child follow directions
- Use books and pictures to engage the child in conversations

Expressive Communication

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

16 months to 24 months: Children continue to experiment with language and expand their vocabulary as they begin to speak in two-word utterances.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses more words than gestures when speaking
- Repeats overheard words
- Has a vocabulary of approximately 80 words
- Begins to use **telegraphic speech**, consisting of phrases with words left out, e.g., “baby sleep” for “The baby is sleeping”

Strategies for interaction:

- Continue to engage in conversations with the child about topics meaningful to him or her
- Encourage the child when speaking and elaborate on what the child is saying
- Acknowledge and extend what the child is expressing, e.g., “Yes, I see the baby; the baby is sleeping”

Early Literacy

Standard: Children demonstrate interest in and comprehension of printed materials.

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to demonstrate an understanding of printed words and materials.

Indicators for children include:

- Turns the pages of a board book, one by one
- Points to familiar pictures and actions in books
- Repeats familiar words in a book when being read to
- Begins to anticipate what may happen next in a familiar book, e.g., generates sounds and movements and/or uses words for pictures
- Randomly scribbles
- Identifies a favorite book and signals familiar others to read with him or her, e.g., brings the book over, or points and gestures

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide access to magazines and books throughout the child's day
- Encourage the child to repeat words and point to objects that are found in magazines and books
- Name objects in the child's environment, e.g., bed, window, table, bottle
- Spend quality time with the child during which reading is the focus; follow the child's lead during this time

Concept Development

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to understand object representation and begin to use verbal and nonverbal communication with object use.

Indicators for children include:

- Pretends to use objects in their intended manner, e.g., holds a play phone to ear and engages in a conversation by babbling
- Begins to identify and name objects and people
- Uses an object to represent another during play, e.g., uses block as a phone
- Begins to identify characteristics of the object, e.g., “red ball”
- With assistance, groups a few objects by similar characteristics, e.g., color, shape, or size

Strategies for interaction:

- Continue labeling the child’s environment for him or her; introduce new objects to the child by naming them
- Engage in play with the child; follow the child’s lead
- Create a simple game where the child can try to sort objects by one attribute
- Encourage the child to identify objects that are the same, e.g., matching activities

Memory

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

16 months to 24 months: Children recognize and anticipate the series of steps in familiar activities.

Indicators for children include:

- Remembers several steps in familiar routines and carries out these routines with little or no prompting
- Recalls an event in the past, e.g., a special visitor, or a friend's birthday party
- Searches for objects in different places

Strategies for interaction:

- Engage in conversations with the child pertaining to past experiences; ask questions
- Notify the child when there will be a change in the daily routine
- Ask the child what he or she thinks may happen next when reading a familiar story

Spatial Relationships

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

16 months to 24 months: Children have a clearer sense of size and direction and use this knowledge to expand their understanding of how objects move and fit in relationship to each other.

Indicators for children include:

- Understands words that characterize size, e.g., big, small
- Uses simple trial and error to complete simple puzzles, e.g., matches piece, orients and attempts to turn to make a puzzle piece fit
- Recognizes the proper direction of objects, e.g., will turn over an upside-down cup
- Begins to understand simple prepositions, e.g., under, in, behind

Strategies for interaction:

- Narrate while assisting the child in figuring out a solution, e.g., “Let’s try to turn the puzzle piece this way”
- Provide the child with opportunities to problem-solve with and without your help; minimize the possibility for the child to become frustrated
- Start to ask the child to do complete simple actions that include a preposition, e.g., “Can you put the book on the table?”

Symbolic Thought

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

16 months to 24 months: Children demonstrate the beginning of symbolic thinking as they start to label objects in everyday life. Children also use more complex social interactions and engage in imaginary play to make sense of the world around them.

Indicators for children include:

- Pretends one object is really another by using substitution, e.g., a napkin for a baby's diaper
- Finds objects after they are hidden in close proximity
- Engages in pretend play with familiar objects and experiences, e.g., places baby doll in stroller and pushes the stroller
- Identifies or names his or her drawings, e.g., points to scribble and says, "mama and dada"
- Communicates labels to familiar objects and/or people, e.g., says "dog" when seeing four-legged animals

Strategies for interaction:

- Engage and play with the child; follow the child's lead
- Narrate the child's play, e.g., "Are you taking the baby for a walk to the store?"
- Repeat words that child is attempting to attach meaning to, e.g., say, "yes, baby," as the child points to a picture of a baby
- Encourage and praise the child as he or she shares accomplishments

Creative Expression

Standard: Children demonstrate the ability to convey ideas and emotions through creative expression.

16 months to 24 months: Children continue to show increasing ability as they engage with their caregiver(s) in music, movement, building, and play activities.

Indicators for children include:

- Imitates basic movements during an activity, e.g., places beanbag on head
- Engages in more intricate pretend play, e.g., uses a toy banana as a phone
- Enjoys using instruments while listening to music
- Builds by using different objects and materials, e.g., lines up cars, stacks small boxes
- Enjoys breaking down what he or she has built, e.g., knocking over a stack of blocks with his or her arm
- Creates artwork; focuses and enjoys the process rather than the final product

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide props and instruments that the child can use during music and movement
- Engage in conversations about what the child is creating during art activities
- Display the child's artwork where he or she can see it and show it off
- Provide play experiences both outdoors and indoors

Logic & Reasoning

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

16 months to 24 months: Children understand how purposeful and select actions can affect different objects and people. Children also begin to connect objects and ideas based on repetition and experience.

Indicators for children include:

- Repeats actions over and over to cause desired effect, e.g., dumps out a bucket and refills it with objects
- Starts to predict the consequence of simple and familiar actions, e.g., knows that flipping the light switch will either turn on or turn off the light
- Understands functionality of objects, e.g., mop is used to clean the floor
- Begins to understand certain behaviors are related to certain contexts, e.g., behaves differently at childcare than at home

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with experiences that demonstrate cause and effect, e.g., objects that produce sounds after performing a specific action
- Show and explain what objects do and what they are used for during everyday interactions
- Narrate sequencing found in everyday interactions, e.g., “First we will fill the tray with water, then we will put toys in it.”

Quantity & Numbers

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

16 months to 24 months: Children recognize various quantities of objects and people and begin to accurately match number words to the correct amount.

Indicators for children include:

- Communicates amount of familiar objects, e.g., sees two apples and says “two”
- Uses nonverbal gestures to demonstrate understanding of quantities, e.g., holds up two fingers to express two of something
- Begins to use “one,” “two,” and “three” to identify very small quantities without counting them
- Begins to use descriptive words for people in a more complex fashion, e.g., “he big,” “she baby”

Strategies for interaction:

- Use numerical concepts in everyday activities, e.g., “Would you like one cracker or two?”
- Use teachable moments, e.g., ask the child to pass you one crayon from the pile during art
- Acknowledge the child’s attempts to use numerical concepts in everyday interactions, e.g., “Yes, you are right, you are two years old!”

Science Concepts & Exploration

Standard: Children demonstrate a basic awareness of and use scientific concepts.

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to use experimentation to interact and engage with their environment in different ways. In addition, a new, distinct interest in living things emerges.

Indicators for children include:

- Shows interest in own body; may know names for certain body parts
- Begins simple categorizing, e.g., cats and dogs are animals
- Asks simple questions about nature
- Attempts new tasks during familiar activities, e.g., plays at the water table, and instead of using hands, tries to use head to make the water move
- Uses motion and sound to represent an observation, e.g., “snake, ssssss!”

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide opportunities for the child to engage in sensory play
- Talk to the child about different animals, their size, where they live, and what sounds they make
- Allow the child to explore flowers, insects, and other living things while outside

Safety & Well-Being

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to build a basic understanding of their physical limits and unsafe situations. Children are still motivated to interact and explore the environment with little regard to risks and continue to rely on caregiver(s) to help manage their impulses.

Indicators for children include:

- Understands when “no” and “stop” is communicated through either words or gestures
- Responds to warnings and begins to change behavior accordingly, e.g., moves away from the outlet after caregiver communicates “no”
- Seeks comfort when fearful
- Imitates adults’ actions during play, e.g., tells baby doll “no touch” when walking by the pretend stove

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide a safe, child-proof environment, while providing constant supervision
- Model safe practices and behaviors for the child, e.g., do not stand on chairs when attempting to reach for objects
- Support the child in new situations; allow him or her time to warm up to new people, objects, and activities

Curiosity & Initiative

Standard: Children demonstrate interest and eagerness in learning about their world.

16 months to 24 months: Children become increasingly curious about new experiences and activities that include peers and adults; they begin to interact and seek involvement with others.

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates an interest in new activities and a willingness to try out new experiences
- Engages in active exploration in new environments, e.g., walks over to a toy shelf in an unfamiliar home or classroom
- Initiates play with others, e.g., a grandparent, sibling, or teacher
- Experiments with different ways to use materials and objects

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with different choices for play and activities throughout the day
- Encourage the child to participate in a new activity but do not force
- Model positive interaction with the child throughout the day
- Encourage the child to notice what other children are doing, e.g., “Annie and Steve are making a pizza out of their play dough”

Problem Solving

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

16 months to 24 months: Children have an enhanced capacity to solve challenges they encounter through the use of objects and imitation. Children may take on a more autonomous role during this stage, yet, reach out to caregiver(s) in most instances.

Indicators for children include:

- Imitates a caregiver's behavior to accomplish a task, e.g., attempts to turn a doorknob
- Increases ability to recognize and solve problems through active exploration, play, and trial and error, e.g., tries inserting a shape at different angles to make it fit in a sorter
- Uses objects in the environment to solve problems, e.g., uses a pail to move numerous books to the other side of the room
- Uses communication to solve problems, e.g., runs out of glue during an art project and gestures to a caregiver for more

Strategies for interaction:

- Validate and praise the child's attempts to find solutions to challenges
- Narrate while assisting the child in figuring out a solution, e.g., "Let's try to turn the puzzle piece this way"
- Provide the child with opportunities to solve problems with and without your help; minimize the possibility for the child to become frustrated
- Respond to the child's communication efforts

Confidence & Risk-Taking

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

16 months to 24 months: Children increase their confidence in the context of a secure relationship and begin to engage in more complex tasks and seek out new situations.

Indicators for children include:

- Plays and explores farther away from attachment figure; continues to “check in” for reassurance, e.g., plays across the room and glances toward caregiver, then re-engages in playing
- Seeks out assistance and reassurance from familiar others
- Demonstrates confidence in abilities and achievements, e.g., cheers or claps when accomplishing a goal such as completing a simple puzzle
- Joins in a new activity after cautiously observing at first

Strategies for interaction:

- Remain available for the child during play; use reassuring cues to encourage the child to explore, e.g., smile, nod, and clap
- Provide materials and activities that are challenging but not frustrating, e.g., large blocks, a simple puzzle
- Be sensitive to the child’s temperament; recognize that the child may need some time to engage in a new experience; allow the child to observe until he or she is ready to take part

Persistence, Effort, & Attentiveness

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

16 months to 24 months: Children increase their ability to remain focused on goal-oriented tasks. At this stage, persistence is evidenced by the process the child engages in to discover how to accomplish the goal, instead of by the end result.

Indicators for children include:

- Focuses for longer periods of time on activities
- Engages for longer periods of time when trying to work through tasks, e.g., fits puzzle pieces together
- Repeats experiences he or she enjoys, e.g., says “more” after reading his or her favorite book
- Demonstrates preferences for activities, e.g., reads with a caregiver, plays at the sand table, prefers to sit by certain caregivers

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with different manipulatives that he or she can explore independently, e.g., puzzles, peg boards, books
- Celebrate the child’s accomplishment in a genuine manner
- Offer support and guidance if the child becomes frustrated when playing; respond promptly if the child calls for assistance
- Recognize the child’s favorite activities and use them to identify other toys and materials that he or she will be interested in

Creativity, Inventiveness, & Imagination

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

16 months to 24 months: Children begin to expand how they use creativity, imagination, and inventiveness through the use of symbolic representation in play.

Indicators for children include:

- Pretends one object is really another by using substitution, e.g., using a toy car to brush hair
- Engages in pretend play with familiar objects and experiences, e.g., places baby doll in stroller and pushes the stroller
- Engages familiar adults in pretend play, e.g., hands the adult a play cup and pretends to pour “tea” into it
- Communicates in creative ways, e.g., plays with words by rhyming, chanting, or making up songs; uses movement and dance

Strategies for interaction:

- Play with the child; follow the child’s lead
- Narrate the child’s play, e.g., “Are you taking the baby for a walk to the store?”
- Encourage the child’s creative and inventive attempts
- Actively engage with the child while playing; demonstrate enthusiasm and delight

Physiological Regulation

Standard: 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.

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to independently manage functions of feeding, sleeping, waking, and eliminating with some support from their caregiver(s). Children can now manage and begin to discriminate internal and external stimuli.

Indicators for children include:

- Calms down in order to sit and read a book with a caregiver
- Uses movement to express an emotion, e.g., jumps up and down when excited, stomps feet when upset
- Recognizes patterns throughout the day, e.g., grabs a pillow and blanket after lunch, when it is nap time
- Communicates needs more thoroughly, e.g., “I am hungry”
- Manages **overstimulation** in a more organized manner, e.g., disengages, walks away
- Demonstrates a readiness to begin toilet training

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide words to the child’s feelings and physical actions
- Teach the child about respecting personal space and provide objects to help them define this space, e.g., individual seat cushions during circle time
- Continue using soothing and calming behaviors when helping a child regulate
- Listen to child when expressing needs and wants; watch for verbal cues carefully
- Slow down and be present for the child; limit overstimulation and provide support for the child as needed
- Approach toilet training within the context of the home culture and the primary caregiver’s guidance

Emotional Regulation

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

21 months to 36 months: While children still need support from a caregiver, they are able to better manage their emotions and can sustain regulation as they begin to discriminate which skills and strategies to apply in different situations.

Indicators for children include:

- Communicates wants and needs verbally, e.g. “pick me up”
- Engages in pretend play to manage uncertainty and fear, e.g., plays doctor and gives someone a “shot”
- Seeks caregiver support when feeling overwhelmed by emotion; may reject support as well
- Expresses emotions through the use of play
- Holds on to a special object during certain times of the day, e.g., blanket, picture, book, stuffed toy

Strategies for interaction:

- Remain physically and emotionally available for the child, e.g., share in the child’s expressions and feelings of joy and excitement through touch and sound
- Continue to use books that illustrate different emotions that children may experience
- Validate the child’s feelings and let them know it is okay to feel the emotions they are experiencing
- Provide balance in both supporting the child and allowing the child space to work through situations independently; use the child’s cues to decide what he or she needs
- Prompt and provide words for what the child may be feeling for more complex emotions

Attention Regulation

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

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to attend to, engage in, and transition between multiple activities or interactions at a time. Children also have an increased internal capacity to discriminate and strategize while focusing and attending, and they can remain focused for longer periods of time.

Indicators for children include:

- Attention expands and stays focused on an activity or object even when distractions are present
- Uses self-talk to extend play, e.g., says “now sleepy” to the baby doll after feeding it a bottle
- Plays independently before moving on to a new activity, e.g., engages in block play, reads a book
- Wait time increases, e.g., participates in turn-taking activities
- Transitions between what he or she is engaged in and what is happening in the background, e.g., makes a comment in regard to a conversation happening between another child and adult, while engaged in completing a puzzle

Strategies for interaction:

- Observe the child during play and limit adult-directed interruptions while engaged
- Engage in play with the child; create games that encourage the child to find certain objects in the environment
- Provide independence for the child to problem-solve and discover while engaged in play
- Create a quiet space and limit distractions for children to attend and focus
- Focus on extending the child’s experiences through the interaction between adult and child instead of focusing solely on objects

Behavior Regulation

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

21 months to 36 months: Children demonstrate some limited self-control over their behavior without adult intervention or prompting. Children have knowledge of a wide range of expected behaviors and can manage some of those expectations. Children also have an increased capacity to recognize when they need their caregiver to help regulate instead of relying on their own self-regulation strategies.

Indicators for children include:

- Increases the use of **private speech** in everyday play and interactions
- Increasingly reacts appropriately to adults' facial expressions, tone, and affect, before acting on an impulse
- Identifies situations where he or she needs the caregiver to support in controlling behavior, e.g., holds caregiver's hand when crossing the street
- **Transitions** smoothly if prepared ahead of time
- Checks in with caregiver through nonverbal and verbal communication, e.g., glances, waves, points, says name, asks a question, all without having to be in close proximity
- Demonstrates an awareness of expectations, e.g., approaches and gently touches a baby, waits for brief periods of time when turn-taking

Strategies for interaction:

- Prepare the child for changes in routines and transitions by providing them plenty of time to anticipate and plan for change
- Acknowledge and praise desirable behavior by saying what the child did and why it is important
- Be consistent in limit-setting and responses
- Briefly revisit behavior after the child has reached a calm state, e.g., "You were so upset, I am so sorry you felt that way. It's important to remember that we do not hit our friends."

Attachment Relationships

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

21 months to 36 months: Children demonstrate a desire for their attachment figure to share in their feelings, responses, and experiences. Behaviors that demonstrate a need for physical proximity with the primary caregiver decrease, while in certain instances of distress, some children seek to be close to their attachment figure.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses glances and words to stay connected, without having to be physically near or touching the caregiver
- Initiates activities that are meaningful in the relationship, e.g., brings over a favorite book to be read together
- Communicates thoughts, feelings, and plans to familiar adults
- Seeks adult assistance with challenges
- Separates with assistance from attachment figure with minimal anxiety

Strategies for interaction:

- Show empathy and acknowledge how the child is feeling
- Genuinely praise the child as he or she shares accomplishments
- Respond with interest as the child engages in conversation
- Recognize and respond to the child's verbal and nonverbal communications
- Prepare the child for separation by telling him or her good-bye and that you will return

Emotional Expression

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

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to convey and express emotions through the use of nonverbal and verbal communication. Children also begin to apply learned strategies from their caregiver(s) to better regulate these emotions.

Indicators for children include:

- Attempts to use words to describe feelings and names emotions
- Acts out different emotions while engaged in pretend play, e.g., cries when pretending to be sad, jumps up and down for excitement
- Begins to express complex emotions such as pride, embarrassment, shame, and guilt
- Engages in play to express emotion, e.g., draws a picture for a caregiver because he or she misses them, hides a “monster” in a box due to a fear

Strategies for interaction:

- Discuss feelings with the child; reassure him or her that it is okay to feel different emotions
- Recognize that the child may need some assistance in expressing feelings
- Allow other channels in which children can express their emotions, e.g., art, dance, imaginary play
- Respect cultural differences when it comes to expressing emotions; never discount what the child is sharing and expressing
- Ensure to continue reading the child’s cues even as the child begins to use words to describe feelings

Relationship with Adults

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

21 months to 36 months: Children interact with adults to communicate ideas, share feelings, and solve problems. Children also actively explore adult roles and tasks.

Indicators for children include:

- Imitates adult roles and activities through pretend play, e.g., goes grocery shopping or prepares a meal
- Initiates activities that are meaningful in the relationship, e.g., brings over a favorite book to be read together
- Communicates thoughts, feelings, questions, and plans to both familiar and unfamiliar adults
- Demonstrates desire to control or make decisions independent from adults

Strategies for interaction:

- Play and spend quality time with the child on a daily basis
- Respond with interest as the child engages in conversation
- Provide materials with which the child can play, e.g., toy kitchen, phone, baby doll
- Provide choices for the child to help him or her feel more in control, e.g., “You may have milk or juice.”

Self-Concept

Standard: Children develop identity of self.

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to identify and discuss their connections to other people and things. Children can also identify their feelings and interests and communicate them to others.

Indicators for children include:

- Names people in his/her family and shares stories about them
- Asks for help from familiar adults but pushes away and refuses help
- Incorporates roles of family members in play
- Begins to show an interest in describing physical characteristics, e.g., “I have blue eyes”
- Demonstrates preferences, e.g., “I want the green cup”
- Communicates feelings, e.g., may say “I’m sad,” or stomps feet when mad
- Begins to understand concept of possession, e.g., “yours,” “hers,” “his”

Strategies for interaction:

- Listen and respond with interest as the child shares meaningful information about his/her life
- Ask the child about his/her day, friends, and favorite things
- Acknowledge the child’s efforts in sharing stories, thoughts, and questions, e.g., comment and answer promptly and genuinely
- Be aware and respectful of cultural differences in regard to independence
- Encourage the child to bring in a picture of his or her family; keep it in a place where the child can access it

Relationship with Peers

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

21 months to 36 months: Children engage and maintain interactions with their peers through the use of developing social and play skills.

Indicators for children include:

- Demonstrates a preference toward select peers
- Becomes frustrated with peers, e.g., yells “no” if a peer tries to interfere in something he or she is engaged in
- Participates in sharing, when prompted
- Communicates with other children in different settings, e.g., talks to a peer during snack time or hands a peer a book
- Begins to engage in more complex play with two or three children

Strategies for interaction:

- Create small groups, each with a caregiver, to share some quality time with particular children
- Provide toys that can be played with by two or more children at a time
- Provide activities that encourage sharing, while limiting the risk for frustration, e.g., for art projects, make more than enough art materials available for the children participating

Empathy

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

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to exhibit an understanding that other people have feelings different from their own.

Indicators for children include:

- Communicates how other children may be feeling and why, e.g., states that a peer is sad because his or her toy was taken away
- Responds to a child in distress in an attempted manner to make that child feel better, e.g., gives a crying child a hug, uses soothing words, or uses distraction
- Shares in and shows an emotional response for peers' feelings, e.g., may show concern for a child who is hurt, or smile for a child who is happy and jumping up and down

Strategies for interaction:

- Model thoughtful and sensitive practices when listening and responding to the child's description of his or her feelings
- Continue to name and discuss feelings, e.g., state why the child may be feeling certain emotions
- Genuinely praise the child when he or she responds in a sensitive manner to another child
- Gently guide the children's play to encourage empathy, e.g., "Michael is hungry, too. He needs some pretend snack on his plate."

Gross Motor

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

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to master more complex movements as coordination of different types of muscles continues to develop.

Indicators for children include:

- Stands on one foot with support and maintains balance for a brief period of time
- Jumps forward a few inches; jumps from slightly elevated surface onto the ground
- Walks up and down the stairs by placing both feet on each step
- Throws a ball
- Walks on tiptoes, walks backward, and runs
- Pedals a tricycle with both feet

Strategies for interaction:

- Incorporate outdoor games where the child has to jump and run
- Provide safe climbing structures and other materials such as tricycles and low balance beams
- Use dance and movement activities to encourage the child to move his/her body in different ways
- Engage in activities that promote throwing a ball

Fine Motor

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

21 months to 36 months: Children effectively coordinate their small muscles to manipulate a wide array of objects, toys, and materials in different ways.

Indicators for children include:

- Begins to use more complicated hand movements, e.g., uses eating utensils independently, stacks blocks
- Attempts to help with dressing self, e.g., snaps buttons, pulls zipper, puts socks and shoes on
- Scribbles with intent and begins to draw circles and lines on own
- Uses hand-eye coordination in a more controlled manner, e.g., completes puzzles, strings beads together

Strategies for interaction:

- Model how to use writing and feeding utensils through everyday activities
- Provide experiences and objects that promote fine motor development, e.g., stringing manipulatives, play dough, using plastic tweezers to pick up objects, and peg boards
- Allow the child to help in dressing him- or herself; be patient and provide guidance as needed to limit frustration
- Introduce more complex puzzles for the child to attempt, e.g., puzzles with more pieces

Perceptual

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

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to process sensory information in a more efficient manner and use the information to modify behavior while interacting with the environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Imitates familiar adults when coloring; draws lines and/or circles
- Adjusts approach to unknown objects, e.g., presses harder on a lump of clay
- Perceives and acts accordingly when holding a fragile object, both in the actual environment and in play, e.g., walks carefully when holding a pretend tea cup

Strategies for interaction:

- Spend time with the child; draw, paint, and color together
- Prompt the child to discuss what he or she is feeling during sensory play, e.g., “How does that finger paint feel on your hands?”
- Allow the child to explore freely and have fun while learning, e.g., child uses finger paint to paint their face and squeals with delight

Self-Care

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

21 months to 36 months: Children attempt to attend to their self-care needs independently with less support from their caregivers.

Indicators for children include:

- Undresses independently but still needs assistance with dressing
- Performs some self-care tasks regularly and mostly independently, e.g., brushes teeth, washes hands, places cup in sink
- Makes choices pertaining to dressing and eating
- Uses nonverbal and/or verbal communication to specify needs
- Begins to demonstrate an interest in using the bathroom, e.g., wants to sit on “potty”
- Attempts to put on shoes and socks without help

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with choices, e.g., “Would you like to wear the blue shirt or red shirt?”
- Remain patient and supportive as the child attempts to master self-help skills; provide the child with encouragement and support as needed
- Respond promptly to the child’s signals when he/she needs assistance
- Recognize that cultural expectations and practices impact the child’s understanding and self-initiation of self-care routines

Social Communication

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

21 months to 36 months: Children maintain social interactions through the pattern of turn-taking and are able to build upon ideas and thoughts conveyed.

Indicators for children include:

- Responds verbally to an adult's questions or comments
- Begins to make formal requests or responses based on his or her context and culture
- Uses repetition to maintain the conversation and obtain responses from familiar others
- Communicates related ideas when in interactions with others
- Uses "w" questions to initiate and expand conversations, e.g., "who," "what," "why"
- Initiates and engages others using meaningful objects or ideas, e.g., points out his/her artwork or favorite toy to a caregiver to begin conversing

Strategies for interaction:

- Engage in conversations with the child every day; model appropriate turn-taking
- Listen carefully to the child and follow his/her lead when communicating
- Pick conversation topics that are meaningful to the child
- Use open-ended questions to build upon what the child is saying

Receptive Communication

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

21 months to 36 months: Children continue to expand their comprehension across a variety of contexts through the use of words, actions, and symbols.

Indicators for children include:

- Names most objects and people in a familiar environment
- Comprehends compound statements and can follow multistep directions
- Demonstrates understanding of a story by reacting with sounds, facial expressions, and physical movement, e.g., laughing, widening eyes, or clapping
- Understands simple sentences or directions with prepositions, e.g., “Put cup in sink”
- Responds verbally and/or nonverbally to comments or questions while engaged in conversations with both peers and adults

Strategies for interaction:

- Continue to label the child’s environment for him or her; name or use sign language when introducing new objects or people
- Ask the child to complete two-step actions, e.g., “Please put the cup in the sink and then wash your hands.”
- Read with the child often; ask them questions about what just happened in the story or what will happen next
- Ask the child about their favorite toy or friend; gently prompt them to expand their answer

Expressive Communication

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

21 months to 36 months: Children communicate about present themes and begin to combine a few words into mini-sentences to express needs and wants.

Indicators for children include:

- Speaks in three-word utterances, e.g., “I want ball”
- Begins to use pronouns and prepositions, e.g., “He took my toy” and “on the table”
- Makes mistakes, which signal that he or she is working out complex grammar rules
- Uses adjectives in speech, e.g., “blue car”
- Uses simple sentences, e.g., “I want the yellow cup”
- Has a vocabulary of more than 300 words

Strategies for interaction:

- Model but do not correct when the child is speaking, e.g., “Oh, Mommy went to work?” after the child expresses “Mommy goed work”
- Speak in simple sentences when communicating with the child
- Allow children to play and experiment with language through songs and word rhymes
- Expand on what the child is saying, e.g., “The baby is crying; maybe she is hungry?” after the child expresses, “The baby is crying.”

Early Literacy

Standard: Children demonstrate interest in and comprehension of printed materials.

21 months to 36 months: Children engage others in literacy activities, and have an increased awareness and understanding of the variety of different types of print found in their environment.

Indicators for children include:

- Imitates adult role when engages with printed materials, e.g., pretends to read a book or newspaper to stuffed animals or dolls
- Participates in early literacy activities independently, e.g., sits in a reading nook and browses through the pages
- Recites parts of a book from memory
- Scribbles in a more orderly fashion and begins to name what he or she has drawn
- Expresses what happens next when reading a familiar book with a caregiver, e.g., uses gestures, words, and/or sounds

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide the child with books that he or she can connect to, e.g., a book about different foods, or about family
- Encourage the child to guess what is happening in the book or what will happen next in a story by using pictures as a guide
- Provide opportunities for the child to use art materials such as paper, paint, and crayons
- Create a special book with the child's picture and ensure that it reflects the child as a unique individual; read this book often with the child

Concept Development

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

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to demonstrate the ability to classify objects based on common characteristics and begin to apply knowledge of simple concepts to new situations.

Indicators for children include:

- Identifies characteristics of objects and people when named, e.g., colors
- Begins to arrange objects in a line, e.g., lines up toy cars, one after the other
- Uses symbolic representation during play, e.g., grabs a hair brush and uses it as a telephone
- Purposefully arranges similar objects, e.g., divides plastic blocks into a red group, a blue group, and a yellow group
- Identifies categories, e.g., able to point out all the animals within a picture even with different types of objects represented

Strategies for interaction:

- Incorporate learning about colors into songs, reading, and sensory play
- Provide different materials and objects of the same shape and color, e.g., blocks
- Play simple matching games with the child; provide guidance as needed
- Expand on the child's play by introducing new ways to use familiar objects
- Create a simple game where the child can try to sort objects by two or three attributes

Memory

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

21 months to 36 months: Children anticipate the steps in experiences and activities and understand the sequence of events. They may also remember and recall past events and translate knowledge of past experiences to new experiences.

Indicators for children include:

- Shares with adult what happened in school that day
- Carries out routines independently without being reminded what comes next in the daily routine.
- Uses play to communicate about previous events or experiences, including the sequence of events that took place, e.g., a friend's birthday party
- Translates past knowledge to new experiences, e.g., recalls a trip to the dentist, and narrates and acts out each step of the experience on a peer during play

Strategies for interaction:

- Listen to the child's stories; ask open-ended questions
- Model sequencing during play, e.g., "First we will put on these hats, then we will go to the tea party, we will drink tea, and finally we will go back home"
- Read a story with the child; ask the child if he or she can remember what happened at a certain part
- Encourage the child to create a story around a picture he or she has drawn

Spatial Relationships

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

21 months to 36 months: Children can better predict how objects and people will fit and move in relationship to each other. Children have knowledge of **object properties** and apply this knowledge without having to rely on physical trial and error.

Indicators for children include:

- Uses words and gestures to describe size of objects
- Recognizes where his or her body is in relation to objects, e.g., squeezing in behind a chair
- Completes simple puzzles with less trial and error, e.g., can match a puzzle piece to its correct slot by identifying the size and shape by simply looking at it
- Actively uses body to change where he or she is in relation to objects, e.g., climbs to sit on the couch

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide puzzles and other fine-motor activities for the child to engage in
- Engage in movement activities that promote balance skills
- Describe everyday objects by size, shape, and other characteristics
- Create a safe obstacle course where the child can run, climb, crawl, scoot, and maneuver his or her body

Symbolic Thought

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

21 months to 36 months: Children use their ability to label and think symbolically to engage in increasingly complex social interactions, exploration, and play. Children use these skills to recreate experiences, problem-solve, and explore relationships and roles.

Indicators for children include:

- Assigns roles to peers while engaged in imaginary play
- Builds in sequencing while engaged in play, e.g., beginning, middle, and end
- Communicates descriptors of people or objects that are not present, e.g., says “My mommy has blue eyes”
- Projects feelings and words onto stuffed animals, e.g., “The horse is sad”
- Takes on different adult roles during play and uses appropriate mannerisms, e.g., pretends to be the teacher and speaks in a more adultlike voice while pretending to read a book to students

Strategies for interaction:

- Interact with the child during pretend play and follow his or her lead
- Ask open-ended questions while playing with the child in order to expand on thoughts and language
- Continue to label and narrate actions, objects, and experiences for the child
- Encourage the child to use objects in creative ways to help problem-solve, e.g., using a blanket as an apron when aprons are all being used by other children

Creative Expression

Standard: Children demonstrate the ability to convey ideas and emotions through creative expression.

21 months to 36 months: Children initiate and engage in music, movement, building, and play activities to interact with others and express ideas, feelings, and emotions.

Indicators for children include:

- Selects movements that reflect mood, e.g., jumps up and down when excited
- Identifies and discusses characters that are meaningful to him and her
- Builds increasingly complex structures and expands upon them, e.g., uses smaller blocks to build taller towers, lines up materials and adds other components to create a “road” leading up to the tower
- Uses imaginary play to cope with fears, e.g., puts monster in a closet
- Plays dress-up and invites caregiver(s) to play along

Strategies for interaction:

- Expose the child to music and dance from different cultures and backgrounds
- Provide opportunities for pretend play in which the child can dress up as various characters, e.g., a cowboy, firefighter, or princess
- Encourage the child’s creative expression by genuinely praising his or her efforts
- Participate in the child’s play; dress up, pretend, and play with the child

Logic & Reasoning

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

21 months to 36 months: Children have a greater understanding of **causation** and can predict and choose specific actions to attain a desired result. Children also begin to apply past experiences and knowledge to form ideas.

Indicators for children include:

- Recognizes actions and objects and can generalize meaning, e.g., sees someone opening an umbrella and can attribute that to the fact that it may be raining
- Makes a prediction of what will happen next in a sequence of events
- Applies past experiences to new situations
- Expresses cause and effect in certain situations, e.g., “I fell down and now I have a boo-boo.”

Strategies for interaction:

- Use stories and everyday conversations to ask the child to predict what may happen next
- Use child’s past experiences to bridge to new experiences, e.g., using chalk on the sidewalk to scribble instead of crayon and paper
- Discuss and experience cause and effect in everyday interactions, e.g., add food coloring to the water table and show the child what happens

Quantity & Numbers

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

21 months to 36 months: Children use language to demonstrate a basic understanding of number representation and quantity identification.

Indicators for children include:

- Understands progressive number order, e.g., recites the number series to ten
- Begins to count objects; may count objects twice and/or skip numbers
- Begins to identify quantity comparison, e.g., “Which group has more blocks?”
- Assigns meaning to numbers; understands the concept of a small number or big number, e.g., communicates “wow” when a caregiver shares that he or she is 35 years old
- Uses descriptive words when communicating about others, e.g., “She ran fast,” “He is short,” “Look how far away I am”

Strategies for interaction:

- Recognize that experience and exposure are factors that influence whether or not the child is familiar with numbers
- Engage the child in participating in word rhymes that incorporate numbers and math
- Use descriptive words when interacting with the child, e.g., “You are so tall!”

Science Concepts & Exploration

Standard: Children demonstrate a basic awareness of and use scientific concepts.

21 months to 36 months: Children use their communication skills to indicate interests in observations, experiences, and engagement with the world around them. Children actively experiment with their environment to make new discoveries happen.

Indicators for children include:

- Begins to identify characteristics of animals, e.g., “The dog barks”
- Identifies various attributes of objects, food, and materials, e.g., color, shape, size
- Draws on past experience to describe and communicate about observations and experiences, e.g., knows what happens when one blows on a candle, discusses what happens to snow when the temperature is warmer
- Engages in processes to reach an outcome, e.g., mixes three different colors of paint to see what color emerges

Strategies for interaction:

- Begin to ask the child “w” questions: what, where, when, and why
- Incorporate science and inquiry questions in the child’s daily routine
- Provide activities and experiences that allow the child to problem-solve and reach conclusions, e.g., building, experimenting with changes from solids to liquids
- Create themes and activities that focus on nature, e.g., share with the child the life cycle of a butterfly through both books and real-life experiences

Safety & Well-Being

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

21 months to 36 months: Children will begin to demonstrate a limited ability to internalize what caregiver(s) communicates in relation to safety, rules, and well-being. Children continue to act upon impulses but begin to develop strategies to protect themselves in uncertain and potentially unsafe situations.

Indicators for children include:

- Pays attention to safety rules but still needs supervision to keep self safe
- Communicates to an adult if something is wrong, e.g., a peer is hurt or missing
- Remembers and begins to apply past experiences to future situations, e.g., walks carefully and slowly when there is snow on the ground
- Reminds younger peers of rules, e.g., holds hands with a younger peer while walking outside

Strategies for interaction:

- Provide constant supervision and guidance
- Talk with the child about unsafe situations and what he or she should do to get help
- Respect the child's expressed fears
- Establish boundaries and limits; remain consistent and firm

Curiosity & Initiative

Standard: Children demonstrate interest and eagerness in learning about their world.

21 months to 36 months: Children demonstrate initiative by participating and maintaining engagement in novel experiences. Children use observation, communication, and inquiry to make sense of these experiences.

Indicators for children include:

- Observes other children in play
- Enjoys accomplishing simple goals, e.g., completing a puzzle, blowing a bubble
- Asks questions while interacting with others, e.g., “why,” “what,” “how”
- Participates in a broader array of experiences, e.g., outdoor jungle gyms, art projects

Strategies for interaction:

- Encourage the child when he or she is trying something new and/or taking reasonable risks; remain sensitive to the child’s temperament and provide support as needed
- Engage in conversations with the child and answer their questions clearly and honestly
- Build upon the child’s interest by introducing books and other activities
- Extend interactions by introducing novel or alternate ways to use materials, objects, or toys

Problem Solving

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

21 months to 36 months: Children begin to discriminate which solutions work, with fewer trials. Children increasingly become more autonomous and will attempt to first overcome obstacles on their own or with limited support from caregiver(s).

Indicators for children include:

- Asks for help from a caregiver when needed
- Begins to solve problems with less trial and error
- Refuses assistance, e.g., calls for help but then pushes a hand away
- Shows pride when accomplishing a task
- Uses increasingly refined skills while solving problems, e.g., uses own napkin to clean up a spill without asking an adult for help

Strategies for interaction:

- Follow the child's lead and pay attention to his or her cues when assisting in a task
- Share in the child's joy and accomplishments
- Model and narrate problem-solving skills through play
- Provide the child with blocks of uninterrupted time to work on activities
- Be available for the child and recognize when he or she needs guidance

Confidence & Risk-Taking

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

21 months to 36 months: Children use their confidence to begin taking emotional risks in addition to physical risks, with support from their caregiver(s).

Indicators for children include:

- Attempts to independently resolve social conflicts without automatically running to the caregiver, e.g., tries to retrieve an object that was taken away by a peer
- Demonstrates eagerness and determination when problem-solving during new tasks, e.g., the child who pushes the caregiver's hand away and refuses help until he or she is ready to ask for it

Strategies for interaction:

- Validate the emotions the child is feeling, e.g., "I can see you are upset that your toy was taken away from you."
- Model thoughtful and polite behavior through everyday interactions
- Provide the child with opportunities to problem-solve on their own, intervening only when the child appears to become frustrated and/or asks for help

Persistence, Effort, & Attentiveness

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

21 months to 36 months: Children can attend to tasks for longer periods of time, and their ability to persist in increasingly difficult tasks increases. In addition, children are now able to attend to more than one event in their environment; this skill enables them to stay focused even when there are distractions.

Indicators for children include:

- Makes choices based on preferences, and at times, in opposition to adult choices, e.g., “No milk, want juice”
- Attempts to try a difficult task for an increasing amount of time
- Practices an activity many times in order to master it, even if setbacks occur
- Shows interest in completing routine tasks independently, e.g., zips up coat, puts on shoes

Strategies for interaction:

- Allow the child to make certain choices throughout the day
- Provide the child with blocks of uninterrupted time to work on activities
- Support the child in building attention by extending interactions, e.g., adding a new experience to the current interaction
- Assess how to best support the child in completing complex tasks; take into account varying abilities of each child
- Provide the child with a small amount of responsibility, e.g., setting the cups out for snack time or holding the door for peers

Creativity, Inventiveness, & Imagination

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

21 months to 36 months: Children incorporate their use of creativity, inventiveness, and imagination in a more complex manner while they play, communicate, and problem-solve.

Indicators for children include:

- Expands use of objects and toys in new and unexpected ways; makes a road out of a few blocks; or substitutes an object for another to solve a problem
- Takes on familiar roles during play, e.g., cooks in the pretend kitchen
- Expresses inventive ideas to peers while playing; becomes directive, e.g., “You will be the police officer and you have to wear this.”
- Creates an art project and creates a simple story to accompany the artwork

Strategies for interaction:

- Interact with the child during pretend play and follow his or her lead
- Ask open-ended questions while playing with the child in order to expand on thoughts and language
- Encourage the child to think of new ideas, e.g., “What do you think happens after the butterfly flies away?”

Glossary

Alignment refers to how these early learning standards relate to the sets of standards in place for older children. It also illustrates the interconnectedness of these standards within state systems and early childhood programs, producing healthy outcomes.

Attachment figures refer to a few, select caregivers, with whom children have an attachment relationship. Attachment figures can include parents, grandparents, relatives, and childcare providers.

Attachment refers to the bond between a child and their primary caregiver(s). The **secure attachment relationship** provides emotional and physical security for the child and is the foundation for development and learning.

Attending refers to children's ability to remain focused on objects and people for brief periods of time. As they get older, children can attend, or remain engaged, for longer periods of time.

Attention is the ability to focus and concentrate on something in the environment.

Attributes are characteristics or properties of objects, such as shape, color, or size.

Bio-behavioral shifts are changes in behavior triggered by biological changes in the brain. These shifts allow children to grow and gain new skills.

Biological rhythms are patterns that occur within people's bodies. These include sleeping, waking, eliminating, and maintaining normal body temperature.

Caregivers are those who are primarily responsible for the care of the child. Caregivers include parents, grandparents, other relatives, and childcare providers.

Causation refers to the relationship between cause and effect. Children understand that specific actions and words affect objects and people in their environment.

Code-switching is the practice of moving back and forth between two languages within the same dialogue or conversation.

Concept refers to a general notion or an abstract idea formed in the mind, derived from specific occurrences. Early experiences form schemes, which form into concepts.

Co-regulator refers to the child's primary caregiver(s) who assists the child in achieving regulation through responses, interactions, and communication.

Cultural variations refer to the differences in beliefs, practices, and attitudes within the same cultural group.

Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviors, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society.

Curiosity is an instinctive drive to learn about the world.

Delayed imitation occurs when a child imitates an action after a significant amount of time has passed.

Early literacy encompasses the foundation for reading and writing.

External states refer to what the environment demands, such as sounds, actions, touch, or objects.

Familiar others are people who are a common presence in the life of the child. These may include family members, additional childcare providers, family friends, occasional caregivers, and neighbors.

Fine motor refers to the movement and coordination of small muscles, such as those in the hands, wrists, and fingers.

Gaze aversion is the child's purposefully looking away and avoiding eye contact.

Gross motor refers to the control and movement of large muscle groups such as the torso, head, legs, and arms.

Habituation refers to becoming accustomed to and not distracted by stimuli occurring in the environment.

Homeostasis refers to the infant's ability to remain regulated and form basic cycles of sleep, wakefulness, feeding, and eliminating.

Intentional or goal-directed behaviors are purposeful and deliberate. Intentional behaviors become increasingly complex as children grow.

Internal states refer to bodily conditions, such as hunger, discomfort, or tiredness.

Joint attention is the shared experience of looking at an object, person, or event, established by pointing, gesturing, or the use of language and/or vocalizations.

Large muscles refer to the muscles found in the arms and legs. Large muscle movements include crawling, kicking, walking, running, and throwing.

Linguistic variations are slight differences within a language and/or dialect.

Object permanence refers to children's understanding that objects continue to exist even though they can no longer be seen or heard.

Object properties are observable characteristics that define objects. Examples of object properties include size, weight, shape, color, and temperature.

Overstimulation refers to excessive sounds, textures, temperatures, and sights that impede children's ability to make a meaningful connection with others or objects.

Perceptual development refers to taking in and interpreting sensory stimuli; it is through these stimuli that children learn about and interact with their environment.

Persistence is the ability to see a process through in order to accomplish a particular goal. Children demonstrate persistence when they work through challenges to complete tasks and/or actions.

Pincer grasp refers to grasping small objects with the index finger and thumb.

Play is integral in how children learn about and make sense of their world. Play is enjoyable and spontaneous, and children use play to discover, pretend, and problem-solve.

Private speech is children's use of self-directed language to guide, communicate, and regulate their behavior and emotions. While this self-directed language can be heard, it is not intended for others.

Proximity-seeking behaviors are those that the child uses to remain physically and emotionally connected to a caregiver, e.g., crawling over, making eye contact.

Schemes are early frameworks that organize information and help infants make sense of their environment.

Secure base behavior is described as the child's ability to use their primary caregiver(s) as both a physical and emotional base while exploring their environment. This behavior emerges between 7 and 18 months of age.

Self-concept refers to the child's developing ability in realizing that one's body, mind, and actions are separate from those of others.

Self-regulation is the ability to regulate or control attention, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

Sensory stimuli are sounds, textures, tastes, sights, and temperatures found in children's environments.

Separation anxiety begins to occur between 9 and 14 months and is expressed in tears, sadness, or anger when a child is physically separated from his or her primary caregiver(s).

Small muscles refer to the muscles found in the hands, fingers, feet, and toes.

Social referencing is the term for the way young children take their cues from familiar others in deciding what emotions and actions are appropriate.

Soothe is the action of providing comfort and reassurance.

Spatial relationships refer to where objects and people are located in space in relation to other objects and people, and how they move in relation to each other.

Spontaneous refers to an action that is not preplanned.

Stimulation refers to any number of sounds, textures, temperatures, tastes, and sights that impact a child's senses or development.

Stimuli are sounds, textures, tastes, sights, and temperatures found in children's environments.

Stranger anxiety is a normal part of development where children may cling to a familiar adult, cry, or look frightened when an unfamiliar person appears too soon or too close.

Symbolic representation refers to children's understanding of how an image or different objects can represent familiar objects.

Telegraphic speech is known as the "two-word" stage and is the use of combining two words to convey meaning, e.g., "Daddy go."

Temperament refers to the unique personality traits that children are born with and that influence how they interact with their environment and with others.

Textures refer to the different feel, appearance, and/or consistency of objects, surfaces, or substances.

Toxic stress is detrimental to the developing child and includes exposure to physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, extreme poverty, constant parental substance abuse, and family and community violence.

Transitions are changes in children's activities or locations. Transitions are hard for young children, as they may feel out of control. Therefore, it is essential caregivers prepare children for transitions.

Trial and error refers to a child's use of different strategies while attempting to solve a problem.

Tummy time is the time babies spend lying and playing on their stomachs while awake. This time is important for the development of head control and neck strength.

TOC

Resources for the 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 <http://go.illinois.edu/IELGresources>

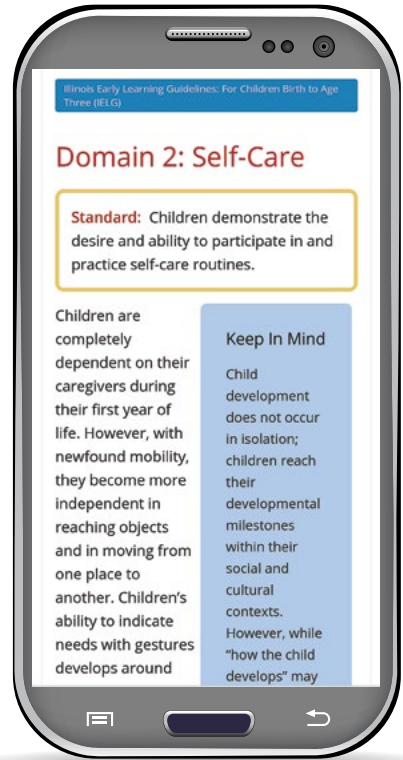


For an online version of the complete Illinois Early Learning Guidelines in English and Spanish, visit

go.illinois.edu/IELG
go.illinois.edu/IELGspanish

The Illinois Early Learning (IEL) Project provides a complete online version of the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines (IELG) that is easily viewed on a wide range of platforms and devices, including tablets and phones. IEL hosts many resources for the IELG, such as a crosswalk aligned with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards (IELDS), crosswalks with various assessments and curricula, and an FAQ on what parents need to know about the guidelines.

IEL also has created a set of guidelines videos. For each video we provide some brief background information and a description of strategies caregivers used to help children meet IELG standards. For IEL's parenting videos that involve children under age 3, we provide a table that shows how activities shown in the video relate to some IELG standards.



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