



Standards for the Developmental Profiles

Birth-42 months

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Introduction

The Ounce Scale provides a structure for observing growth and development of children from birth to three and a half years of age. It was designed by the authors of The Work Sampling System along with experts in the field of infancy. It is structured around four basic domains of development: (1) social and emotional (building trust, sense of self, relationships with others); (2) language (receptive and expressive); (3) cognitive (memory and problem solving); and (4) physical development (gross and fine motor as well as self-help). Within the scale, these domains are covered in six Areas of Development.

The Ounce Scale consists of three elements: the Observation Record, the Family Album, and the Developmental Profiles and Standards. The scale relies on the documented observations of child care workers, teachers, or home visitors as recorded in the Observation Records along with the family's responses in the Family Albums. These observations are then matched to the descriptions given in the standards in order to complete the Developmental Profiles. The profiles are based on age-appropriate developmental expectations gathered from research documented in the many resources listed at the back of this book. A detailed description and guide to implementation of The Ounce Scale can be found in the User's Guide.

The Ounce Scale depends on keen and knowledgeable observations made by caregivers in their everyday activities with children. The areas of development represented on the profile are structured so that all aspects of a child's growth can be reviewed, helping to focus on skills and achievements as well as becoming aware of areas that need additional attention.

By using the standards as a guide for assessing development, caregivers can then match observed behaviors to established standards and make determinations about whether a child's growth is Developing as Expected or Needs Development. Similar to the Omnibus Guidelines of The Work Sampling System, these standards present each specific skill, behavior, or accomplishment in the form of a one-sentence performance indicator that also appears on the Developmental Profiles. Each indicator is followed by a rationale and by two sets of performance examples: Developing as Expected or Needs Development.

The rationale explains the meaning and importance of the indicator and briefly outlines reasonable expectations for children of a particular age. The performance examples are intended to provide concrete examples of competent, skilled behavior for children of different ages. In other words, the examples describe very specific behaviors that illustrate a variety of ways children might demonstrate competence as described in the rationale. If the child is not performing at this level, then his or her behavior is considered to be in need of development. The examples do not exhaustively cover every child's behavior. Rather, they are intended to be guidelines that will help set a context for interpreting and evaluating a child's behaviors.

Overall, the Standards and Developmental Profiles provide a means of evaluating very young children's growth and development in a manner that is strength-based and in a context that is functional and oriented toward improving performance rather than describing failure. The Ounce Scale enhances both parent and caregiver knowledge by focusing their attention on what children are doing, what they might do differently, and what might happen next.

Areas of Development: Overviews

Social and Emotional Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

How children show trust

When you talk to and respond to children in consistent and respectful ways, you help them feel that the world is predictable and safe. Day by day, as you respond, children learn that they can count on you to be there for them. Trust is being built. Of course, at times you may not be able to figure out what a child needs or wants. All you can do then is try your best and show you care. Knowing that they can depend on you, babies begin to develop a sense of trust in themselves and in the world around them. The trust that begins so early in life will shape children's expectations and interactions in relationships throughout their lives.

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me

How children express who they are

Children begin learning who they are and what their world is like through their relationships with nurturing adults. Their sense of self is rooted in the beliefs, practices, and values of their families. Yet from the beginning, children also have their own style and personality. Part of the excitement and challenge very young children present is the opportunity to discover and encourage each child's individuality and to help each child express who he or she is.

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child

How children act around other children

Children's interest in each other begins early. By about four months of age, most babies are fascinated by other children. Over the years they will learn from one another about themselves, relationships, and their world. Their interactions with others will be shaped in large part by their ages, personalities, the experiences they have with other children, and how adults encourage and guide them.

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Baby, Toddler, and Preschooler Talk

How children understand and communicate

From the moment they are born, babies of every language and culture are learning to understand the messages their caregivers are giving them, as well as how to give messages. Babies communicate by crying, smiling, gesturing, and making babbling noises. They listen to your words, tone of voice, and inflections to learn what you are saying. Language is a natural process that seems to develop on its own as children listen to the sounds of the voices around them. However, children vary enormously in how their language skills develop and in the timing of their use of

words to communicate. Adults encourage communication by talking with children, trying to understand and respond to them, and sharing children's delight in their growing ability to communicate.

Cognitive Development

V. Exploration and Problem Solving: Baby, Toddler, and Preschooler Discoveries

How children explore and figure things out

Children explore and learn about their world as they look at, touch, taste, listen to, and feel everything in their environment. They are also discovering the ways people and things respond to them as they explore. From their first attempts to reach toward objects soon after birth, to their discoveries about making things happen as preschoolers, they are learning the way that things work and how to solve problems. They are also learning to persist, to keep trying, and to figure out and try many different ways to make things happen. They are learning how to learn. When they are in situations that interest them, and if they feel secure with adults who give them positive support, their desire to explore, solve problems, and learn is strengthened.

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers in Motion

How children move their bodies and use their hands

Gaining control over large and small muscles tends to evolve along a predictable path, but each child does so at his or her own rate. You can help support children's development by providing safe places where they can move freely, sharing their excitement about their growing abilities, and respecting their individual differences. By the time children reach their third birthday, they know how to run and jump, manage quite complicated maneuvers with their bodies, and hold and explore with their hands whatever is interesting to them.

Babies 1: 4 months

Social and Emotional Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

1. Responds to familiar adults

Young infants respond to the people around them from the moment they are born. For example, newborns just a few minutes old turn their heads toward the sound of their mother's voice. Even in the first months, babies demonstrate the ability to respond to and initiate interactions with the adults around them. Babies use several ways of paying attention and attracting interactions, such as looking in the direction of people around them, smiling, crying, protesting, or clinging. Long before they show clear preferences for specific adults, babies come to know those adults who respond to them socially. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- gaze into their caregiver's eyes while they are fed
- turn their head toward familiar voices
- stop crying when they hear their caregiver's voice
- coo or smile when someone talks to them
- follow their caregiver with their eyes and continue to look at the door when their caregiver leaves the room
- fuss or cry to gain the attention of familiar adults
- cuddle into a caregiver's shoulder when being held

Needs Development:

- search in several directions when they hear a familiar voice
- quiet briefly when they hear a voice but then resume crying
- look when someone talks to them, but not respond
- not respond easily when a familiar adult coos to them

2. Shows awareness of unfamiliar people

Even in their early months, many babies begin to respond differently to people they are not familiar with. Sometimes you have to look carefully to see how they differentiate their responses because they can be quite subtle. They might be more reserved in their body motions or their facial expressions. They might explore a new person by looking at him or her and perhaps show hesitancy, wariness, or even distress when approached by an unfamiliar person. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look passively and then begin to fuss when a new person moves toward them
- stop cooing and smiling when a new person tries to play a game of “Hi, Baby”
- make no cooing sounds when an unfamiliar person leans over to “talk” to them
- turn their head into the shoulder of their caregiver when a new person approaches
- stiffen and lean away from the unfamiliar person who picked them up

Needs Development:

During the first four months of life, many babies demonstrate wariness or withholding tactics toward unfamiliar adults. However, other babies seem to be very comfortable with almost everybody. This may be due to their different personalities, the frequency of exposure to a variety of adults, or the ease and skillfulness with which an unfamiliar adult approaches them. Therefore, at this age, consistency or inconsistency of response is not a clear indication of babies in distress when approached by new people.

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me

1. Expresses comfort and discomfort, enjoyment and unhappiness

When very young infants first arrive home they are trying to adjust to their new environment. They use their faces and bodies to cry, smile, gurgle, or wiggle in the direction of the people around them to let them know how they feel. By the time they are four months old, they have become adept at letting others know about their wishes and needs, and the adults have become adept at understanding their signals. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- use specific kinds of cries when they're hungry
- squint if the light is too bright
- startle when they hear a loud noise
- relax when their back is gently rubbed
- yawn and arch their back, or turn away, when they've had enough interaction or there's too much noise
- wave their arms and kick when they see a familiar person coming
- make vocal protesting noises when they're not picked up when they want
- pay attention when spoken to or in response to smiles or frowns
- show joy or interest by making cooing sounds and smiling

Needs Development:

- cry a lot in a way that is hard to understand what they want
- fuss when they're hungry, but continue to fuss even after eating
- fuss or cry, quiet when picked up, and then fuss again
- alternately tense and relax when someone gently rubs their back

2. Calms self

Young infants are faced with the challenge of beginning to make sense of a world that can be exciting or sometimes overwhelming, with many sights, sounds, familiar and unfamiliar happenings, and comings and goings. By four months, babies have usually begun to follow recognizable patterns of sleep and wakefulness, and with help from their caregivers have begun to eat on a more regular schedule. They have a variety of ways to indicate when they need to rest, such as yawning, looking away, fussing, or stretching. Adults help babies calm by swaddling them, dimming the lights, partially covering the bassinet, or turning down the TV or stereo volume. Gradually babies are able to calm themselves as they learn to close their eyes, suck on their fist, or turn their heads away from the distractions. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- stop crying when they see a familiar person
- suck on their hand before falling asleep
- snuggle and relax when rocked
- go back to sleep when they're awakened by a loud noise they've heard before, such as a dog barking or a phone ringing
- relax their arms and legs when someone talks soothingly to them
- quiet when swaddled in a soft blanket
- relax when the lights are dimmed

Needs Development:

- have a very hard time falling asleep whether in a quiet or a noisy environment
- cry and extend their arms and legs tensely when they are being comforted
- continue to arch their back and cry even though someone is talking soothingly to them
- not seem to notice when the lights are dimmed
- try to get their hands to their mouth, but can't quite do it

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child**1. Shows awareness of other children**

In the first months of life, babies' responses to children are not very different from their responses to adults. Their interaction might be social and could include curiosity, wariness, and exploration. Brothers and sisters are often the first people to elicit a laugh from their baby sibling. Other children's voices are often an invitation for babies to wiggle and kick and even reach out toward them. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look in the direction of a nearby child, often with neutral expressions
- smile and coo when an older child makes faces at them
- gaze intently, unaware of the uncertain grasp an older brother has as he carries them across the room
- laugh out loud for the first time when an older sister makes sneezing noises
- take on a sober expression and look uneasy when another baby starts crying
- startle or cry when an older child crowds onto the caregiver's lap
- begin to fuss when the playroom gets very loud with children shouting and playing
- brighten and wave their arms when a preschooler looks into their crib and says, "Hi, baby"

Needs Development:

Babies respond to children they don't know much the way they respond to unfamiliar adults. Consistency or inconsistency of response is not a clear indication of development at this age. (See page 8)

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Baby Talk

1. Responds to sights and sounds

Babies begin to respond to language when you talk to them and tell them what is happening while you dress them, change their diapers, feed them, and play with them. They learn to respond to your tone of voice, your facial expressions, your way of being in the world, and your temperament or mood. They know when you're in a hurry, when you're tense, or when you have time to relax and just be with them. They begin to understand language as they listen to the words you use. Babies learn to be excited when they hear your voice and begin to know this means they may be picked up, or that someone is going to play with them. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- stop crying when they hear a familiar voice calling to them
- turn their head toward the voices of family members and caretakers
- look intently and stop kicking their legs when a family member speaks to them
- look at the face of the caregiver who is talking to them as she changes their diaper
- seem to listen ("quiet") when music is played softly or the music box is playing
- smile when they hear someone coming and see their bottle being held out
- turn their head this way and that as they try to locate where the children are playing

Needs Development:

- not respond to the sound of familiar voices
- seem not to hear loud noises such as a door slamming
- show little reaction to seeing their bottle
- not show recognition when a caretaker approaches with arms outstretched to pick them up
- pay little attention to the musical mobile playing and moving over the crib

2. Uses sounds and body movements to communicate

Crying is the main way that very young babies communicate. Their cries have many meanings, such as being hungry, or cold, or just wanting some company. Their cries begin to turn into gurgles and babbles as they explore how their voices work and learn about the sounds they can repeat. Usually, during this period, babies laugh out loud for the first time. Babies use their eyes, hands, and even legs and feet to express joy, pleasure, unhappiness, or displeasure. By paying attention and responding to babies' attempts at communicating, caregivers help babies learn that they can let people know what they want and that their "messages" are listened to and understood. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- squeal in a repetitive way as they experiment with sounds they have discovered
- make babbling or cooing sounds or wave their arms or legs as someone speaks to them or smiles at them
- practice a consonant sound over and over when lying on their back
- make babbling sounds at the rattle or swinging mobile
- cry in differentiated ways for different needs, such as insistent and loud when hungry, or whiny and softer when not sure what they want
- lift their arms toward you to show they are ready to be picked up

Needs Development:

- make cries that seem to sound the same, showing little differentiation between hunger, tiredness, anxiety, or joy
- make only a few gurgling or babbling sounds
- respond only slightly when a caregiver appears ready to pick them up
- act surprised when they make a vocalization, but cannot repeat it

Cognitive Development

V. Exploration and Problem Solving: Baby Discoveries

1. Pays attention to what is happening in the environment

Babies are aware of what happens around them from birth, but they differ in how much stimulation is needed to capture their interest and how much they can comfortably deal with. By watching carefully, caregivers can learn what satisfies the infants they care for and what excites or tires them. Babies are able to see and respond to visual cues as well as make distinctions in what they hear right after they are born. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- follow an object with their eyes as you move it back and forth
- look around the room when being held on someone's shoulder
- show excitement when they see their caregiver approach
- recognize the bottle in their caregiver's hand
- quiet or look puzzled when a new person approaches
- wave their arms as they try to touch the dangling toy attached to the changing table
- laugh out loud when someone leans close and gently touches their forehead
- gaze at their own hands as they move about
- watch intently when someone makes funny faces
- coo when their caregiver sings or talks as she changes their diaper

Needs Development:

- not respond to the mobile hung above the crib
- kick and wave their arms randomly rather than in response to seeing a caregiver approach, or on hearing a rattle, or when watching the mobile swing
- not "quiet" when they hear you calling their name
- look at the silhouette pictures hanging by the changing table or above the crib with little show of response or interest
- ignore the barking of the family dog

2. Makes things happen, quite often unintentionally

Babies learn that they can get a response from the people around them with their smiles, coos, and other babbling sounds. They also learn after many contacts that they can have an impact on the objects around them when they wave their arms and legs. It is hard to determine during these first four months how much of babies' activities are intentional and how much are accidental. What is important is to have objects around for exploration and to respond to babies' activities with words and excitement about what they are doing. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- hit at objects with some degree of accuracy
- try to keep their crib mobile moving by continuing to swing with their hands
- move their hands about vigorously when they see their caregiver
- bring objects to their mouth
- splash water in the tub and look surprised when it gets into their face
- grab toward the rings of the sturdy crib gym hung over the crib
- use their entire body (arching their back, kicking their legs, stretching their arms) to reach toward a toy that intrigues them

Needs Development:

- not notice that when they wave their arms near the mobile, it turns and makes a noise
- kick their legs but not realize they are the source of the banging sounds

- look passively at “the baby” reflected in the mirror attached to the side of the crib
- wave their arms but seem unresponsive to the bells that ring on the mobile

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Babies in Motion

1. Gaining control of head and body

Babies’ first movements are mostly reflexive and happen without intention. These reflexes begin to fade within the first several months, and movements become more purposeful, beginning to show some control. Some babies are able to hold their heads up for a few seconds right at birth; most gain this control over months. By four months, some babies are able to push their way around in their cribs and can flip over from front to back. Babies vary greatly in the timing of when they acquire body control. If they are growing quickly in another area of development, they may seem to be on a plateau in this area. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- turn their head easily from side to side when lying on their stomach
- lift their head and chest when on their stomach and look around for a minute
- reach with their arms toward a sibling when being held on their mother’s lap
- thrust their legs and feet against the bottom of the crib over and over
- hold their head erect and steady when they are held on a shoulder
- sit with support

Needs Development:

- continue to need support for their head when being held
- wave their arms in random motions, not really reaching toward objects placed within their view
- hold their head up for a very brief moment only when being held on someone’s shoulder
- swing their arms toward objects like a dangling rattle or a face, but cannot yet reach with consistency
- kick their legs more as exercise than with the realization that they can control these movements

2. Reaches toward things that capture their attention

Newborns usually hold their fingers in a tight fist. At about six weeks, their hands start to relax and they begin to watch their hands when they cross their field of vision. By two months of age, most babies are able to wave their arms toward objects they see dangling in front of them, and by four months, they begin to reach toward caregivers and other familiar people. They also start to bring their hands together over their tummies and explore touching one hand with the other. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- bat at soft toys held in front of them when they are sitting in their infant seat
- watch and touch their fingers as they move toward midline and meet
- swing their hands toward a familiar face or their bottle
- relax with their hands predominantly open
- look at toys placed near them on the floor and seem to try to reach out toward them
- wave a rattle placed in their hand, often with a floppy grip

Needs Development:

- not seem to see objects within their range of vision
- keep their fingers fisted most of the time
- continue to swing their arms and hands randomly, without apparent purpose
- kick with their feet, making the mobile move, not yet connecting their kicks with the movement

3. Holds things briefly before they drop from fingers

By four months of age, most babies not only reach toward objects, but also are able to fold their fingers around what they touch and can hold on to. This is a difficult task because babies are still not competent at opening their hands before contact, so they often don't make the connection. They cannot yet open their fingers to let things go intentionally, which means that rattles, blocks, or their bottles, drop from their hands as their fist relaxes. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- fold their hands around a small rattle placed in their fist and hold it for a minute or more
- hold onto the ring on the cradle gym after their hand has touched it
- hold their bottle for almost an entire feeding
- start to bring toys or their fingers to their mouth
- grab onto their toes as they wiggle and move in front of them
- bring objects placed in their hands to their mouth

Needs Development:

- not seem to notice when things are in their grasp or when they drop from their fingers
- swing their hands about, even after the rattle has fallen out
- not grasp objects even when the objects touch their hands
- continue to grasp your finger automatically when it touches their hand, but without intention

Babies II: 8 months

Social and Emotional Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

1. Engages with familiar adults

As they get to know the adults who are with them everyday, young infants develop more specific ways to show that they want to be with these adults. Babies will reach, smile, and laugh in order to gain the attention of those they are with most often. It is important for caregivers to cuddle, hug, and generally show how much they appreciate and enjoy the babies in their care. Caregivers show babies how to be responsive in social situations. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- babble and coo to gain the attention of someone nearby and then look intently at the face when the familiar person talks to them
- smile when someone familiar smiles or makes gentle funny faces at them
- kick their legs or reach with their arms when they see a familiar person approaching their crib or infant seat
- catch the eye of someone familiar nearby and then smile
- bounce on their caregiver's lap as though trying to say, "Let's play horsie"
- make loud sounds as though trying to talk to someone even when everyone is in another room

Needs Development:

- just look at the rattle when it is offered to them rather than reaching for it
- not relax or seem to be comforted when held in someone's arms
- lie quietly in their crib or on the floor, or sit in their high chair for long periods of time, seemingly unaware of the people around them or what they are doing
- continue to fuss or cry, even when picked up and talked to soothingly

2. Notices and reacts to unfamiliar adults

By now, young infants know the nurturing adults who are with them regularly. Babies show they know who is who in their lives by their response to strangers. They may respond with curiosity, but more often babies at eight months are showing wariness or fear, called “stranger anxiety.” Their reactions are influenced in part by how many unfamiliar adults they usually encounter. Babies in child care are more accustomed to coming in contact with a variety of people, but they might still be wary and cautious at this age. Babies look to their familiar adults for support when a stranger approaches or tries to start some play. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- hide their face in a familiar adult’s shoulder when he or she is talking with someone they don’t know
- look curiously at a relative they haven’t seen for a long time and hold tight to their caregiver
- stop eating and stare when a new person comes into the room
- reach to a familiar adult to be picked up when a stranger says hello
- cling to familiar people when they see a person who looks different from what they are used to, such as a man with a mustache or beard, or someone in a costume
- cry if it is not the same person each day who greets them when they go to child care in the morning
- cry and “tense up” if someone new approaches them

Needs Development:

- not show they recognize a difference between caregivers and a new person who picks them up
- reach to be picked up, whether it’s a familiar or an unfamiliar person
- look back and forth without concern between the familiar and unfamiliar adults who walk into the room together
- reach toward, then pause, when a new person is approaching
- not seem to notice that it is a new person who is offering them a toy

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me

1. Expresses feelings

Babies become very adept at letting you know how they feel about things, even when you are not paying attention. Babies are able to recognize basic emotions in others by their facial expressions or tone of voice, and can demonstrate those emotions too. In play with adults as well as with children, babies respond with giggles and laughter, or show frustration or fearfulness. They show you their preferences and interests by the sounds they make, their facial expressions, and their actions. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- smile and giggle when someone plays a game of peekaboo with them
- fuss and whine when they are tired of lying still on the changing table
- wrinkle their face when fed a new food that isn’t familiar

- look worried when they hear a loud noise, such as a balloon popping or the vacuum running
- act wary, or curious, when a new person comes into the room
- smile and laugh when someone plays silly games with them, such as ducking his head or pretending to sneeze
- reach toward someone nearby when they want a hug or to be held

Needs Development:

- not notice or respond when someone tries to play a game of peekaboo
- look at and reach toward a new toy but pull back when it is offered to them
- reach to be picked up, then fuss and cry to get back down
- not respond to people clapping to show approval when they have demonstrated a new skill

2. Learning to cope with familiar and unfamiliar situations

Babies can't control their feelings yet. They are just learning consistent ways to express some of their feelings. Basically, they are happy people, especially when someone is paying attention to and playing with them. But they howl and otherwise complain when they don't get their way. Babies are responsive to their caregivers' ways of helping them manage their feelings when the caregivers play soft music, rock them, sing a song or read a book, or give them a toy to play with. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look to a familiar person for a positive nod or encouraging word before playing with a new toy
- gum and swallow a spoonful of familiar food but spit out a new food
- fall asleep easily at home but need a caregiver's presence and perhaps some rocking before settling down in a new place
- look fearful and cling in their parent's arms when entering a store or a home where there seems to be a lot of unfamiliar activity
- settle easily when able to hold a favorite blanket or stuffed toy when in a strange situation

Needs Development:

- respond with fear to new things and people
- not fall asleep in a new place even when held and rocked
- be fearful and clingy in most situations except at home and at Grandma's, where they stay each day
- be frightened of a new toy that makes a noise

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child

1. Shows awareness of other children

Babies are responsive and comfortable around new as well as familiar children. When young babies are together, they often ignore each other, but they may stare at each other, or attempt to touch one another. They especially love it when older

children talk to them or play peekaboo or some other interactive game. They often laugh more easily with their siblings and their peers than with adults, and they watch the activities of older children intently as they play nearby. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- watch nearby children, often reaching out toward them
- look toward a peer who is actively exploring an interesting object
- direct their smile and vocalizations toward other children
- kick their feet excitedly when they see other children in the park
- explore with their hands the eyes, nose, mouth, or hair of a peer
- turn to watch the hubbub of several children playing a game nearby
- watch with an expression of worry if another child cries, and may even cry themselves
- laugh when another child dances a “silly dance”

Needs Development:

- not look in the direction of another child who is banging the toys
- not seem to notice when a peer crawls up to touch their cheek
- cry in the presence of other children even though the setting is familiar
- watch another child until that child moves toward them and then they cry
- display a wary and sober expression when other children are nearby
- quiet with a worried expression when another child reaches for their toy

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Baby Talk

1. Responds to frequently heard sounds and words

Babies understand words and language much sooner than they are able to talk. They learn to understand words that are repeated often and are accompanied with actions, such as opening your arms with palms up when you say, “All gone.” They begin to respond to questions that are repeated often, like, “Do you want [this food] or [that food?]” or “Should we read [this book] or [that book]?” They might not understand the actual words, but they begin to understand the meaning when questions are asked in context, such as going toward the door and suggesting, “Let’s get your coat on so we can go out.” For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look toward Mommy or their brother when asked, “Where’s Mommy?” or “Where’s Kabe?”
- look worried when someone speaks in a very stern voice
- laugh when someone sings a silly song
- become excited when they hear “bottle” or some other familiar word
- lift their arms toward you when you say, “Down?”

Needs Development:

- not look toward other family members when their names are said
- not respond to repeated cues such as “soooo big,” or “all gone”
- not look around to find who is speaking when someone calls their name
- pay little attention when someone claps their hands for patty-cake
- not indicate a favorite book or other play material when asked to make a choice

2. Uses a variety of sounds and motions to communicate

Babies are now using a wide variety of sounds to communicate as they explore all the many kinds of sounds they are able to create. Many sounds are made just for the pure pleasure of being able to do so, while other sounds are beginning to have meaning and are repeated over and over. Their babbling begins to take on the quality of the language being spoken to them by their caregivers during daily routines of dressing, bathing, feeding, and so on. Babies are using their arms and hands in imitation of the ways they see their caregivers gesture to communicate, such as pointing to the cupboard where the cookies are kept. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- repeat consonant sounds such as “da-da-da” or “ga-ga-ga”
- copy some nonverbal sounds you make, for example, a cough, a tongue click, or a kissing sound
- babble as they look at a stuffed animal they are holding
- laugh when they are alone in their crib because they have discovered they can make a laughing sound whenever they want
- coo and smile when they are fed something they like
- vocalize sounds along with someone who is singing to them
- hold their hands over their eyes, trying to get someone to play peekaboo
- wave their hand “bye-bye” after the door has closed and brother is already gone
- bounce up and down in their bouncy seat when they see the caregiver going to the refrigerator and bringing out the bowl of pudding
- look away when they don’t want to eat any more

Needs Development:

- continue to make only a few sounds, such as cooing or repetitious syllables
- not try to imitate the cooing sounds others make for them
- point to the flowers as they walk along together with their caregiver but not make verbal babbles
- seldom imitate the hand motions of patty-cake or bye-bye and not start these activities on their own
- continue to make random sounds without much repetition of vowels or consonants
- laugh when they see a sibling dancing to the music but not clap or move their body or indicate in other ways that they are enjoying the activity

Cognitive Development

V. Exploration and Problem Solving: Baby Discoveries

1. Attends to what is happening in the environment

Babies inspect and explore the world around them to try to figure out the way things work. As they come in contact with new things, they show that they recognize the difference between familiar and new objects. Babies like to examine small objects, preferably ones that make a noise, holding them, turning them, shaking them, and dropping them. As they investigate, they almost invariably put things in their mouth. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look worried when they hear a dog barking outside the window
- visually explore with sustained interest a small toy they hold in their hands
- react to facial expressions such as a smile, a frown, or a scowl by a caregiver
- imitate actions such as waving bye-bye
- respond to the words “peekaboo, I see you”
- look toward the sound of a caregiver’s voice calling from the other room
- turn a rattle or toy bell over and over as they listen to the sound
- reach for a toy that has been taken away or placed out of reach

Needs Development:

- hold things and then let them drop without really inspecting them
- hold things and put them in their mouth more as a reflex than as exploration
- not notice when things roll or drop out of sight, and not look around for them
- pick things up and put them down and not try to reach for a third object or toy
- put things in their mouth but not pull them out and look them over as part of an exploration process

2. Displays short-term memory

Babies are beginning to show they remember things as they explore their environment and as they respond to the things that happen around them. Their responses show that they are beginning to expect certain things to happen and are growing to expect consistent consequences to their actions. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- turn their head away when you reach out with a cloth to wipe their face
- look toward the sky when they hear an airplane flying over
- pull back when you approach with a tissue in your hand because they remember that this means you are going to wipe their nose
- search for an object that has disappeared over the edge of a table or tray
- look for their caregiver after she has left the room

Needs Development:

- not look in the direction of the phone when it rings
- act surprised when the rattle makes a noise as they turn it this way and that
- participate only sporadically in the games you play often, such as patty-cake
- look at the spot where an object disappeared after it fell over the edge of the high chair tray but not look over the edge to the floor

3. Makes things happen

Babies are incredibly fast learners and excellent observers. Between four and eight months of age, they are learning about their world at the same time their motor skills are developing rapidly. As they explore and make things happen, they discover that there is a predictability about the way things happen. They can act on things, and the response is the same over and over. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- pat or hit at the rubber toy because it squeaks every time
- bang a block on the floor, reveling in the sound it makes
- purposefully touch or push the buttons on the toy box, although sometimes still be surprised at the results
- shake the rattle harder and harder, delighting in the louder noise
- clap their hands to start a game of patty-cake
- pull a string attached to a toy, making it come closer and closer
- gesture toward the graham cracker, smile, and then take it from your hand
- drop several large beads into a cup or bowl, dump them out, and drop them back in all over again
- dip a finger into the applesauce, lick it off, and then do it again and again

Needs Development:

- not repeat actions that would make expected things happen
- not respond to social games such as clapping hands or playing “Sooo Big”
- continue to hit at the buttons on the toy box randomly without seeming to anticipate expected things to happen
- bang their spoon on the tray and not stop when Mom or the caregiver asks them to, not acting surprised by or even aware of the noise they are making

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Babies in Motion

1. Changes body positions

Babies make rapid progress in gaining control of their bodies from four to eight months. While the sequence of development is fairly predictable, individual timing varies greatly. A few babies walk on their own by nine months, but most babies are just beginning to roll over from back to stomach, sit alone, and crawl during these months. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- use their arms to pull their body along on the floor, often moving backward rather than forward
- roll from their back onto their stomach
- succeed in moving from lying down to sitting all by themselves
- get up on their hands and knees and rock back and forth
- stand firmly on their legs when held in a standing position
- pull to standing at a table or other low piece of furniture

Needs Development:

- not sit up without support from a caregiver or in an infant seat
- not change from one position to another without adult assistance
- roll from their stomach onto their back, still surprising themselves, but continue to struggle to roll from back onto stomach
- not try to reach toward toys that are within easy reach

2. Uses both hands with intention and purpose

Babies look at something and purposefully open their fingers, getting ready to grasp and hold it. At this age they can direct their hands to reach for and grasp everything within reaching range. They may still have trouble letting go when they want to. They are fascinated with small objects that fit nicely within their finger span. They are able to transfer objects from one hand to the other and try to pick up a third object when it is presented. They continue to bring objects to their mouth and bang whatever they are holding on hard surfaces. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- reach for and hold interesting objects
- pass a small block or stuffed animal from one hand to the other
- bang a block or other object on the tray or table
- reach with both hands toward their bottle and then put it in their mouth
- grab at the washcloth while being bathed and swish it around in the water
- hold a block in each hand and bang them together over and over
- feed themselves a cookie or cracker
- pick up a tissue or napkin and swipe at the surface of their tray
- mimic a hand clap or a wave good-bye
- pick up a rattle or a set of plastic rings and deliberately shake it to hear the noise

Needs Development:

- reach toward interesting objects but not yet able to hold onto them
- use only one hand for touching and holding
- have difficulty bringing things to their mouth
- not reach toward the sound of a rattle or musical toy
- continue to swipe at things but not use their fingers to pick them up
- swipe at crackers or banana pieces, trying to pick them up

Babies III: 12 months

Social and Emotional Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

1. Shows preference for familiar adults

Twelve-month-olds make connections with their parents and with other caregivers that grow stronger and more complex as they grow older. They show more clearly their preferences for the adults who are frequently with them in caretaking and play activities. They show their interest in adults by imitating parents and caregivers, trying to engage them with smiles and babbling, and clinging in the presence of a new person or event. They definitely do not want to be very far away from the people they are familiar with. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- actively cling, cry, or try to follow when their parent says “good-bye” or opens the door to leave
- show great delight when a caretaker plays peekaboo with them
- check out their caregiver’s reaction before deciding if they should act hurt after they fall down
- reach to their caregiver for comfort when upset or hurt, because no one else will do
- hold a toy phone to their ear as they’ve seen other people do
- point to a book when they want to get someone’s attention, showing that they know that reading is something familiar adults will do
- tug on their parent’s leg repeatedly while he or she is talking on the phone
- imitate various actions of their caregivers, such as patting a doll on the back in the way the caregiver does with them

Needs Development:

- not show emotion as they watch their parent walk out of the room
- cry and pull away or hide from caregivers and family when they are upset
- not point to things to show that they are interested in something
- act frightened during a game of peekaboo even though it's with a familiar adult
- not appear to keep track of where their family or caretakers are

2. Reacts to unfamiliar adults

Twelve-month-olds know who is who in their world. They express this by responding differently to people they know and trust and people they don't know or haven't seen for a while. Though the intensity may differ, almost all one-year-olds show some hesitancy and fear of new people. Sometimes they even protest when their parents leave them with their familiar child care provider. It makes sense: Their parents are the most important people in their world, and being separated from them can be frightening and upsetting. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- play comfortably in a new setting until the arrival of a new person, then need to be comforted and to sit close to a familiar adult
- stop exploring or playing in order to watch intently when an unfamiliar adult enters the room
- look from the stranger to the caregiver and back again as the stranger approaches
- cry inconsolably when their parents leave them with a baby-sitter or caregiver
- seem worried about people they used to smile at
- enjoy the ride in their stroller until a new person stops to talk to them, and then they start to fuss and reach around for you to hold them

Needs Development:

- ignore a parent's return even though they had been upset when the parent left
- smile and reach toward an unfamiliar person, allowing the stranger to pick them up and hold them
- respond as if terrified when a new person is present, and can't be comforted by a familiar adult
- offer their toy to a new person who just came into the room

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me**1. Shows likes and dislikes**

Infants are beginning to know a lot about who they are. They pay attention to their reflections in the mirror, express their feelings—sometimes strongly—and let us know what they want. By the end of their first year, babies have made tremendous strides in identifying their feelings and in communicating their needs and desires. They are becoming aware of what they don't want and what frightens them as well as what they do like and what they prefer. While it may seem that babies who were happy and calm are now more anxious than they were, this is a sign of growth and indicates babies' emerging understanding and recognition of the world and who they are in it. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- point to the juice several times and protest when given water instead
- vocalize and try to reach for the toy or cookie they want
- look away and squirm when someone tries to read to them when uninterested
- pull off their hat after it was just put on
- push the spoon away when someone tries to feed them when they aren't hungry
- “rear back” when put into the high chair before they're ready
- repeat “ba-ba” when they want their bottle instead of a cup
- cling to your leg and begin to cry when you don't pick them up

Needs Development:

- not vocalize or point in order to indicate a toy they want
- not seem to have a preference but be willing to take any object given to them
- go along with almost everything without protest
- not have consistent sounds to convey what they want
- fuss or whine but be unable to clearly indicate what they need or want

2. Tries to manage own behavior in different situations

As they grow, babies begin to develop their own special ways of coping with new situations and problems. Some babies grow attached to a familiar blanket, or a special teddy bear—a “love” or “transitional object.” Other babies suck their thumbs or carry around a pacifier. These support strategies are important in helping babies learn how to cope with the many stressful situations that may arise in their lives. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- rub the satin trim of their special blanket against their cheek when upset or tired
- relax in the arms of their caregiver after being startled by a loud clap of thunder
- look toward their parent's face to find out if they can pick up the object on the rug
- suck their thumb when taken into the supermarket
- grab and cling to their favorite teddy bear when they feel there are too many people around

Needs Development:

- cry when taken into a new situation even though their caregiver holds them and tries to comfort them
- continue to be afraid after being frightened by a loud noise even though they are being held and someone is talking to them
- not be able to stop crying when upset even though the caregiver tries to soothe them with the offer of a bottle, snack, or pacifier
- throw their spoon on the floor when they can't scoop up the carrots in their dish

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child

1. Demonstrates awareness of other children

When babies are together, they seem to be checking each other out by reaching out to touch one another, smiling and gesturing, and even starting to imitate each other. Toward the end of the first year, babies may begin to assert themselves when they are with other children. Periods of interaction are brief and usually give way to exploring a toy or other available object. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- watch as an older sibling tosses and catches a ball
- reach for a squeaky toy that another child is playing with
- touch the hair of a baby sitting near them
- cry when they hear another baby crying
- try to make the wind-up toy go after watching someone else do it
- look toward another child who is shaking a toy and making sounds
- push a wheeled toy back and forth as they sit beside another child who is pushing his or her truck
- watch as several children pull all the blocks off a shelf
- crawl into your lap while you are reading to another child
- hold onto a toy when other children start to come toward them

Needs Development:

- cry and seem fearful when other children are nearby
- pull back and flinch whenever another child comes toward them
- look anxious when other children laugh or talk loudly
- watch warily as another child pushes a wheeled toy toward them
- laugh nervously when another child cries, then pay no attention
- start to reach toward another child but then stop and pull back when that child looks at them

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Baby Talk

1. Shows understanding of gestures and words

Babies show they understand what is being said to them by the way they act in response to what they hear and the gestures they see repeated often. Babies become active participants in routines as well as in the social games adults play with them. Repetition of actions and words, reading the same books over and over, explaining what is happening, using the same words and phrases with each activity—these are all ways babies learn to understand language. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- participate in the clapping when playing patty-cake
- wave bye-bye when shown the way people say good-bye to each other
- put their hands over their eyes when they see someone else doing it

- look attentively toward you when you say, “No-no”
- follow a direction, such as, “Please give me the cup”
- look at or move toward a person calling their name
- point to the banana on their tray when asked, “Where’s your banana?”
- giggle even before you finish when you play “This Little Piggy” because they remember that the tickling part is coming
- put a block in the cup, then take it out when asked, “Where did the block go?”
- point to the appropriate picture as you read a nursery rhyme

Needs Development:

- not respond to attempts made to help them choose which book to read
- not look toward the person whose name is being called
- not respond to waving bye-bye
- look at your face rather than up in the sky when you excitedly say, “Hear the airplane? Where is the airplane?”

2. Uses consistent sounds, verbal expressions, and gestures to communicate

One-year-old babies are starting to make many consistent sounds and to use them with meaning and understanding. Often they use syllables such as “ma-ma-ma,” or “ba” for bottle as labels for things. They also create babbling sounds that go on and on, as though they are pretending to talk. Sometimes an almost recognizable word slips into the string of babbles, but this usually happens without intent. Despite babbling and making many wordlike sounds, babies usually continue to express most of their feelings and desires using nonverbal signals such as facial expressions and gestures. When caregivers show they understand and respond to babies’ messages, they encourage babies to use all of their resources in extending their communication skills. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- babble happily as they crawl into the lap of a familiar person
- screech or kick their legs in protest when picked up from block building when the caregiver needs to change their diaper
- reach their arms up over their head after finishing a cookie to indicate “all gone”
- shake their head and turn away when you keep trying to feed them green beans after they’ve been pointing to the applesauce
- kick their legs against the high chair when they want to get down
- push their cup off the high chair tray when they don’t want any more to drink
- repeat syllables with a languagelike inflection while pointing to an out-of-reach toy
- say “ba-ba” for bottle or “ma-ma” when they see their mommy
- start making sentencelike sequences of sounds, or repeat syllables using inflections that are similar to conversational tones
- babble, stop, look at you, and then smile when you repeat their sounds back

Needs Development:

- make few babbles and not many repetitive sounds
- show little interest in communicating desires or making choices when offered
- not try to start social games such as peekaboo
- express anger when adults don't understand what they are trying to communicate

Cognitive Development

V. Exploration and Problem Solving: Baby Discoveries

1. Shows understanding of things in the environment during exploration

As babies' mobility increases, they discover a whole new world to explore. They experiment with everything that comes within their reach. They push, pull, taste, bang, pile, build, and dump. They especially like household objects such as plastic cups, wooden spoons, pots, pans, and lids. They like taking things apart, putting them together, banging them, putting things in containers and taking them out again. They are interested in sounds, both those they can make with their toys as well as those they hear in the outdoors or on the radio or TV. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- try to make the square shape go in the round space, pounding and pushing with all their might
- unstack the nesting blocks and then try to pile them back together again
- pull out all the pots in the bottom cabinet
- inspect the clapper in a bell, turning the bell over and over
- inspect the breadcrumb they found on the floor and then put it in their mouth
- pull all the CDs off the shelf
- fiddle with all the knobs on the TV even after having been told, "No, don't touch!"

Needs Development:

- not look spontaneously around at the small or large toys that are nearby
- not appear interested in things on shelves or in lower cabinets and drawers
- look at the block they are holding but not bang it or turn it over and over or try to drop it on the floor
- keep mouthing the round cylinder and not respond to efforts to encourage them to put it in the round hole in the shape box

2. Demonstrates memory

Babies show great memory skills by their first birthday. They remember where things are stored and where to find their own special cabinet in the kitchen. They enjoy imitation, and their play often incorporates activities of their caregivers or family members as they use a spoon to stir, or pull a string to bring a wooden toy closer to them. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- pretend to drink from the cup in the tea set and then offer a drink to you
- point to several body parts when you name them
- try to buckle the strap on the booster seat or on the car seat
- unwrap their small doll after watching you hide it in a napkin
- point to appropriate pictures in a book as you read to them
- open only certain drawers and cabinets because these are where their toys are stored
- take the wooden spoon and stir it around in the bowl they are playing with

Needs Development:

- not see the connection between the string and its attachment to the toy on wheels
- randomly try the shape blocks in all the holes or spaces, showing they've not yet learned where they go
- hold toys but not use them for their intended purposes or to perform actions
- look at you blankly when you ask them to point to objects or animals in pictures
- not point to body parts as you name them

3. Makes expected things happen

Babies are beginning to think things out. You can almost see their thought processes churning as they show that they now expect certain outcomes when they push a button or squeeze a rubber toy. One-year-olds are very persistent and try the same things over and over. When things don't happen as they expect, you can see the puzzlement on their faces. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- push the buttons on the toy box and wait for a clown to pop up
- splash water in the tub and close their eyes in anticipation of getting water in their face
- drop an object over the edge of the high chair and wait expectantly for someone to pick it up
- turn the stack of rings upside down, then restack them, not necessarily in order of size
- throw a toy and wait for you to tell them, "No throwing," as you put the toy out of reach
- find a favorite small toy under the cup after being shown how you can hide it and then find it right where it was hidden

Needs Development:

- not persist in their play activities or play with much repetition
- not look over the edge of the high chair tray for the toy they pushed over
- not show that they expect that squeezing the rubber toy will produce a sound
- still startle when the phone or doorbell rings

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Babies in Motion

1. Changes position and begins to move from place to place

As babies gain increased strength in their muscles, and when they are in environments that allow for freedom of movement, they make great progress in moving and maintaining their balance. During these months, some babies are taking their first steps while others are perfecting their crawls to a speed that can be nearly breathtaking. Most babies are occupying themselves with pulling to stand at every piece of furniture available and then carefully learning how to sidestep around the edge as they hold on (called “cruising”). For a few weeks they are unable to get down and might cry for help, only to get right back up again. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- walk when you hold both their hands
- roll over to get from lying down to a sitting position
- pull to stand at the edge of a low table and cruise around the edge
- sit alone, maintaining their balance, for long periods of time
- stand alone without support for a few seconds or minutes
- take some steps unaided
- easily switch from crawling to sitting and back again
- crawl easily, gaining speed from month to month
- drop from standing to sitting with ease
- begin to climb up onto furniture such as a low coffee table or a sofa

Needs Development:

- stay in one place until moved
- lie on their back without trying to roll over or get into a sitting position
- sit for only short periods of time without support
- not lift up their tummy when on the floor on their stomach
- pull themselves from one place to another flat on the floor

2. Coordinates eyes with hands while holding and exploring objects

With their increased mobility, babies find all kinds of new things to grab, hold, and explore. They are able to use their hands to accomplish actions such as waving bye-bye when a family member goes out the door, or to participate in a game of patty-cake. They hold one object in one hand while reaching for a second object, such as picking up a cracker with one hand and reaching for a second cracker with the other hand. Feeding themselves with their fingers comes before self-feeding with a spoon. They have become very adept at finger feeding. They are changing from a full palm grasp (palmer) to using their thumbs in opposition to their fingers (pincer grasp). Being able to open their fingers and release objects takes time for some babies to integrate, while other babies let go so easily that it is hard to see that they have learned a new skill. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- pick up bits of cereal or banana slices from their tray and put them in their mouth
- grab the spoon as you try to feed them
- put their hand over yours to move the sponge as you wipe off the tray
- pick up a piece of sandwich or a toy and drop it over the edge of the high chair tray
- pick up small bits of lint from the rug and place them in your hand
- drink from a cup, often needing some assistance
- begin to turn the pages of a board book that you have read together a number of times, using their thumb and fingertips
- cooperate in dressing by putting an arm out when you're ready to put on their shirt
- pick up their spoon by the handle

Needs Development:

- show poor coordination as they try to use their thumb in opposition to their fingers to pick up tiny things
- continue to miss or not close their fingers with ease as they reach toward a block or a stuffed animal
- shake their hand as they try to let go of a toy or piece of cookie
- use an awkward grasp as they transfer a rattle or block from one hand to the other
- pick up a block and then drop it to pick up a second block, not using both hands at the same time

Babies IV: 18 months

Social and Emotional Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

1. Relies on the presence of familiar adults to try things

Mobile infants depend on their parents and caregivers to be their base of safety and security. As babies begin to venture out in the world to explore and play, they pause at times to check in for a reassuring touch, word, or smile. In the presence of trusted adults, they feel safe to experiment and to become absorbed in what they're doing. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- crawl through the cloth tunnel after they see a trusted face at the other end
- explore and experiment with new materials such as play dough when the teacher or caregiver is sitting at the table
- continue to stack cardboard blocks after being given a reassuring smile or an encouraging word by a caregiver from across the room
- play on the rocky boat, climb out and go over to the caregiver to touch his or her leg, then return to the rocky boat
- stop playing when a parent leaves the room but start playing again when the parent returns
- go to get a trusted adult and, with words or gestures, show that they want that person to be near them

Needs Development:

- not try crawling through the cloth tunnel even with encouragement
- not let go of their parent's leg the whole time they're in the store
- not let their caregiver get them out of the stroller at the park
- tentatively climb up two steps of the ladder as long as a familiar person is standing right there and keeps one hand on their leg
- try the swing only if someone familiar holds their hand while they swing

2. Shows awareness of unfamiliar adults

One-and-a-half-year-olds often appear worried around unfamiliar people. This can seem like a step backward in development if they have previously seemed very secure around all adults. They have learned how important their parents and caregivers are, and now they feel vulnerable around strangers. They show their discomfort in a variety of ways. They can appear to be both curious and cautious at the same time, alternating between approaching and retreating. Babies look to familiar adults for reassurance as they try to figure out what to do. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- hide behind their parent but peek out when a new person their parent has been talking to says hello
- move to the other side of the room when an unfamiliar person enters the room
- cry when their parent leaves them at child care but slowly settle with the help of the caregiver
- cry when they see a face that is different from what they are used to, such as a clown or someone with a mustache or beard
- allow a stranger to approach them only when the stranger does something familiar, such as wave to them or start a game of peekaboo

Needs Development:

- move over without hesitation to the new person and hold out a toy for inspection
- climb into the new person's lap and hold out a book to read
- not respond to a new person even when that new person says hello
- reach to be picked up and hug the new person who has just arrived
- look toward a new person and smile or wave

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me

1. Shows preferences, likes, and dislikes

Eighteen-month-olds often don't want something in particular as much as they want a little of everything. The world is exciting and demands their attention. It is difficult to sort out what they really want from what they're just experimenting with. They seem to be very self-centered as they claim everything they see as "mine." They issue orders as their language improves and seem to expect instant compliance. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- insist, "Me, me!" as the teacher tries to help them carry a puzzle from the shelf over to the table
- take the spoon out of the caregiver's hand and try to feed themselves
- shout, "Mine, mine," when another child tries to play with the blocks
- begin to cry when things don't go their way, for example, when they cannot pick up the peas with their spoon or spear the carrot slice with their fork

- show particular interest in a special music tape, or the fish in the aquarium, or special picture books
- call out insistently, “Book, book,” when they want a book they can’t reach
- let go of the caregiver’s hand when entering the park and move to the swings
- protest when their parent tells them it’s time for a bath and they’re busy with the pegboard
- find the CD with the picture of dancing bears on it and hand it to you to play
- fight with another child over who gets to use the toy telephone

Needs Development:

- seem to watch but mostly remain quiet and noninteractive during playtime
- cry and not be able to make their requests clear
- look away and not say which one of the two choices being offered they want
- not attempt to feed themselves and continue to accept being fed with a spoon
- sit at the table without trying to assemble the puzzle in front of them

2. Tries to manage own behavior

Babies begin to show early forms of self-control by the way they act when making choices and react to the limits set for them. With verbal guidance accompanied by physical support, adults can offer alternatives and change the focus of an activity. One-and-a-half-year-olds show that they can listen and sometimes even stop themselves. By setting clear and firm limits in a respectful and caring way, caregivers help babies feel good about themselves. This provides positive self-esteem that helps children learn how to manage their own behavior. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- stop banging their spoon on the tray when asked to stop
- catch their parent’s warning look from across the room even as they continue to climb on the back of the sofa
- hand you a used tissue they picked up from the floor after you ask them for it
- say, “No, no,” to themselves as they sit in the sandbox and throw a handful of sand over the edge onto the ground
- hand you the book they finished looking at instead of throwing it on the floor
- stop before hitting another child when they hear the teacher call their name

Needs Development:

- cry when they can’t have the book they reached for
- continue stamping their feet in the water puddle, even after the caregiver asks them to stop
- throw the spoon when asked to stop banging it on the tray
- fall on the floor kicking and screaming when they can’t open the door
- hit the child who had the toy they wanted, then begin crying when the other child starts to cry

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child

1. Interacts with other children

Babies this age show more interest in toys than in other children. Peer play may begin to have the “feel” of a dialogue when there is a mutual exchange of tickling, touching, and laughing with each other. However, toys have an important role in helping babies maintain social interaction. Eighteen-month-olds may interact briefly and sometimes somewhat impulsively with another child, and the periods of interaction become longer as young children grow in their ability to share attention with each other. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- reach out and tug another child’s curly hair
- give another child a piece of their play dough after receiving lots of encouragement from an adult
- hit another child when that child tries to take the ball
- make silly faces with a child sitting across from them at the lunch table
- offer a toy to another child
- play with an older child by following the activities that the older child suggests

Needs Development:

- not look in the direction of the children playing near them
- ignore another child who has fallen down nearby and is crying loudly
- back away when another child approaches and offers a toy
- hit a child who gets too close
- sit on the climbing structure or on the top of the toddler slide, unaware that other children can’t get by
- say, “Okay” but still won’t give another child one of the trucks they are using even after you try to encourage them to let the other child play with just one

2. Begins to show awareness of other children’s feelings

Although babies are mostly focused on their own ideas and feelings, they can recognize sadness, anger, and happiness in the expressions of other children. They might become upset when another child is unhappy, or jump up and down when another child is excited. Sometimes they try to imitate the feelings they see other children expressing. They begin to respond to other children in ways similar to how they have been taken care of. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look distressed when another child cries after falling on the playground
- hug their teddy bear to comfort themselves when they see another child crying
- seek comfort after they hear their brother being scolded
- look sad or worried when they see some children fighting over a toy
- attempt to comfort another child who has fallen on the playground
- clap with joy when the teacher praises another child for an accomplishment
- help an adult comfort an infant by patting the baby’s back

Needs Development:

- not look in the direction of another child who is crying
- grab another child's shirt and ignore the other child's demand that they let go
- look confused at another child's angry reaction to being hit
- pinch the child who is crying

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Baby Talk

1. Shows increased understanding of words and gestures

At this age, babies are able to understand many more words and phrases than they're able to say. They understand the words that describe what is happening now, and those that indicate what will happen next. Babies are able to follow one-step directions that are accompanied by gestures. They respond with actions when asked to make a choice, such as choosing which shirt to put on today when two shirts are held out to them. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- walk toward you when you open your arms for a hug
- show enjoyment and participate in a familiar finger play, such as "Here's a Ball for Billy" or "Open, Shut Them"
- point to appropriate pictures in a book when asked, "Where's the ___?"
- go to the coat rack when their caregiver tells them that it's time to go out now
- take their hand away from the potted plant when their parent says, "No," but then continue to dig in the dirt
- pick up their spoon after being told to use the spoon instead of their fingers
- offer their stuffed animal to you when you ask if you can give it a hug
- follow a simple direction such as, "Please bring me the book from the table"
- get a tissue from the box when you say they need to wipe their nose

Needs Development:

- not respond to explanations about what is going to happen next
- become angry when routines are interrupted
- kick and protest when their caregiver tries to help them put on their boots
- look at you without moving after you ask them to choose a book to read
- point to body parts that are named, but not always the right ones
- point to only one drawing in the book when asked to pick out all the animals

2. Uses consistent sounds, gestures, and some words to communicate

Babies' babbling begins to mimic the sounds and rhythms of the language they hear around them. Their first words reflect the words they hear most often as caregivers talk near them or to them. Caregivers are the role models for these one-and-a-half-year-olds who are just learning speech and the meaning of words. Although babies this age may say a few words, they continue to use gestures as their primary way of communicating. They initiate social interactions and indicate what

they want by pointing, jumping up and down to get an adult's attention, tugging at an adult's clothing, shaking their heads yes or no, or just going ahead with their plan. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- greet family members when they return home with a sound that clearly resembles “hello”
- use their word for milk when they want another drink
- “name” several pictures in the book as they turn the pages
- use single words, such as “bye” when carried out to the car, or “nite-nite” when being put into their pajamas
- put several words together, such as, “Da-da bye bye”
- jabber with sounds that begin to be more and more like words as they play with their blocks or stuffed toys
- talk into their toy phone pausing as if listening to someone on the other end
- tell their caregiver “shoes wet” when they come in from playing in the yard
- shake their head no when they don't want any more cereal
- yank off their bib when they're finished eating

Needs Development:

- babble without consistent sounds
- use gestures but very few sounds when trying to communicate their needs
- just begin to use word-sounds with meaning, such as “da-da” or “up-up”
- use gestures that are so general it is hard to understand their meaning

Cognitive Development

V. Exploration and Problem Solving: Baby Discoveries

1. Gains new understanding while exploring the environment

Mobile babies are full of energy and curiosity. Their expanding ability to move gives them opportunities to explore new places and reach for new things — even things that could be dangerous, such as electric sockets or heavy pieces of furniture. They like having adults explore with them, especially when the adult talks about what they're seeing and doing. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- pull their wagon around and around in the play area, seeing how it works
- pat, push, mound, squish, and pound the play dough, experiencing all the ways it feels and can be used
- explore the pegboard holes with their finger and then look around for something to fit in the holes
- mix, fill, pile, and dump sand at the sand table, sometimes naming the piles while creating them
- try to push two pop-it beads together the way they've seen a caregiver do it
- stack a set of cardboard boxes, knock them down with a giant kick or a swing of their arm, and then stack them up again

Needs Development:

- pay little attention to new stories or books being read
- not participate in finger plays or songs with hand actions
- seem uninterested in exploring new spaces; content to stay in one place
- hold toys without exploring how they look, feel, or work
- touch and look at toys that are familiar but pay little attention to new toys

2. Shows increased memory skills

Mobile infants show better and better memory skills. They now remember what will happen when they do certain things. They depend on routines that have a certain order or sequence. This new awareness of sequence can make them appear to be stubborn and inflexible because they expect things to happen in the exact ways that they remember. Babies show their increased memory skills as they mimic and imitate the actions of their caregivers. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- imitate the way they have seen an adult turn a screwdriver using their own plastic screwdriver
- try to insert a key into the lock of a door
- identify themselves in a mirror or photograph
- show recognition of sounds, such as mom's footsteps, water running in the bathtub, the refrigerator door being opened
- imitate adult actions, such as pretending to stir sugar into a make-believe cup of coffee
- move toward the door when they see a family member putting on a coat

Needs Development:

- not insist on following routines
- listen as you read to them but not show a preference for any one special book
- not try things over and over, showing that they don't yet have an understanding of order and consequence
- not look for an object placed out of sight, although they saw you hide it

3. Uses toys and other objects with a purpose

Mobile babies this age begin to understand that some things happen predictably as a consequence of their own actions. However, after they learn to do something in one way, they're not usually able to change what they do if they run into problems using these familiar patterns of behavior. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- use the string attached to a toy to pull it toward themselves, even when the toy gets stuck on something and won't move
- demonstrate beginning understanding of how to play catch as you roll the ball over to them and they learn how to roll it back to you

- pretend to cook by stirring a spoon in a pan
- roll a ball toward you and watch to see what you'll do
- pick out one of their favorite books from the pile on the shelf and turn the pages
- place round shapes into a form board with increasing accuracy

Needs Development:

- play with blocks or at the sand table without any apparent purpose
- go from one activity to another without pausing to explore or plan what they want to do
- continue to poke cylinders or puzzle pieces randomly into any space on a form board
- dump blocks out of a container or pull farm animals off a shelf but not have a plan to build or create with them

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Babies in Motion

1. Moves from place to place

Controlling their movements and exploring new ways to get around are major preoccupations of eighteen-month-olds. They fall down a great deal as they walk uncertainly with their arms extended for balance and try to gain speed while running. They're excited by their new skills as stopping and starting become easier but turning corners remains a challenge. One-year-olds are busy pushing and pulling things, climbing on furniture, trying to crawl up stairs, and starting to play simple games such as rolling a ball to someone. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- sit in a chair without support
- walk upright more than they crawl
- start and stop more easily than before
- squat down to pick up a toy or a crumb of food they discover on the rug and stand up again with little difficulty
- move smoothly from sitting to standing
- climb up and turn themselves around in order to sit in a chair
- climb up the stairs on their hands and knees
- push and pull toys as they walk around
- stand with their feet wide apart and sway side to side in time to music

Needs Development:

- continue to use their arms for support when sitting
- find it difficult to get from sitting to standing
- continue crawling as the fastest way to get from here to there
- bump into furniture and trip a lot while trying to move around

2. Uses hands to engage in a variety of activities and social games

Eighteen-month-olds are able to do fairly intricate things with their hands, but they continue to use their whole arm rather than just their hands for fine motor activities. Although they fumble and drop things, when they have a plan, they don't deviate from it even when it doesn't work—for example, trying to jam a puzzle piece into the wrong space, or a shape block into the wrong hole. They can now use one hand in opposition to the other, pick up two objects in one hand, and turn or twist their wrists to rotate things. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- fit two cups together, one inside the other
- stack the rings on the ring tree, although not in the right order
- use their thumb and forefinger to pick up pieces of cereal
- pick up two small toys in one hand
- turn the pages of the book and point to pictures while you read to them
- hold the toy telephone receiver up to their ear with one hand and poke at the number buttons with the other hand
- hold a toy in one hand as they touch and explore it with the other hand
- reach with confidence for the things they want to pick up
- drop as many as two or three wooden beads into a container before dumping them out and starting over again

Needs Development:

- carry one toy at a time, putting it down in order to pick up another toy
- continue to have trouble releasing objects, as when throwing a ball, letting it go too soon so it doesn't go where they intended
- bang two blocks together repeatedly as they did when they were younger
- have trouble stacking the table blocks as they want because their finger control is awkward

3. Begins to participate in self-help activities

As caregivers talk with babies while they change, bathe, dress, and feed them, babies become very interested in participating in everyday care routines. When caregivers praise them for helping and tell them what is happening, they begin to participate with enthusiasm. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- hold their own cup or plastic glass when drinking
- use a spoon to feed themselves, even though awkwardly
- pick up small pieces of food and put them in their mouth
- help in dressing by poking their arm into the sleeve of a shirt
- hold out their foot for a sock or shoe, although they might pull it off again right away
- help their caregiver pick up and put away toys
- pick up big pieces of cracker or toast and feed themselves

Needs Development:

- not notice what is happening during dressing and bathing
- cry during bathtime
- drink from their bottle and show little interest in using a cup
- grab the spoon, but then just play with it or throw it on the floor rather than trying to use it for eating

Toddlers I: 24 months

Social and Emotional Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

1. Seeks the support of familiar adults to try things

Toddlers depend on having the adults who are important to them in view while they are playing, exploring, and trying new activities. Although their increased mobility allows them to explore more actively and do more things independently, they need to be close to the adults who are important to them so that they can feel secure about moving away. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- start moving toward the room where the toys are kept but come back to a familiar adult several times before finally entering the room
- explore the water table while their mother is sitting nearby, but stop playing, protest loudly, and follow her when she moves toward the door to leave
- pull the face of a caregiver toward them when he or she begins to talk to someone else
- want to eat the food from their caregiver's plate
- bring toys to a familiar person and pile them on his or her lap
- cry when they cannot have their caregiver all to themselves
- hand a piece of their cookie to a familiar person sitting nearby
- try the slide at the park after sitting beside their caregiver for a while watching the other children shriek with joy as they slide down

Needs Development:

- refuse to try any of the swings or the slide even though they had been begging to go to the park earlier
- refuse to leave the side of their caregiver or parent, even to play with toys that are clearly interesting to them

- pull their caregiver along while looking at the books on the bookshelf
- cry loudly when their caregiver or teacher can't sit with them at the table
- keep asking for a drink of water or for something else to keep you from leaving them

2. Acts cautiously around unfamiliar adults

Some toddlers are fascinated by new people and things, while others are cautious and tentative. Depending on how often they've encountered new people and on the way familiar people have responded to new people, their reactions may include curiosity and interest as well as wariness or fear. Toddlers may interrupt their play to seek safe shelter with a familiar adult when a stranger appears, or they may just stop and watch, ask questions, or even approach the new person. Toddlers might be slowly drawn into interacting with a new person who offers an interesting object to explore or when that new person is in the company of a well-known adult. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- cautiously watch, then, after a familiar adult talks to the new person, slowly walk over and say hello
- show their new shoes to the visitor in the classroom while their teacher stands beside them and holds their hand
- say hello to the person handing out shopping carts near the door when going into the supermarket
- go over to the person planting flowers in her yard to see what she is doing
- act shy at a party and hold their parent's hand for a long time before going over to a group of children who are using markers to decorate the paper tablecloth
- say hello to the delivery person who is waiting at the door
- allow themselves to be drawn into play with a new adult as long as a familiar person is nearby
- watch the plumber fixing the kitchen sink but not speak to him
- keep one eye on the stranger and not respond to any friendly overtures the new person makes

Needs Development:

- not look toward a new person who enters the room
- cry when a new person looks at them
- rush up to a new person and ask for help in reaching for something on a shelf
- greet the new adult before anyone else and show him or her the hamster cage

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me

1. Expresses own ideas, interests, and feeling

Toddlers show their wishes, worries, fears, and expectations through their behaviors, play, and actions. They find out who they are, what they can do, and who is in charge by exploring their surroundings, making choices, and experiencing

frustrations as well as successes. Even though they are sometimes unwilling to accept help directly, toddlers do need help, praise, and the approval of the adults who are important to them. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- protest angrily when someone offers to help with the puzzle they are struggling with, but then call out for help when they can't do it by themselves
- choose between soup or a peanut butter sandwich for lunch
- help their teddy bear eat lunch in the same way that their caregivers do it for them
- choose the same favorite shirt every morning when getting dressed
- reject a substitute for their “love blanket” when it cannot be found while they are getting ready for a nap or to go somewhere
- insist on wearing their summer shorts even though it's cold outside
- say, “No!” to everything that is asked them, whether being asked if they want to play with a new toy or if they want to make play dough
- fall down on the floor crying loudly when they can't have their brother's model plane
- help push chairs up to the lunch table and proudly say, “Me do!”

Needs Development:

- not make choices about foods they want or clothes they prefer
- passively accept the intrusion of a sibling or peer who takes their toy away
- not act out daily experiences
- act anxious or worried about many things and be afraid to try new things

2. Tries to manage own behavior

Toddlers are exploring the limits of their behavior. Feelings of pride as well as a new sense of power and a need to find out “who's in charge” begin to influence their approach to their environment. Sometimes their wish to be powerful and to control things makes them appear stubborn and often leads them to resist adult guidance and support. Adults can help toddlers manage their frustrations by being enthusiastic about their efforts, setting limits, and comforting them when things don't go their way. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- jump on the sofa, jumping higher and higher even when their caregiver or parent asks them to stop
- bring the washcloth over to you after they've finished eating and you've reminded them that they need to wipe their hands and mouth
- stop running down the sidewalk and turn to you when you call their name
- climb down off the low table without asking for help when they see your frowning face
- get angry and throw the beads on the floor when they are having trouble stringing them

- reach over as though ready to push down another child’s block tower, but first look at their teacher or caregiver and then stop
- close the drawer that contains sharp knives after being warned with words, “Keep that drawer closed!”

Needs Development:

- cry for help after climbing into the rocking chair and then becoming afraid to try to get down
- hit you on the leg after you tell them they can’t have a cookie now
- stand quietly, looking sad, but not ask for help when their tricycle gets stuck
- not reach over for another cracker at the snack table even though they want one
- ask for help in almost all tasks as though afraid to try doing things for themselves

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child

1. Watches and plays briefly with other children

Toddlers continue to spend most of their social playtime watching and imitating other children their age. They may play next to someone for very brief periods, but they tend to become possessive and demanding, and need adult help and direction. As they play, there are instances of mutual give-and-take, but then the play may be disrupted because taking turns is still difficult. At these times, adults are needed to provide guidance. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- watch carefully as their friend digs with a shovel at the sand table
- run across the play yard waving their arms and screaming “Yiiii” behind another child doing the same thing
- refuse to share their riding toy with another child
- participate in a play sequence briefly, such as pretending to eat at the table in dramatic play
- watch a child build with a stack of cardboard blocks, go over and push it over, then help to rebuild it
- imitate a peer who is crawling like a worm or hopping like a frog
- grab the shovel their friend is using, but give it back when the friend cries

Needs Development:

- not even try to play with other children
- hit and kick when told they need to let another child have a turn
- hold on desperately to the whole box of crayons, refusing to listen to the teacher explain that other children can use the crayons too
- run through the sand pile kicking over the castle that the other children were building
- watch one child building with blocks, start to help, but move away when a second child joins the play

2. Shows awareness of other children's feelings

Toddlers are continuing to grow in their awareness of the feelings of others. They are inconsistent in their responses, sometimes displaying empathy and sometimes showing possessiveness and saying, "No!" or "Mine!" At one moment their responses seem to be reasonable, while in the next moment they may become contrary and unable to respond to another child. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- give a friend a giant "love you" hug, just because they feel like it
- come to you with a look of distress and point to another child who is crying
- pat another child on the back and say, "It's all right," when the other child cries because his mommy just went out the door
- put their arm around a child who has fallen off a riding toy
- add a block to a construction another child is making when they see the child looking around for something
- wipe their doll's cheeks while saying, "Don't cry"

Needs Development:

- grab the riding toy for themselves after another child falls off
- shout at a child who is crying and put their hands over their ears
- pull harder to take the truck when another child cries and holds onto it
- knock over the blocks other children are using, then run out of the play area
- push another child's paper and glue project off the table after they've argued over who will have the glue first

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Toddler Talk

1. Follows simple directions and suggestions consistently

Children this age are very interested in understanding words and following directions. They can now understand simple questions and even provide simple one-word answers with an appropriate nod of the head for yes and no. They understand a caregiver's explanations of events that are taking place and can understand when told that something can't happen until later in the day, or even tomorrow. They can find an object when asked to go get it. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- point to several body parts as you name them
- point to the appropriate picture in the book when you ask for it
- respond to requests, such as, "Please close the door"
- find their special truck in the other room or on the shelf when asked where it is
- respond to directions, such as, "It's time to wash hands for lunch"
- go over to the refrigerator door or the snack table when asked if they want juice

- put their blocks back on the correct shelf when you are helping them clean up and you ask, “Which shelf do these go on?”
- say, “Hot! No-no!” when you tell them not to get near the stove when it’s hot
- put their wet boots on the mat after being reminded

Needs Development:

- remain unengaged in family discussions at the dinner table
- go to get a diaper for the baby in the other room and then forget what you wanted and start to play with the toys
- point to their eyes when asked to show several body parts but won’t respond to any more questions
- ignore suggestions that it’s time to go in and wash up for lunch

2. Uses a growing number of words and puts several words together

Toddlers move at their own pace in how and when they use words and language. Children this age display a wide span of development in their production of words, ranging from just beginning to label objects to talking in sentences. The words toddlers do use can usually be understood, but some words still run together. Toddlers’ vocabulary develops from their daily experiences so that in different cultures and different settings children use the words and phrases they hear spoken to them. As toddlers’ language abilities develop, they move from simple labels to using words that show intent, such as, “No!” or “Mine!” For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- name pictures in their picture book
- jabber to themselves as they make different shapes with the play dough
- say their word for shirt as they pick out one that is red
- put several words together, such as, “More cookie” or “Go out now”
- use language with increasing specificity to ask for what they want
- start asking questions related to the story you are reading or the things they see as you go on walks together
- respond to something that just happened, such as, “Kitty gone?”
- look at Daddy getting ready to go out and say, “Juan go?”

Needs Development:

- continue to use gestures rather than words to communicate
- cry or stamp their feet when you don’t understand what they want
- try to tell you about something, but their babbling sounds don’t make sense
- point to the juice but use sounds that are not distinguishable as words

3. Pays attention and tries to participate in conversations

Toddlers are now attempting to participate in conversations with the people around them. They have enough language ability that they can understand what grown-ups and older children are talking about, and they want to be a part of the action. They use the language they hear most often and can be encouraged to use the social conventions of the culture in which they are living. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- babble in a run-on flow of word sounds as they talk to their stuffed animals while having a pretend tea party
- imitate the flow and inflections of conversation as they jabber to a baby sister or play with trucks or stuffed animals
- become impatient when they have to wait too long to “say something” at the lunch table
- wait for a few minutes to tell you something if you are busy
- try to get the attention of the adults or other children while on a walk by repeating what they see until someone finally responds to them
- say, “Bye,” after you remind them as you are preparing to leave

Needs Development:

- interrupt a conversation with jabbering that is not understandable
- not pay attention to the conversations going on around them
- play silently with their trucks in the block corner
- jabber loudly to show they want to be included in the table conversation

Cognitive Development

V. Exploration and Problem Solving: Toddler Discoveries

1. Explores the environment and learns how things work

Young toddlers are able to move around with relative ease, and they seem to be everywhere. They’re discovering many fascinating things as they touch, examine, try out, and drop everything within reach. Because they are so actively interested and involved in all that they see, they’re often described as having short attention spans. But just watch when an adult explores one-on-one with them, or when they find something new, such as a very interesting bug. You’ll see an attention span that lasts a long time and is very focused. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- try to activate a mechanical toy
- pour and fill at the water table or the sand table
- empty cabinets and shelves
- attempt to nest or pile cups or nesting blocks
- slide graduated rings onto a stacking tree
- push a toy truck over and over to see how the wheels turn and the siren whines
- empty and refill containers with small blocks, puzzle pieces, large beads, dumping and filling over and over again
- bang pot covers on the tile floor, then try banging them on the rug, but go back to banging on the tile floor
- hammer the pegs into the pounding board, then turn it over and do it again

Needs Development:

- wander or flit from one area of the room to another, not stopping for more than a moment at each play area or object in the room
- splash a few dabs of paint on a piece of paper and then trot off
- stand at the water table and appear to watch but not try to reach in and use any of the pouring containers
- not attempt to use the musical instruments at music time
- take a book off the shelf, open to one page, drop the book, and run off

2. Shows increasing memory for details and routines

Toddlers are known for wanting to follow specific routines. They feel comfortable when they know what is going to happen next. Having rituals to follow allows toddlers to feel that things are okay as well as helps them understand the way that things work. They are learning about order and sequence. They remember the words to familiar songs and ask to sing them over and over. Familiarity helps them feel they have some control in a world that is exploding with new things to learn about. Doing things in a familiar way, following routines, establishing rituals are all ways toddlers learn to understand how things work. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- sing a favorite song to themselves as they swing on the swings
- put a bib on the doll as they feed it from the baby dish, take the bib off, and then put the doll to bed
- run to get their favorite book for you to read after getting ready for naptime
- say “hot” to themselves as they reach out to touch your coffee cup
- walk to the steps that go down from the porch, turn themselves around, and crawl down backward
- hold up their seat belt for you to fasten after climbing into the car seat
- remember where things go, such as the used tissue in the wastebasket, the book on the shelf, their boots in the cubby, or someone’s used spoon in the sink
- go to the sink to wash their hands when someone calls out that it’s time to sit down to eat

Needs Development:

- become upset when it’s time to clean up for snacktime, not remembering the routine of play, clean up, and then snack
- continue to try to push the puzzle pieces into the wrong spaces on the form board
- struggle at naptime because they don’t remember the routine and rituals that make lying down for a rest easier for toddlers at this age
- not say nursery rhymes or sing songs that they have heard many times
- resist sitting in their high chair to eat snack, or try to get down from their chair with their food still in their hand

3. Expects specific results when playing with toys and other objects

Toddlers are fascinated with the predictability of responses to the actions that they initiate. They show that they understand functional relationships as they put things together (a spoon in a bowl or a cup in a saucer), and they are able to use one object as a substitute for another (a block for a plane or a phone). Their fantasy play has become very prominent as they act out familiar life experiences that they have seen many times. They remember events and try to relive them with their play equipment, exploring how things go together and what happens when they do things in specific ways. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- put all the red pegs in a container and the blue ones in a pile on the table
- turn right side up a picture you handed to them upside down
- call you over to see how high they piled the blocks
- string several large beads on a string, shake them off, and string them back on
- walk around the room pulling a mechanical animal or train engine that makes a noise, then stop, listen, and start to walk and pull again
- try to make toys “work” after watching others push the buttons or twist the keys
- explore new ways to make things go together, such as trying various holes in which to put the square shape into the shape box
- put large round pegs into a pegboard with success on the first try
- successfully place round and square shapes into a form board

Needs Development:

- dump puzzle pieces out but not able to put them back in their proper places
- struggle with the string and the bead but just can’t get the beads on the string
- dump and fill at the sand table but not try to build roads or use the plastic trucks as props
- run or gallop at circle time, not noticing that they are not responding to the suggestions of the teacher that the group fly like a bird or grow like a flower

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Toddlers in Motion

1. Shows increasing coordination and balance, and combines actions to participate in play activities

Toddlers’ energy is incredible. They become totally involved in using their large muscles to walk, run, bend over, squat, and climb the steps to the slide and then slide down. They love to dance, push things around, follow the leader, dig in the sand, and ride on their riding toys. They stack big blocks and play with balls, often throwing other objects as well as balls as they explore the power of being able to hurl things with growing force and some direction. They can be found wherever there is a space to run and jump and practice their newfound freedom of motion. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- walk as a primary means of locomotion
- push or pull a toy that makes a noise as they walk around
- get on a kiddie car and try to push it using both feet at the same time
- back into a chair to sit themselves down
- squat to pick up something and return to standing with ease
- walk backward to pull a toy on wheels
- walk up a few steps on the stairs, holding the railing, not yet alternating feet
- climb up on sofas and other furniture, just for the fun of climbing
- play follow the leader around a very simple course
- play ring around the rosy, loving the falling down part because that is one of the things they do best

Needs Development:

- continue to crawl as their fastest way to move about
- try to get on a riding toy but give up when it becomes too difficult
- try to climb up on the sofa or chair but not be successful
- not participate in group activities such as dancing to music or following the leader

2. Uses hands and eyes to accomplish a variety of activities

Toddlers use their fingers and hands with increasing skill as they turn pages of books, string large beads, put things together, and take them apart. Their activity shows more purposefulness as they explore and try various ways of doing things. Their play involves using their hands and fingers to put puzzles together, experiment with crayons, dress dolls, and build with blocks. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- pour and dump water from container to container, through a funnel, and then through a sieve or colander in the bathtub or sink
- hit the pegs on the pounding board with more accuracy, using the head of the hammer
- work at turning the key on the wind-up toy
- put several large, round pegs into the round holes in the pegboard
- string large beads, using one hand to slide the bead on while the other hand holds the string
- pull apart large pop-it beads and then try to push them together again
- hold a book in one hand while turning the pages with the other hand
- hold their crayon with a steady grip as they make scribbles on their paper
- imitate the motions of finger plays such as “Where Is Thumbkin?”
- answer by pointing to the correct picture when you ask, “Find the boy who is hiding?” or “Where is the girl who is running?”

Needs Development:

- use both hands trying to push a puzzle piece into the wrong space in the puzzle board
- turn the puzzle board this way and that to make the puzzle piece fit rather than twisting the puzzle piece, which would require using a wrist motion
- continue to repeat the same actions rather than try new ways to make things move or go together
- use the side of the hammer to pound the pegs into the pounding board
- not be able to make the string go through the hole in the beads

3. Participates in self-help activities

Toddlers are becoming very interested in managing their own self-care, especially feeding. They also are interested in helping to dress themselves, especially if they can help to choose which clothes to wear. They like routines and know the order of how things happen, which makes this a good time to start establishing health routines like washing hands before meals and after toileting, brushing teeth on a regular schedule, eating healthy foods, and so on. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- insist on washing their own hands and drying them before lunch
- use a spoon expertly when feeding themselves
- drink from a cup with hardly any spilling
- try to put on their own shirt (frontward or backward) or their socks
- drink by themselves as they hold a small glass in one hand
- help to put spoons or napkins on the table
- help in dressing by handing you the matching sock when you are ready
- stick out their arm for the shirt or their leg for the pants
- pull their clothes off at bedtime or naptime

Needs Development:

- show little interest in helping to put on socks, shoes, or boots
- show no preference when asked to choose a shirt to wear
- not participate in dressing by putting out an arm for the shirt or jacket or lifting a leg to help in putting on their pants
- show little interest in using a spoon or in feeding themselves
- show no desire to help with things such as peeling their own banana or helping to set the table when you ask them to put a spoon at each place

Toddlers II: 30 Months

Social and Emotional Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

1. Shows need for familiar adult's approval and also acts independently

Toddlers often switch between trying to be in charge and independent while still needing the reassurance and physical closeness of their primary caregivers. They are interested in exploring and trying new things, and insist on doing things “by self” even when something is too hard for them. They often refuse help, but they continue to rely on the presence of familiar adults to feel secure and able to try new things. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- hold on tightly to a familiar adult at first, then gradually let go in order to inspect the toy truck that is nearby
- climb out of their parent's lap, then back in, then out again to see what the other children are doing with the building blocks
- cry after they've fallen down and scraped a knee, then run for comfort and a bandage
- climb happily to the top of the slide, but look to the teacher or caregiver for reassurance before sliding down
- reach for a hug when told that their parent is about to leave, look around for their big sister or the teacher, then go back to playing
- struggle all the way across the street to free their hand, which the caregiver insists on holding
- get their own shirt out of the drawer and put it on by themselves, all the while calling out to a family member announcing their progress

Needs Development:

- cling and cry on the playground and refuse to get near the slide without the caregiver going with them
- stand “frozen” beside a familiar adult when he or she puts them down from his or her lap
- quickly climb into a caregiver’s lap when they hear a loud siren going by and not get down even after the siren has stopped
- stop playing and run to a caregiver when several children start yelling and not go back to playing unless the caregiver goes too

2. Shows cautious interest in unfamiliar adults

Toddlers often respond hesitantly when meeting new adults even if the adult is a relative, if they haven’t seen him or her for a long time. New people are both an attraction and a challenge. Some toddlers seem to worry more now than when they were younger as they try to integrate their need for assurance and their desire to explore and investigate. The way toddlers react to new people depends on many different factors, including their own personality type, how much experience they have had meeting new people, and how the new person approaches them. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look at the floor when a new person talks to them
- wave to the trash collector as he drives by in his truck
- tell a new caregiver their name, but only in a whisper
- allow a relative they haven’t seen for a while to help them put on their jacket
- cling to their father’s pants leg when introduced to a relative they don’t remember
- say hi to the person waiting beside them at the corner to cross the street
- keep playing with their trucks in the sand pile while all the time keeping an eye on the stranger talking to their caregiver in the yard
- approach a new person after their caregiver has talked with him or her for a while

Needs Development:

- hide behind the door and not come out when a new person arrives
- climb into their caregiver’s lap and not let go until the new person leaves
- go right up to a new person and start talking, even climbing into his or her lap
- show no reaction to the arrival of a new person
- stand silently and look at a new person with an expression of fearfulness
- run to a caregiver’s side but not walk with him or her to greet the new person

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me

1. Shows an emerging sense of self

Toddlers' feelings of competence sometimes lead them to expect more of themselves than they can do. They haven't had enough experience to know what will work and what won't, but this doesn't keep them from trying many different kinds of things. Their efforts to master new challenges can be frustrating for them as well as for those taking care of them. However, when they are successful, they gain a sense of mastery and achievement. By supporting their unsuccessful efforts as well as their successes, adults encourage them to keep trying and not feel as if they have failed during their initial attempts at mastery. They are learning to try things, again and again, which is part of the process of gaining mastery. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- peel their own banana at lunch and show how they did it
- say no when someone wants to help them walk up the stairs
- eagerly climb up the bars on the toddler gym, then call for someone to help them get down
- dump the puzzle pieces out on the table and then ask for help in putting it back together
- insist on carrying their glass of milk over to the table but cry when it spills
- try to put on their own sweater, and even though it may be upside down or backward, they insist on leaving it this way

Needs Development:

- look anxious as they view the new riding toy and refuse to get on it
- examine the form board shapes and then cry and say, "I can't," while refusing to try even one of the shapes
- attempt to squeeze the toothpaste out, then cry and hit out when they can't do it
- throw down the connecting cubes and shout, "Too hard," after making one attempt to put them together
- try several different puzzle pieces, each with increasing frustration, and then push them all off the table
- push the new riding toy over to a caregiver, then protest when their attempts to use the pedals to make it go don't work

2. Shows growing ability to manage own behavior in different ways

Toddlers want to find out what they are in charge of and what they can control. They are becoming aware of the rules both at home and at their child care centers. They often forget social expectations in moments of intense feelings, but they are learning. They push limits because it's not clear to them what the boundaries are, and they need to experience the limits. This makes them appear stubborn and uncooperative at times, but they do this as a way of asking adults to be clear in setting limits and to let them know what the expectations and rules actually are. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look at their caregiver when asked to stop jumping on the sofa but continue to jump until helped to find something else to do
- cry for a few minutes after being dropped off at child care, then start to play
- take off their coat and try to hang it on the low hook put there especially for this purpose
- show increased interest in using the toilet
- wash and dry their own hands before a meal without being reminded
- talk about needing to use a “whisper voice” when going into the library
- try to wipe up the juice they spilled at snacktime

Needs Development:

- throw their coat on the floor as they race through the room
- grab for the graham cracker as they push another child’s hand out of the way
- drag their feet and pull away when asked to go to the sink to wash up
- stamp their feet and cry when told they can’t play with the blocks just now

3. Expresses feelings through language and pretend play

Toddlers are beginning to understand the social expectations around using words to express their feelings. Their growing mastery of language skills helps them as they learn how to use words to say how they feel. Older toddlers are also beginning to engage in pretend play, which is greatly facilitated by their new command of spoken language. Using words helps them to think about and begin to understand the way they feel about things. Toddlers work harder at expressing their negative feelings than they do in expressing joy and pleasure. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- repeat “Mommy gone” over and over as they watch their mother walk down the sidewalk from the child care center
- pretend to be an angry lion who roars at everyone
- act out a visit to the doctor by giving a “shot” to the stuffed animals and then comforting them after the shot
- laugh and call out, “Yeah!” as they run to their parent or teacher when asked if they would like to help make the salad
- explore being a mommy as they feed the doll and put it to bed
- walk confidently down the street until they see a dog, then run to the safety of their caregiver’s arms

Needs Development:

- kick and scream when told it’s not their turn on the riding toy
- cry loudly but can’t explain what happened or answer any questions
- grab the doll from another child and say, “I want that one”
- yell, “I hate you,” after being told, “This isn’t the time for watching videos”
- walk angrily away from a peer with whom they were playing, yelling, “You’re not my friend”

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child

1. Plays beside other children

Toddlers like to be near other children, and they enjoy small group activities. They listen to each other's suggestions, imitate each other, and may have one or more preferred friends within small groups of familiar children. They are more apt to play beside other children than to play with them, but they are able to share some short pretend play themes. Although their verbal skills are improving, they continue to need adult help and intervention to solve social conflicts. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- drive their pedal car along the blacktop path, saying “beep, beep” to the child ahead of them
- add blocks to a construction another child has started, without being invited
- sit near other children who are using crayons and markers
- use words or actions to ask another child to play with them
- push another child away from the toddler slide so they can have a turn first
- insist on sitting next to a particular child at the snack table
- push a friend around the yard in the pushcart

Needs Development:

- not try to engage other children in play activities or try to join in their play
- try to talk to other children, but go off and sulk, when it's too hard for the other children to understand them because their words are not yet clear
- push their way into a small group of children even though the others protest and yell, “Stop!”
- walk on top of the sand “road” the other toddlers are making because they want to play in the sand too
- follow and watch other toddlers play but not know how to join them

2. Responds to other children's feelings

Toddlers are becoming aware of the feelings of other children, and they may even try to comfort children who are distressed. However, solving social problems, such as whose toy this may be, whose turn it is, or who gets to be the leader, all make demands beyond toddlers' limited capacity to understand. Hitting, kicking, and yelling are more likely to be their way of handling emotionally charged situations. In the heat of these disagreements, toddlers continue to need adult support to understand what is happening and to realize that someone else's needs are involved. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- say they're sorry when their friend's painting rips while they try to take it off the easel
- try to help wipe up the paint that spilled on the floor
- call for help when another child takes all the hats in the dramatic play area
- say “please” when asking for the crayon a classmate is coloring with

- listen carefully when the teacher explains that hitting hurts and she will help them find words to use instead of hitting
- look anxious and ask why that boy is crying
- say “no-no” instead of grabbing when another child tries to take the play dough
- comfort a friend who is crying because she can’t have the riding toy she wanted

Needs Development:

- push another child out of the way in order to climb the steps to the slide
- try to claim the tricycle that another child is holding onto while they both pull on it
- yell, “I had it first,” after hitting another child and grabbing the sand shovel
- start to ask for a turn on the tricycle but end up grabbing it when the other child starts riding away
- bump into another child, making him cry, and then continue pulling their wagon along the path
- hit out when another child takes a crayon away from them

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Toddler Talk

1. Understands questions, simple directions, beginning concepts, and the ideas and sequence of stories

Toddlers show they understand more and more words by the way they respond to what adults say to them. They’re able to answer questions with meaning and accuracy. They can follow simple suggestions, unless they are engaged in showing their individuality by choosing to ignore the instruction. They love being read to and participate in the reading by pointing to pictures or making relevant sounds such as mooing like a cow. They begin to relate to some basic concepts such as position words as they demonstrate *under* and *up*, and show beginning understanding of the descriptive words of time such as *soon*, *after*, and *right now*. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- point to associated pictures as the caregiver reads to them
- answer questions such as, “What’s this?” when looking at a picture book
- pass the salt shaker when someone asks for it
- put the covers back on the markers after being reminded to do so
- demonstrate understanding of a few position words, such as, “Put your shoes *under* the bed” or “Please put your chair *beside* mine”
- turn the pages of the book at the right time in the story without being prompted
- follow simple directions, such as, “Go to the art area and get the markers so you can make a picture”

- understand complex statements, such as, “When we get home from our walk we’ll have a snack” or “After cleanup we can read that book”
- understand the reason they’ve been given about why they need to wear mittens on this cold winter day

Needs Development:

- not seem to pay attention to requests or suggestions such as picking up the crayons or putting the book back on the shelf
- not point to relevant pictures on the page when asked about them
- forget why they went to the other room when asked to get the purse off the table and bring it to you
- not be interested in listening to a story about the pictures in the book

2. Uses words and some conventions of speech to express thoughts and ideas

Two-year-olds show their fascination with the power of language in their excitement and ability to use words for many purposes. They use speech to express needs, indicate possession, make demands, or tell about something that happened a short time ago. Toddlers move at their own pace in learning to speak. Language for typical two-year-olds occurs across a wide range of skills. During these months, some toddlers use language minimally to label and say single words, while others say four- and five-word sentences. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- sing simple songs
- include a few social conventions into their speech, such as please and thank you
- use language with increasing clarity to ask for what they want
- ask questions related to a story or an activity
- use words to describe the purpose or function of an object, such as a comb (“Mommy’s hair?”) or a phone (“talk to Grandpa”) rather than simply demonstrate its use
- use action words to describe activities in pictures, such as running, hiding, or playing
- use pronouns such as *you*, *he*, *I*, and *she* in their speech
- begin to incorporate more unusual plurals, such as *teeth* instead of *tooths*
- use sentences that are three or four words long
- describe actions in pictures as easily as they name objects

Needs Development:

- repeat words they hear rather than create new thoughts and ideas
- play quietly without using many words or paying attention to the language of those around them
- avoid using words to express what they want
- mumble and run their sounds together, making it difficult to understand their thoughts

3. Participates in conversations

Toddlers want to be included as a participant in family gatherings, such as at mealtime or in conversations while riding in the car. They hear and understand what is being said and want to express their own thoughts, even if their thoughts are sometimes unrelated to the current topic. Adults may be tempted to talk about toddlers as though they were not there. However, including toddlers in conversations encourages their language development as well as helps to build their sense of self. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- add their own comments to the talk about the trip to the children's museum
- repeat the story just told by another person, showing their desire to be a part of the conversation
- ask questions about the pictures in the book being read
- show their caregiver a picture or a toy and try to engage him or her in a conversation about it
- ask frequent and meaningful questions
- talk about something that happened and then wait for a response to their report
- make up stories as they try to enter into a conversation

Needs Development:

- seem uninterested in the talk at the table
- make noise when other people are talking, so that they're asked to be quiet
- ignore questions people ask them
- not respond to the group discussion of a story just read aloud

Cognitive Development

V. Exploration and Problem Solving: Toddler Discoveries

1. Explores new ways to do things and shows beginning understanding of concepts such as color, size, matching, and weight

Exploration is the passion of two-year-olds. They touch and hold everything they see. They love to dump, pour, fill, and spill in the sand table, the water table, the sink or tub. They put things together and pull them apart. As they explore, they learn how things work and begin to understand concepts of color, matching, same, and different. They are learning the foundation ideas of time (now versus later), size (bigger and smaller), and weight (light and heavy). Two-year-olds show their love for books, especially tiny ones that they can carry around with them. They explore ideas in the dramatic play area as they learn who does what and how people do what they do. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- ask meaningful questions in relation to the television show they are watching
- match their blue crayon to the one a friend is using
- complain that they don't have as many crackers as a friend has
- recognize Grandma in the family photo

- match clothing when asked to find the other sock in the drawer just like the one they already have on
- sort the pegs from the pegboard into groups of the same colors
- try new ideas with play dough, such as using toothpicks as candles for a birthday cake
- match duplicate pictures

Needs Development:

- push play dough around on the table without trying to make it into anything
- not stop to examine flowers, bugs, or other interesting sights on a walk
- use blocks or markers in the same way every time with little creativity or exploration
- not match or sort crayons or toy cars according to color or size
- just look at the picture, and not respond when asked to point to the boy who is running

2. Uses reasoning skills and imagination when planning ways to make things happen

Two-year-olds are able to figure things out using their experience combined with their new imaginative skills. They are learning about how things work when engaging in simple pretend play in the dramatic play area, building with blocks, pouring at the sand or water table, and participating in various art activities. They like to have the same books read over and over and can retell the stories they have heard most often. They begin to plan what they want as they find a book they want to hear or pull out of the drawer the shirt they want to wear. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- anticipate Grandpa's arrival when they see a parent making up the bed in the guest room by asking, "Is Grampa coming this day?"
- create stories and dramatizations based on a book they just heard
- combine toys in complex ways, such as using play dough in the dramatic play area to represent food, or putting blocks into the cars of a train to represent people riding to town
- look outside at the newly fallen snow and run to get their boots and mittens
- make up stories as they build with unit blocks, table blocks, or while they color
- know that the rectangular shape belongs in a particular spot on the form board and twist it until it fits
- find all the felt pieces they will need to tell the story of *Ask Mr. Bear* or *The Hungry Caterpillar* on the felt board
- push chairs into a row to create a train for dramatic play
- plan a tea party with stuffed animals and go to the water table to fill the teapot

Needs Development:

- insist on being the same character every day in dramatic play
- not be able to name the main characters in a story
- watch as classmates build a pretend castle in the block area but not join them
- pick up and put down objects in dramatic play but not plan for or act out a specific routine or familiar activity

3. Begins to understand consequences when re-creating familiar events and following routines

Toddlers are very determined and often appear stubborn as they try to follow routines. They want to make things happen in the exact way that they think things should happen and can become upset when something turns out differently from their expectations. If routines have become fairly predictable in their lives, they know what will happen next, which adds to their comfort and security. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- call for a nearby adult to help, rather than hitting out, after another child grabs a toy away from them
- insist on putting on their mittens before they put on their jacket, although this makes it difficult to dress themselves until they remove their mittens
- imitate the ways they've observed a parent using tools around the house
- show frustration when trying to follow the rules of a simple board game
- imitate simple block structures or single-line crayon strokes
- start to cry when Mom says it is time to say good-bye to Grandma
- select a book about a cowboy after pulling on the big boots in the dress-up box
- choose their brand-new shoes when getting ready to go to a birthday party

Needs Development:

- continue to fuss when it's cleanup time, even though they know that snack comes next and then storytime follows
- forget after every snack to pick up their napkin and cup and throw them away
- push the same knob on the activity box even though no action is produced
- try to push the circle shape into the square slot
- not know where to put the little people at cleanup time

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Toddlers in Motion

1. Shows coordination skills while moving around and engaging in play activities

Depending on their opportunities for outdoor play and the active play space available inside, toddlers begin to show new skill in moving their bodies about and executing more complicated maneuvers with their arms and legs. They use their arms or legs together in combination and are not as likely to fall down when walking and running as they did when they were younger. They love to walk on tiptoe, march to music, or jump off a low step. They enjoy practicing the same skill over and over, and they appear more directed in their activity than they did a few months ago. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- fling a ball in an attempt to throw it toward you
- roll a ball back and forth to a partner
- push a friend in the pushcart or on a riding toy
- climb the steps on a toddler slide more skillfully and slide down with ease
- climb up the bars of a small jungle gym, perhaps still needing help getting down
- jump with both feet leaving the ground at the same time
- run, gallop, and then walk slowly along with classmates in a group activity
- walk on a broad balance beam or on the edge of the sidewalk
- climb on a riding toy and make it go using both feet at the same time

Needs Development:

- continue to walk with a “waddling” gait, hands held out at their sides, bumping into things and falling down
- not try to climb on the toddler gym
- hesitate to put their leg over the seat of the riding toy
- fall down or bump into things as they move around

2. Demonstrates eye-hand coordination while manipulating and exploring objects

Young two-year-olds still have trouble using one hand independently of the other. Their fingers tend to move together as they scoop up sand or play at the water table. Two-year-olds do not yet have a hand preference. They have, however, become increasingly skillful in using their fingers to do what their eyes see and can put together simple puzzles, paint with brushes at the easel, draw with crayons, and enjoy finger play games. They are becoming expert at managing play dough. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- pound, poke, and build with the play dough
- scribble with crayons or markers on drawing paper, holding their marker in several kinds of grasps, but beginning to use their thumb and fingertips
- pull apart pop-it beads or connecting blocks
- play ball games with a teacher or friend, rolling a ball in the direction they want
- twist their wrist when trying to fit a puzzle piece into its proper space, rather than rotating the board
- use their thumb and forefinger when picking up beads to string them
- use a twisting wrist motion to take off the covers of the markers or the paste jar
- begin to use their thumb and fingertips when putting pegs in holes on a pegboard
- do the hand motions for finger plays such as “Where Is Thumbkin?”

Needs Development:

- have difficulty pushing connecting cubes or pop-it beads together or pulling them apart
- not twist their wrists when trying to turn the key on a wind-up car
- hold crayons and markers in a full palmer grasp and make only tentative marks
- knock over the blocks as they try to build a tower or make a house

3. Participates in self-help activities

Toddlers love doing things for themselves, so much so that it can become difficult for caretakers at times. They want to feed themselves, dress themselves, do their own toileting, wash their own hands, put away the laundry, and put the wet clothes in the dryer. Their abilities are not always equal to their desires, but with practice they become proficient. Although adults have to wait longer while toddlers do things for themselves, this is the age to encourage participation, practice, and learning. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- take off their own coat or jacket and try to hang it up on the hook
- pull down the zipper on their jacket
- hold their cup with two hands as they drink, with little spilling
- pull up their own pants after toileting
- feed themselves without help and serve themselves from a serving bowl
- begin to brush their teeth by themselves
- insist on pouring their own milk
- eagerly carry the napkins to the table and place one at each place
- call to a caregiver to watch as they peel their own banana

Needs Development:

- try to wash their own hands but come away with soapy, wet hands and shirt
- feed themselves with their fingers but still not be successful using a spoon
- pull at their coat or sweater to get it off, unable to do it successfully
- place all the spoons for lunch in a pile rather than putting one at each place
- unable to get the zipper on their jacket pulled up even after a caregiver started it for them
- have trouble pulling off their socks

Toddlers III: 36 months

Social and Emotional Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

1. Reflects attitudes and behaviors of familiar adults

Though three-year-olds may seem very grown up, especially when compared to who they were as two-year-olds, they still depend on the presence and support of their parents and caregivers. Older toddlers practice imitating the important people in their lives and are very influenced by their characteristics and values. Although three-year-olds may manage separation more easily than they could a few months ago, they continue to depend on their caregivers' reassurance, presence, and consistency. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- not protest as much when their parent leaves, but they might still show some signs of distress and not begin to play right away
- insist on the same routine every day when saying good-bye to their special adult
- pat their stuffed animal on the back and sing a lullaby just the way their caregivers do with them
- imitate social behaviors of the adults they are with most often, pretending to have a tea party with their dolls, saying "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and other phrases they hear the people around them speak
- use expletives they've heard from adults or children when they're playing
- pretend to go to work in the morning the way their mommies and daddies do
- try to make their caregivers laugh saying silly words that they think are funny

Needs Development:

- not pay any attention to what family or caregivers are doing or keep track of when they come and go
- state, "No!" very loudly and throw their toy on the floor when asked to put their toys on the shelf

- become passive when asked questions about what they are doing and what is happening around them
- hit at their caregiver's face or pull their caregiver's hair while being held when they want to get down

2. Shows cautious interest in new people

Three-year-olds show great interest in new experiences and new people, but they rely on their sense of the familiar and the expected when new people approach them. They are more comfortable if they can make connections between what is new and what is familiar, if the new people behave in ways the toddlers are used to, or if they do things that are familiar, such as play peekaboo or suggest reading a favorite book. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- smile and say hi to their grandmother whom they don't know very well, but pull back when she reaches for a hug
- take a favorite book over to the new caregiver so they can read together
- ask the worker who comes into the classroom to change a lightbulb what he's doing
- show a classroom visitor the new sneakers they got just yesterday
- tell the lady in line at the grocery store about their birthday party coming in the next day and the clown who will be there
- get excited about going to the children's museum with the neighbor next door rather than refusing because their parent isn't going too

Needs Development:

- cry fearfully when a new teacher or caregiver arrives even though it's her third day in the center
- say, "No!" when a new person asks if it's fun playing in the water
- walk away from their caregiver and go right up to the shopper standing nearby to tell him about their new baby brother
- refuse to go on the class trip to a local farm unless their mother goes too

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me

1. Shows comfort with independence, competence, and expressing feelings

Older toddlers begin to take initiative when trying new experiences. They respond to opportunities to test and display their growing competence. They get excited about new discoveries, have strong preferences, and keep trying to make things happen in their own way. Three-year-olds can easily feel overwhelmed when their imagination runs ahead of their ability to understand what is actually going on. Even though their verbal skills have grown substantially, they may not be able to explain their worries or understand why they're afraid. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- become angry when a friend touches their snack but calm down when he says he's sorry
- proudly show off the new finger play they learned at circle time
- choose between two shirts and then try to put it on by themselves
- announce very clearly the song they want everyone to sing at music time
- call someone over to show them how they can pull up their own pants after toileting by themselves
- ask a teacher to watch as they show the way they can climb up the steps of the slide
- show how they can crawl like a turtle and fly like a bird
- "read" a story to their stuffed dog from the book that their teacher or parent has been reading
- sing a new song they learned in school today and ask you if you want to learn it
- ask a caregiver to watch as they put a new puzzle together all by themselves

Needs Development:

- become anxious and not show the class how to play the game they learned earlier
- unable to put on their own jacket when getting ready to go outside
- cry desperately when they splash some water on their shirt and pull at it to try to get it off right away
- call out, "Watch me, watch me," but when a caregiver turns to watch, they stop and won't do the skill they wanted to demonstrate

2. Demonstrates emerging ability to manage own behavior

Older toddlers find it hard to wait or take turns, so it often appears that they aren't able to manage their behavior productively. However, they're very ritualistic, and their routines are important to them. They go to great lengths to ensure that routines are followed, down to the last tiny detail. In addition, they are eager to please the adults in their lives so they try to behave in ways they see the adults behaving, using the words they hear adults using. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- go to the teacher for help after another child pushes them off the swing
- climb up on the counter to get a cookie but quickly climb down when their mother comes into the kitchen
- pick up their napkin and lunch papers after they've eaten and throw them into the trash can
- proudly announce that they used the toilet all by themselves
- pat their little brother on the back while telling him that he can have a different book
- show a teacher how they hung their painting on the drying rack
- tell a friend to hurry over to the circle time so they can hear the story

Needs Development:

- ignore the child who asks to play in the sand with them and pull all the trucks closer
- leave the snack table without taking their napkin and cup, then protest and refuse when called back to take care of their things
- say okay to another child's request for one of the trucks but then keep all the trucks for themselves anyway
- grab hold and pull on the riding toy to show they want it, never letting go of it
- hit the child who has the toy they want and refuse to accept taking turns when the teacher suggests this as a way to settle the struggle

3. Shows awareness of social skills when expressing needs and wants

The development of language skills has a tremendous influence on children's ability to handle frustration and say what they want. They are learning how to express themselves so that others will listen to them and honor their choices and decisions. Some children have trouble making up their minds about what they want, while others have very clear ideas and insist on following them. Adult guidance is very important in helping older toddlers learn social skills for expressing what they want or are feeling. Adults also serve as important role models for the behaviors that children will imitate. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- explain with words that they don't want to come in and sit down for storytime
- call a teacher over to help them get a turn at the easel
- crawl into a caregiver's lap for comfort when pushed out of the block area
- say they wish their mommy would hurry up and get here
- use social conventions spontaneously such as saying please when they want something
- whine when they want another cookie but stop and use words when reminded that there is a better way to get a second cookie

Needs Development:

- grab the blocks they want and hit the child nearby who wants to have a few blocks for her own building
- grab the video and try to put it into the VCR, pushing away their brother who is trying to help
- not answer when a teacher asks them what they want to do during choice time
- stamp their feet and sulk when told they need to sit down for storytime
- ask for a turn at the painting easel, then cry in annoyance and push another child out of the way because they can't wait any longer
- begin to climb onto the table to reach the pitcher when they want more juice

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child

1. Shows capacity to play cooperatively with other children

Older toddlers are able to talk to each other, imitate one another, and engage in simple pretend play, especially when a caring adult is nearby. Although they can play fairly well in small groups of children who are close in age, they also feel the need to protect their possessions by grabbing, refusing, commanding, and hitting. They are likely to have some specific friendships that are lasting, but they continue to need adult support in remembering to use verbal skills to resolve social conflicts. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- stand at the sand table and want to have the same toys as their friend
- play in the dramatic play area, sometimes watching and sometimes imitating
- look through a storybook and giggle with a friend as they retell the story together
- choose a particular activity or place to play because a special friend is there
- watch other children playing at the water table and then try it on their own
- begin to participate in simple group activities like follow the leader

Needs Development:

- not have a special friend
- play next to another child, copy that child's play actions, but not join in any cooperative play
- not play with other children, or try to engage with other children
- hit and push when another child tries to make suggestions about a play theme

2. Responds to other children's feelings

Older toddlers can recognize other children's feelings, but they may have a hard time separating others' feelings from their own. They need the help of adults to understand how the friend waiting for a turn might be feeling, or that a classmate will be upset if they take all the apple slices off the plate. It takes lots of patience and support from adults to help three-year-olds figure out how to understand and respond to other children's preferences and desires. They also need guidance in working out solutions to the conflicts that inevitably arise. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look concerned when a classmate falls down near where they're sitting
- hit a child who grabs their play dough and then look to the teacher to see what will happen next
- say thank you after a peer has helped them get their riding toy unstuck
- put their arms around a peer when he falls down during creative movement
- hold tight to a toy when another child tries to take it away
- help a friend pick up the crayons that spilled while they carried them over to the table

Needs Development:

- laugh at the child who just had a toileting accident and call him a baby
- run away after pushing another child off the swing
- hit and push the child who tries to grab the pail away from them
- say, “I don’t want to play with you,” when another child asks to build with the blocks

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Toddler Talk

1. Understands questions, some abstract concepts, and simple directions

By the time children reach their third birthday, they are able to understand language quite well. They show their understanding of simple directions by their responses, whether or not they comply with or refuse to follow the directions. Many times they offer their own ideas. They understand routines, what happens first and what is supposed to happen next, often insisting on the exact sequence of events. This can make them appear inflexible and willful, when in reality they are just trying to master the order of things. They can follow two-step directions and understand positional words more easily. They are able to understand general references to time, such as events that will happen later in the day or tomorrow. They can comprehend references to things that are out of sight. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- laugh when a caregiver points to her elbow and asks, “Is this my head?”
- react to a familiar song by doing the appropriate hand motions
- remember where the book is that you read just yesterday and run to get it
- become upset when you leave out part of the story as you read
- follow a two-step direction, such as, “Please get the salt shaker off the counter and bring it to the table”
- understand position words, such as, “Please put your markers *beside* your drawing book” or “Put that paper *under* the box of crayons”
- understand beginning time concepts, such as “when you get home” or “after we’re finished eating lunch”
- hold up two fingers (or three fingers if they’ve just had their birthday) when asked how old they are
- answer simple questions such as saying their name, or where they are going

Needs Development:

- not answer questions about the story just read
- not know what you mean when you ask them to find a special toy such as their stuffed floppy dog
- not participate in finger plays or sing songs at music time
- continue to cry even after the teacher explains that she will read a story after they’ve thrown away their trash from lunch

2. Uses some conventions of speech when expressing thoughts, ideas, and commenting on observations

Older toddlers learn new words and how to use language through daily interactions with adults and peers as they listen to stories, learn finger plays, and sing action songs. They now use words to talk about their feelings, describe their own ideas, and react to the ideas of others. They are incorporating rules of grammar into their speech and speak in complete sentences more often. They now add *s* for plurals and *ed* for past tense. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- use “shorthand” phrases such as “all gone” or “Daddy fix truck”
- begin to add descriptive words, such as “pretty flowers” or “no more milk”
- explain that the scribbles on their paper are telling their grandma about their birthday and that they will be three years old
- describe actions in pictures in the book when you ask, “What is happening?”
- correct themselves as they retell the story of *Henny Penny* with a puppet
- describe how play dough feels as they squish it or comment about how the water splashes up and gets them wet when they pour it into the sink or water table
- use personal pronouns such as *we*, *they*, and *us* more frequently
- name less-familiar body parts such as eyebrow, hip, shoulder, or waist
- use an increasing number of position words such as *inside* or *between*
- begin to use contractions such as “Daddy won’t” or “What’s that?”

Needs Development:

- continue to label and use single words to express thoughts or ideas
- not answer questions easily
- have trouble making other people understand what they are saying
- remain quiet during class discussions about stories that have just been read or things that were talked about during sharing time
- not talk about their observations at the water table or on the nature walk or what they see and feel as they experiment with play dough or finger paint

3. Participates in conversations

Children nearing their third birthday love to engage in conversations. Their favorite method is to ask why whenever possible. They ask why even when they know the answer but just want to keep an interaction going. Conversations among peers are becoming more focused. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- ask questions as a way to keep a conversation going
- talk to their toy animals with inflections that mimic what they hear in adult conversations or during discussions at the table
- look at picture books and ask questions or make comments that are intended to get people near them involved in a conversation

- ask questions at the snack table or as they play with play dough about things that are interesting to them but not necessarily on a single topic
- talk with a friend outside on the playground about their birthday that is coming “in the next day”

Needs Development:

- pay no attention to the talk or conversations going on around them
- answer questions with single words
- hide behind a familiar adult when someone they don’t know asks them a question
- jabber away to themselves while other people are trying to carry on a conversation

Cognitive Development

V. Exploring and Problem Solving: Toddler Discoveries

1. Explores and understands in more detailed and abstract ways

Older two-year-olds are eager to learn about matching things that are the same, compare sizes, and name colors. Pretend play and manipulatives (connecting blocks, puzzles, building blocks) are becoming the vehicles for expressing many of the new things they are discovering and for trying new ideas. Three-year-olds are able to divide things into two groups, such as separating the toy people from the toy cars, matching things, and finding two things that are the same. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- show curiosity about almost everything they see
- enjoy creative movement as they explore, hopping like a kangaroo or swimming like a whale
- try out what they would do if they were a mommy as they take care of the doll
- try to dramatize thoughts and ideas, such as pretending to be a lion in order to figure out what it might feel like to be huge and very strong
- show they understand some concepts of size as they experiment with finger plays such as “Here’s a Ball for Billy”
- use words that show their growing understanding of size comparisons, such as *bigger* and *smaller*, or *really, really little*
- explain to the child sitting next to them that the crayons in school belong to everyone so “we all have to share the silver crayon”
- respond with accuracy when asked to put the paper *under* the book, or to put their hand *up* to show that they are ready to go outside

Needs Development:

- walk around outside without asking questions or making comments about the things they see
- unable to find the picture of the spider in the nursery rhyme book
- put the ball *under* the chair when asked to put it *beside* the chair
- not match things, for example, can't find the picture that matches the picture of a boat that they're holding in their hand
- not sort by color as they put all the crayons in one box

2. Plans before taking action

Older toddlers are beginning to show their ability to plan particular activities and carry them out. This is seen in dramatic play and musical activities, in the block area, and at the art table. They continue to interact with peers side by side, so their planning is more solitary than cooperative. While they do think ahead about what they want to do, their activity remains exploratory rather than focused on a specific outcome. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- put the play dough "cookies" on a plate and take them over to the housekeeping area to put them in the oven
- go from large to small with accuracy as they replace the rings on the ring cone
- dramatize a story such as *Ask Mr. Bear* and enlist the help of others in the class
- say to their friends, "Let's make a band," as they bang on a pan cover and tell the others to find "instruments" so they can be part of the band too
- put on a hat in the dress-up area and walk over to the block area to get some blocks to put in the shopping cart
- announce that they want to make a surprise for Mommy and go to the easel to paint a picture

Needs Development:

- dig in the sand table but not respond to a suggestion from the teacher about making a road or a house
- pull all the blocks off the shelf and then walk away
- take a book, sit down, and then get up, leaving the book on the floor
- put on a smock for the water table but stop on the way to pull a puzzle off the shelf or pick up a marker and make a line on the paper set out on the table for making a collage

3. Shows ability to figure things out

Older toddlers continue to deal with problems, such as establishing their own independence, what to do about fearsome things, and how to deal with not wanting to do what they're asked to do. They are still very dependent on adults to help them figure things out, but they learn they can be in charge, especially when the adults explain to them what is happening and offer them choices. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- ask a classmate to help them move the big rocker out of the way so they can ride the fire truck around in the block area
- try to use their fork to eat the peas, finally giving up and using their fingers
- try to crawl through the cloth tunnel, get stuck, and figure out that they need to back up
- look for a toy telephone in the dramatic play area and, when they can't find one, pick up a block and put it to their ear to tell Mommy about the picture they just painted
- try to zip up their jacket and, when it gets stuck, go to find help
- sit on the riding toy trying to make it go on the grass, but when it doesn't move, get off and push it

Needs Development:

- tear their paper off the easel when the paint drips and they can't stop the dripping
- throw the doll's dress on the floor when they can't get it over the doll's head
- become angry and abandon the four-piece form puzzle when they can't get the pieces to fit
- cry and throw themselves on the floor when their caregiver doesn't immediately respond to their request for help

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Toddlers in Motion

1. Demonstrates increased body control and combines several movements when participating in play activities

Children this age can move around with a goal in mind, rather than just for the exhilaration of the activity. They respond to things in their environment such as other children, games being played, marching, and dancing to music. They participate in circle games and pretend play that requires planning and following a theme. They love to climb and jump. They thrive on riding toys and pretend to be riding on a motorcycle, or being a truck driver or the pilot on a plane. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- participate in group activities that include running, galloping, crawling, rolling over, and twirling around
- help a friend make the rocky boat go
- follow a yarn trail that goes under the table, over a large beanbag pillow, and ends with jumping off a wooden block
- run with ease, stopping and starting with precision
- become really skilled and fast in pushing the riding toys around with their feet
- run across the yard with a friend, calling out to each other as they go
- walk on tiptoe for a short distance

- use the pedals on the riding toy for locomotion
- throw the ball in an underhanded toss, although still not very directed
- enjoy a group activity such as keeping the beach ball afloat, or seeing who can run to the steps the fastest
- climb up the steps on a toddler gym and slide down the short slide

Needs Development:

- try to get on the riding toy but can't get their leg over the seat
- jump but can't get both feet off the ground at the same time
- continue to run with an awkward gait, finding it hard to turn corners or stop quickly
- refuse to climb on the toddler gym or come down the slide

2. Uses fingers, hands, and eyes to engage in a variety of activities

Older toddlers participate more skillfully and with more purpose in the eye-hand and finger activities made available to them at home and in preschool. They explore and create with art materials such as finger paints, tearing paper, pasting, using markers and crayons, painting at the easel, and play dough. They enjoy feeling, smelling, squishing, and swirling but are not expecting a product at the end of their exploration. They love trying all the new manipulatives available to them, such as counting bears, table and pattern blocks, stringing beads, puzzles, and pegboards. All these materials provide opportunities for becoming more proficient in using their hands and eyes together. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- watch as lines appear, and then splotches, and then squiggles, as they carefully move a marker over the clean paper and sometimes onto the tabletop
- participate with a small group of children as they sing "Where Is Thumbkin?"
- put food coloring into the play dough and help to mix it up
- string large beads on a shoelace
- use their crayons to make dots, small lines, and swirls, and then talk about what they see on the paper
- successfully turn the key for a wind-up toy
- build a connecting cube structure and sometimes decide it looks like something they can name
- use an eye dropper to add color to a bowl of water in the water table or watch as the color spreads on a piece of paper toweling
- use a meat baster at the water table
- tear up pieces of colored construction paper to paste on a collage

Needs Development:

- refuse to try new art media, preferring to stay with a favorite such as markers or crayons
- do the same kind of drawing or painting every day, not exploring new ways to use a variety of tools such as smaller brushes or chalk

- hesitate to try finger plays or hand motions to songs
- do the same three-piece puzzle over and over
- watch as others play with puppets or the felt figures

3. Accomplishes many self-help activities

Along with developing self-help skills goes attention to routines. Older two-year-olds are firmly attached to routines and doing things the very same way every time. This is how they master new skills, learn about how things work, and begin to participate in their own care. Three-year-olds want to dress themselves, even when they can't do it all, and they insist on a rigid routine for almost everything from getting ready for bed to choosing which way to walk to the store. They often express very firm decisions about the foods they'll eat and those they won't. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- undress themselves with no help
- help get the table ready for lunch as they put out spoons and cups at each place
- dress themselves after getting some help with the hard things such as which hole to put their foot through in the pants
- want to bathe themselves, extending the routine to shining the fixtures
- feed themselves entirely, until they become tired and then they may need help
- use a fork relatively well
- hold a glass with one hand and rarely spill when they drink
- help prepare foods for salads such as tearing the lettuce or peeling a banana

Needs Development:

- seem not to notice the order of routines or know what comes next
- wash their hands without paying attention to the process or being clear about the order of washing and then drying
- continue to drink from a cup, holding it with two hands and spilling quite often
- use a spoon but not master turning it sideways, which makes the food drop off on the way to their mouth
- help in dressing by putting out their arm or leg but not try to do more such as trying to put on their shirt by themselves

Preschoolers: 42 months

Personal and Social Development

I. Personal Connections: It's About Trust

1. Reflects attitudes and behaviors of familiar adults

Preschoolers imitate the characteristics and habits of the adults around them by expressing similar likes, dislikes, and attitudes. They want to please their caregivers and do things just as they do. They attempt to help with grown-up jobs and are eager to be a part of every activity. Now it is easier for them to be away from their parents as their memory develops and they can imagine where their parents are during separation. This helps them feel secure. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- notice that their caregiver is frowning, and pause, but then continue to throw sand over the edge of the sandbox
- carry a cereal bowl themselves, but when it spills, sob until someone helps them
- tell a friend that they should take off their shoes when they are on the sofa, using the same tone of voice that their parent uses
- turn the dramatic play area into a grocery store and “shop” just as they have done with their parents or caregivers
- make “dinnertime” in the dramatic play area more elaborate by adding place mats, putting out dinnerware, and placing a flower on the table
- create an imaginary friend to whom they can talk the way they see adults chat with their friends
- seek the approval of adults important to them as they try new activities
- ask a caregiver to look at their new “invention” or to praise them when they accomplish a new skill
- ask their mother to stay with them when a new visitor comes to the house

Needs Development:

- not act out daily events in pretend play
- pay little attention to the whereabouts of familiar adults
- be fearful and not allow important adults out of their sight
- be passive and quiet and unresponsive to the adults around them

2. Shows comfort around new adults

Preschoolers usually enjoy meeting new people, even in new places, especially when they know that their regular caregivers are close by. They are curious about new people, initiate interactions, and now tend to be fairly talkative. They can do this with less direct support from the adults who care for them. However, since their imaginations are very active, these new experiences can sometimes be frightening. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- talk to a visitor and say their name as long as a caregiver is standing nearby
- walk around the room and look at toys on a visit to a new preschool classroom but not respond to the teacher's questions
- ask for help from the person standing nearby when trying to open a heavy door
- ask the clerk at the shoestore about the funny way he measures feet
- call out a greeting to the woman sitting in her yard as they walk by
- feel comfortable with the new baby-sitter as long as he or she starts an activity that is familiar, such as reading a favorite book, or building with blocks

Needs Development:

- not look at or respond to the parent of another child on the playground who offers to push the swing
- hide behind a caregiver when a person with a loud voice comes near
- not try to sit near the new teacher or baby-sitter even if he or she is reading a story
- run up to an unfamiliar person and start to pet his or her dog even though the caregiver is calling them to come back

II. Feelings About Self: Learning About Me**1. Shows greater comfort with independence**

Preschoolers are enthusiastic about almost everything. They can become angry when things don't go their way but are delighted when everything seems to be going right. Every new achievement adds to their sense of mastery and their feelings of self-worth. They are even able to wait for things for a short time. They are beginning to develop a sense of humor and easily dissolve into peals of laughter and silliness for almost no reason. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- jump up and down with anticipation as they wait for the cookies they helped mix finish baking in the oven
- ask for their favorite kind of cereal when shopping with a caregiver in the market
- help another child get her zipper started
- wash their hands “by self” before meals and after toileting
- show you the space station they built with the unit blocks
- tell a story about their drawing and ask a teacher to write it down for them
- try a new puzzle with smaller pieces than before
- tell you all the words they can say that rhyme with happy

Needs Development:

- show little outward pleasure when they accomplish something new or complete a difficult task
- remain quiet much of the time, making it easy to overlook them or forget that they are there
- play only with familiar things and depend on adult support to get things done
- seem to be without fear, jumping into things without a sense of caution

2. Manages own behavior with increasing skill

Children have developed from “terrible” and single-minded two-year-olds with very elementary or limited verbal skills into sunny and cooperative three-year-olds with impressive new language skills. This new language ability enables three-year-olds to manage their behavior with increasing skill, remember routines, and do simple jobs. They are eager to please and try hard to use words instead of hitting, to ask rather than grab, to plan rather than push and shove. Sometimes they are bossy. They use crying and tantrums less often than a year ago. They make use of their new understanding about other people’s feelings in order to guide the way they manage their own behavior. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- tell the teacher that they would like to feed the classroom rabbit today
- start to use bargaining strategies such as, “I’ll go for my nap after I finish my puzzle”
- say they’re sorry when they waited too long to go to the bathroom and had an accident
- announce very loudly that it must be their turn to be the farmer in the dell because they haven’t had a turn yet
- try to explain a different way to play a game but get impatient and begin to yell and push when no one seems to understand
- call to a parent for help when their younger brother tears the drawing they just finished

Needs Development:

- cry angrily when they realize that they are all wet from the splashing and wild play at the water table
- collect all the crayons for themselves and refuse to share them with the other children at the table
- hit the child who insists they have to wait to have a turn on the swing
- look around in a confused manner when the teacher asks them to get the book off the shelf for storytime

3. Expresses feelings, needs, and wants

Young preschoolers use their new words to express a wide variety of thoughts about how they feel. Some children are insistent and verbal about their feelings, while others are more quiet or shy. They now have the language skills to verbalize what they like and what they want. Fears of imagined dangers continue to be a part of their experience. Young three-year-olds continue to use physical ways of expressing themselves when their feelings are intense. They still need adult support and encouragement to use words when they are upset. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- spill the juice as they try to be the teacher-helper and then stamp their feet in frustration
- use words to tell another child that they don't like it when he grabs the blocks
- ask for a story about monsters because they are trying to gain control over their fear that a monster lives in their bedroom
- laugh as a way of hiding anxiety about a mishap on the playground
- talk to their imaginary friend about things they are thinking about
- explain what they want after someone notices they are agitated and asks them about it

Needs Development:

- hit or cry when they're frustrated or angry
- get silly and run around the room when they're excited or happy
- squeeze too hard and not let go when trying to make friends with a classmate
- hit a child who reaches for one of their crayons or their play dough

III. Relationships With Other Children: Child to Child**1. Engages in cooperative play with other children**

Preschoolers can now include give-and-take in their play with others. They begin to share play themes and to plan simple play ideas together. They ask each other questions, make suggestions, and begin to have ongoing friendships. They become more involved with a small number of specific children and often want to play with only one friend. Although they do play together and can work out some of the problems they encounter, they still need adult support in finding solutions to many of the social conflicts that arise. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- ask several children to play a game of chase with them but get angry when it doesn't work the way they expected
- trade the red marker on the table for the green marker that another child is using
- plan how to act out a favorite story with a friend in the classroom
- join in games of pretend play with other children, for example, playing house and assigning roles such as, "You be the mommy and I'll be the daddy"
- say to a friend, "It's my turn, me first," as they scramble to be first to jump off the low step of the climbing structure
- laugh almost hysterically at the snack table when a friend makes silly faces

Needs Development:

- run to be first in line, pushing aside another child who got there first
- hold onto the ball just rolled to them and not roll it on to anyone else
- play so roughly that other children are afraid of them
- push another child while grabbing away the toy he had been playing with and ignoring his protests

2. Shows increasing ability to understand the feelings of other children

Preschoolers are becoming more aware of other children's feelings and are starting to understand that their actions and words affect others. Although their actions sometimes lead to conflicts, and their enthusiasm includes being angry when things don't go their way, they are learning some simple techniques for solving or preventing these conflicts. Adults continue to play an important role in helping them figure out how other children feel and how to handle social interactions. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- find the dustpan and broom to sweep up the sand they spilled
- let a friend know that she can use the marble roll now
- tell a classmate that there are too many people in the block area so he should paint at the easel
- gather all the blocks into a pile and tell the next child who comes into the block corner that there are no more blocks left
- explain to the teacher that Tanika is sad because her hamster died last night

Needs Development:

- grab the water bucket away from another child, ignoring that child's protests
- tell another child he cannot play in the housekeeping play area
- yell, "You're stupid!" when another child takes the truck or stuffed animal
- grab the cash register and tell the other child she can't play with it any longer
- walk away saying, "You're not my friend," when a classmate begins to argue over the riding trucks

Communication and Language

IV. Understanding and Communicating: Preschooler Talk

1. Understands requests, directions, concept words, stories, and sequence

Three-year-olds have become language experts. New words are fascinating to them, and they understand so many more concepts than they did just six months before. They can recall past events, remember where things have been put, and follow one- and two-step directions, although they sometimes still need physical help and encouragement from adults. They understand questions and can respond to more abstract thoughts, such as, “Why do we do that?” and “What happens when __?” They understand the concept of two as they count their ears and eyes and hands, or pick out two cookies. Time is still very relational and concrete. It has meaning for young three-year-olds in terms of other things they know about, such as *after* lunch or *when it’s dark*. They can recall main events in stories and usually can retell the story in sequence. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- use words associated with their understanding of time, such as *dark time, sleep time, eating time*
- go independently to find their boots or their mittens in the box by the door when told it’s time to get ready to play outside
- find the correct book on the bookshelf when the teacher asks them to get the book she was reading yesterday
- follow all the steps in feeding the hamster (going to the cupboard to get the food, putting it in a dish, and then delivering it to the cage) when it is their turn to take care of the class pet
- get their coat when the teacher says it’s time to go home
- follow the suggestion that they get a paper towel from the sink and help wipe up the soapsuds that were spilled when they were blowing bubbles
- respond to direction words like *around, backward, go forward*
- show understanding of story plots, such as why the monkeys finally threw down their hats in *Caps for Sale*

Needs Development:

- be able to point to only two or three body parts when asked
- become confused when they try to follow simple directions
- look away when asked questions as simple as “What’s your name?”
- not be able to find the picture on the board that matches the picture card in their hand

2. Uses conventions of speech while expressing ideas

Three-year-olds may still have trouble pronouncing all the sounds of the language, but they can usually be understood, even when speaking out of context. Their sentences are longer and they use more complex words. They are following more rules of speech as they talk about their feelings, answer questions, explain their

thoughts, and announce what they observe. They begin to talk about the future and to use words that describe size, position, and the functions of objects. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- repeat actual text when they retell a story using a puppet or the flannel board
- describe the feeling of play dough in their hands as they squish, pound, and twist it
- answer fairly complex questions, such as, “What is this?” or “How did you do that?”
- talk about things that are not immediately present, such as what happened at the store or what happened to Mommy’s hat when the wind was blowing
- explain the rules for using the slide: “Only one person can be on the ladder”
- add observations about details in the pictures as they look at books
- use an increasing number of position words, such as *inside* and *underneath*
- include more extensive social conventions of speech, such as, “You’re welcome”
- describe in more detail, using their expanded vocabulary, the trip they took to visit grandma or the class trip to the library
- express their growing understanding of time when they say, “after Daddy comes home we will _____”

Needs Development:

- use very few action words (verbs ending in *ing*)
- not refer to color or make size comparisons
- continue to have many mispronunciations and substitutions
- not include new words when talking about things

3. Participates in conversations

Three-year-olds are in love with language. They could talk nonstop all day long if it were possible. They sing and chant to themselves, talk with a companion, and if no one is available, talk to their dolls and stuffed animals, pets, and baby sister. They explain what they are doing, what they did earlier, and what is going to happen next, and add details to the stories that are read to them. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- ask questions in order to keep a conversation going
- insert their own information into a family discussion, such as “and then we _____”
- take turns speaking when involved in a group discussion
- use social conventions such as saying good-bye when getting ready to go home from school or when a classroom visitor is about to leave
- chatter away to the dolls sitting at the tea party, asking questions and then answering the questions as they talk for both

Needs Development:

- sit quietly at snacktime or at the dinner table, not seeming to notice the conversations that are going on
- interrupt when other people are talking to say some words that are not connected to the conversation in process
- make few comments about what they see on the walk to the store or with the class
- look down and not answer when someone asks them a question

Cognitive Development

V. Exploration and Problem Solving: Preschooler Discoveries

1. Understands new information and begins to explore more complex situations and concepts

Three-year-olds have been exposed to the concepts of color, shape, size, and even time in many conversational and natural ways. At this preschool age, teachers and parents begin to focus on these concepts in a more organized way. Three-year-olds still learn best and most easily when abstract concepts are a part of everyday conversations and concrete experiences, rather than made into lessons. Children can learn to understand quantity as adults talk about the number of eyes, ears, or hands they have, and then go on to count higher by suggesting, “Let’s count our fingers!” or “How many people are in our family?” Color is learned as they choose which shirt to wear, find socks to match, notice the green leaves or the beautiful yellow flowers. Conversations about size occur as they help pick out a *big* squash at the grocery store, discuss whether to get the *big* tube of toothpaste or the *small* one, and notice how much bigger the baby is getting. Shapes come up naturally as they talk about the *round* ball, the *round* buttons on their shirts, and the *round* apples and oranges. *Round* is the first shape that young three-year-olds can understand and learn to recognize. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- ask many questions about almost everything they see
- recognize color words and pick out the “red blocks” or the “blue paint jar”
- enjoy the feeling of being able to transform the paper on the easel as they cover every inch of it with red paint
- show an understanding of the concept of gender when they tell a friend that he cannot be the mommy because he is a boy
- make up hand motions to go with a song
- act out being the doctor in charge of dolls in the dramatic play area
- show pride in the new finger play they just taught a friend, using all the motions “all by myself”
- notice the tiny sprout just appearing above the dirt in the cup where they planted a radish seed

Needs Development:

- not be able to pick out circles in the environment, such as a round light fixture or a round clockface
- point to objects randomly when asked to look for things that are red
- put all the crayons together in one box even though the teacher asked for the broken ones to be put in one box and the whole ones to be put in another
- not be able to recall the name of the main character in the story that was just read
- do the same puzzle over and over

2. Makes a plan before taking action

Three-year-olds' classroom play shows much more planning than ever before. Their block play now includes combining toy cars and trains with the block structures they've built. Sand play becomes purposeful as pies, cakes, roads, and houses become evident. Dramatic play includes themes and gathering appropriate props. Play dough turns into snakes and cakes and pots and animals. Climbing structures become forts and areas for circus performances. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- look over a collection of buttons and sort them so that all the big ones are in one box and the little ones are in another box
- find all the felt figures they will need for the felt board in preparation for retelling *Gingerbread Man* or *Ask Mr. Bear*
- bring their favorite truck from home because they want to build a garage for it with the unit blocks
- look through a container of beads for another green bead in order to complete the pattern they started
- look for a hose, or its substitute, so they can act out being firefighters after a visit to the fire station

Needs Development:

- move back and forth from one area of the classroom to another without a plan
- continue to push and poke at the play dough, not trying new ways to use it
- run around in the play yard but not try any of the wheeled toys
- make a choice at choice time but stay only a few minutes before leaving and wandering to something else

3. Thinks about a problem and figures out what to do

Young preschoolers have lots of ideas about how the world works. They test their ideas and use their understandings and experience to solve problems, many of which are social. Even though they are learning about negotiation and how to figure out new ways of doing things, they have little patience or endurance for staying with a problem if it doesn't get solved quickly. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- run over to the dramatic play area to find a cooking pan to use at the sand table because the sand pail is missing
- go to the carpentry bench to get a hammer because the wheel on the wagon is broken and needs to be fixed
- find another long block for a classmate who is building an airport in the block area
- tell a friend that they are the oldest, “and I know because I am taller than you!”
- bring over the book with the torn page and ask for tape so they can fix it
- ask for another cookie because a friend has two and they want to have the same
- tell Jason that he can’t play in the block house unless he wants to be the man who delivers the pizza
- sort out the blocks into two piles because “you can’t use my blocks, now you have your own!”

Needs Development:

- continue to tug and cry when they can’t have the fire truck that José is playing with
- take out their lunchbox and start to eat their sandwich even though it is only 9:30
- knock down the block fort when Anselmo says, “No more soldiers can come in here!”
- throw the play dough on the floor in frustration when it keeps getting stuck on the rolling pin when they try to roll it out

Physical Development

VI. Movement and Coordination: Preschoolers in Motion

1. Participates in many play activities and uses new movement skills

Gone is the waddle and the arms stretched out to maintain balance. Three-year-olds are able to move about with stability and confidence. They are able to participate in a variety of play activities now that they have mastered the skills of moving and have gained more control. They can climb stairs using alternating feet, they are becoming skilled at walking on a balance beam, and they can ride a tricycle. They can now pay attention to games and how to play them rather than having to concentrate on how to move. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” with a friend as they make the rocky boat go up and down
- gallop, run, walk, wiggle, and tiptoe along with classmates, watching how they move and imitating their movements
- climb with more agility and less fear on the jungle gym
- walk on a balance beam for a few steps, going both forward and backward
- jump from the second step on the stairs

- begin to move their legs as if pumping while they swing back and forth
- ride a tricycle, steering well and using the pedals
- kick a ball with increasing accuracy
- throw a beanbag or a ball overhand with fairly accurate aim
- participate in circle games that involve all players such as hokey-pokey or “This Is the Way We Wash Our Clothes”

Needs Development:

- sit in or on the swing without moving, waiting for someone to push them
- not be able to keep their feet on the balance beam for even one forward step
- stand in the circle for group games and activities but not seem to catch on to the actions
- not be able to lift one foot for even a second to balance
- ride the tricycle by pushing with both feet and not steering, just holding on

2. Uses hands with increasing control and precision for a variety of purposes

Preschoolers are ready to try out a range of art materials that call for fine motor control. Some are beginning to hold crayons and pencils in a thumb and finger grasp more nearly like that of adults, while others still grasp with the whole fist. Tactile materials such as play dough, finger painting, and water and sand play allow three-year-olds to practice controlling their fingers and develop finger skills. Exploring with these materials also encourages preschoolers to develop their imagination, which is so important for thinking skills. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- try new art media, such as chalk, with eagerness and an exploratory attitude, alternating between a whole hand grasp and a thumb and fingertips grasp
- experiment with pencils, crayons, and markers, beginning to hold them with a more adult-like grasp
- put on and take off clothes in the dress-up area
- draw squiggles on their paper and announce it is their name
- draw a series of lines and dots and tell people it’s a sign, and then tell everyone what the sign says
- participate in songs and finger plays, both familiar and new ones
- fit together a wide variety of manipulatives such as connecting blocks, or pop beads
- dress the doll with more complex clothes such as socks, shoes, or a bonnet
- shape play dough or clay into more intricate and/or representational creations

Needs Development:

- run their crayon or marker aimlessly around the paper, holding the crayon or marker with a palmer grasp
- show little interest or skill in using manipulatives such as connecting blocks, or putting together puzzles
- ask for help when trying to put on a jacket for outdoor play or a dress in dramatic play
- not be able to master the motions of classroom finger plays

3. Accomplishes new self-help tasks

By three years of age, preschoolers are able to use their hands to accomplish many self-help tasks as well as to participate in housekeeping activities. They are increasingly independent and understand routines and procedures. They want to be a part of everything that is going on. Taking care of themselves makes them feel that they are growing up. For example, they might:

Developing as Expected:

- spread peanut butter on crackers or bread
- eat without much spilling, using a spoon and a fork
- participate in cleanup, putting things away where they belong
- feed the classroom pet with little help
- brush their teeth successfully by themselves
- put on their shoes as well as their socks, underpants, and shirt
- pour juice from a small pitcher and stop before the juice overflows

Needs Development:

- not yet participate independently in toileting needs
- fuss when asked to help with dressing, not wanting to put on their socks or shirt
- watch as others pick up and put away toys at cleanup, or have trouble keeping the toys from falling off the shelf as they try to put them up
- spill the food as they try to fill the dish to feed the classroom pet

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