Child Development – Range and Content of Development

(The following content will be delivered via a reading. Printable handouts should be made out of this reading)

INTRODUCTION

This section of the training is designed to provide you with knowledge of the typical content and range of child development for children birth through age 5. Three main age groups will be overviewed: infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Each section will provide an overview as well as typical milestones. When considering these milestones of development it is important to keep the child development principles covered in the previous section in mind. A key principle for interpreting developmental milestones is that there can be great variation in timing of development.

SECTION 1: INFANTS

Infants

Young Infants (Birth to 9 months)

Infants birth to 9 months learn from being touched and held, from the tone of voice and from facial expressions people use when caring for them. Infants develop a sense of trust and security through having their needs met, being fed when hungry, comforted when crying, held and touched gently, and kept warm and dry. This early sense of trust is very important for positive development.

People, and in particular faces, are fascinating to infants. They will turn to voices at an early age. Infants coo when talked to and develop different types of cries to express differing needs. Infant motor development moves rapidly from learning to lift their head to rolling from stomach to back and back to stomach. By about 4 to 5 months, infants will try to grasp for an object, and watch their feet kick and move when placed on his or her back.

Infants quickly begin to understand the meanings of symbols - that a smile and pleasant tone of voice mean the person speaking to them is happy, that dimming lights means it is naptime.

Mobile Infants (8 to 12 Months)

As infants mature, they become more and more mobile, first by creeping, scooting or bouncing forward and then by crawling, pulling themselves up, and eventually walking. This mobility opens up opportunities to explore. Infants at this stage begin to imitate, holding a comb to a doll’s head or patting an adult to imitate how they have been comforted. They also begin to manipulate and use tools, such as a cup to scoop water.
Infants in this stage of development may exhibit anxious behavior around unfamiliar adults. They also show interest in peers and demonstrate intense attention to adult language. They understand many more words than they can say. They typically understand 20 or more words showing they understand by looking at objects or following directions. Babbled sentence become longer with words strung together. Many children at this age will be able to say two or three words clearly and shake their head for no. When looking at picture books, they will point to objects.

The following are some of the typical milestones of infant development:

**NEWBORN TO 2-MONTH-OLD INFANTS**

- Look at adults’ faces when talking.
- Smile back when smiled at.

**3- TO 4-MONTH-OLD INFANTS**

- Make sounds like "oooo" and "aaaaa."
- Jump when there is a loud or sudden noise.
- Lift their heads and chests when lying on their stomach.
- Play with their hands by touching them together.

**5- TO 7-MONTH-OLD INFANTS**

- Reach out to be picked up.
- Laugh and babble (saying “babababa” or “daddadada”).
- Roll from tummy to back and from back to tummy.
- Turn their heads toward sounds like the radio, TV, or voices.
- Reach for and hold a toy.
- Sit up with some help.

**8- TO 10-MONTH-OLD INFANTS**

- Imitate playing "peek-a-boo" or waving bye-bye.
- Scoot or crawl across the floor on his or her tummy.
- Hold something in each hand at the same time.
- Stand while holding onto furniture.

**11- TO 12-MONTH-OLD INFANTS**

- Offer a toy when asked.
- Shake their head "no."
- Look at several familiar objects in response to words, i.e. "bottle" or "ball."
- Pull up to standing by holding onto furniture.
- Can find a small toy when it is hidden.
- Say "mama" or "dada" to the correct parent.
- Pick up small things (like cereal) using thumb and forefinger.
SECTION 2: TODDLERS

TODDLERS

When children learn to walk, they are called toddlers. During the toddler stage, most children learn to walk, talk and solve problems. Toddlers are developing independence. That is why toddlers want to do things for themselves, have their own ideas about how things should happen, and use "no" many times each day.

The toddler stage is characterized by much growth and change, mood swings, and some negativity. Toddlers are often frustrated and "misbehave" as a result of increased desire to explore and be independent but lacking some of the skills needed to do so. Frustration is also common because they frequently lack the language skills to express themselves. Some adults call the toddler stage "the terrible twos." Toddlers are very concerned with their own needs and ideas and have difficulty with cooperative play and sharing.

The following are some of the typical milestones of toddler development. These milestones are divided into five domains:

- Physical Development (Sometimes referred to as motor development and frequently divided into fine and gross motor development),
- Language Development (Sometimes divided into receptive and expressive development),
- Social and Emotional Development,
- Cognitive Development (Sometimes referred to as intellectual development),
- Self-help Development (Sometimes milestones within this domain are included in motor development and a self-help domain is not included separately).

ONE-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Walk without support.
- Can stack blocks.
- Can hold a pencil and scribble.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Point to objects that they want.
- Combine two words to form a basic sentence.
- Use the pronouns “me” and “mine.”
• Use "no" frequently.
• Understand at least four words that are not accompanied with a gesture.
• Can follow at least one simple command without a gesture cue.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

• Want to do things independently.
• May temper tantrum often.
• Enjoy playing by themselves or beside (not with) other children.
• Have difficulty sharing toys. May be possessive.
• Have difficulty remembering rules.
• View themselves as the center of the world.
• Become increasingly more self-aware.
• Begin to express new emotions such as jealousy, affection, pride, and shame.
• May continuously ask for their parents.
• May have rapid mood shifts. Their emotions are usually very intense but short-lived.
• Begin to include a second person in pretend play.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

• Imitate animal sounds.
• Name familiar people and objects.
• Name body parts and familiar pictures.
• Use objects for their intended purpose.
• Have a short attention span.
• Are very active.
• Because of their developing imagination, have trouble knowing what is real and what is pretend.

SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT

• Drink from a cup with help.
• Feed themselves finger food.
• Use a spoon.
• Push foot into shoe, put arm into sleeve.
TWO-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Walk, run, climb, walk up and down stairs alone, and digs.
- Throw a ball and kick a ball forward.
- Jump with two feet together.
- Stand on tiptoes.
- Take things apart and put them back together. Like to screw and unscrew lids.
- Start to show an interest in toilet training.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Use three or more words in combination.
- Have a speaking vocabulary of up to 200 words.
- Use adjectives and adverbs.
- Retell events of the day.
- Recognizes pictures in a book.
- Can carry out at least 3 simple commands without a gesture cue.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Begin to play simple pretend games. Their fantasy play is very short and simple. It does not involve others.
- They are generally very self-centered and sharing is still difficult. They enjoy playing near other children.
- Try to assert themselves by saying "no."
- Sometimes do the opposite of what is asked.
- Like to imitate the behavior of adults and others. They want to help with household tasks.
- Become frustrated easily.
- Refuse help.
- Are surer of themselves than one-year-old children.
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Follow simple directions.
- Express their feelings and wishes.
- Use objects to represent other objects.
- Still have a very limited attention span.
- Can memorize short rhymes.
- Join in simple songs.
- Begin to think about doing something before doing it.
- Have trouble making choices, but want to make choices.

SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT

- Help dress and undress self.
- Drink from a cup independently.
- Use utensils independently.
SECTION 3: THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS

Three and Four-Year-Olds

Three and four-year-old children are making developmental strides and express an interest in the world around them. They learn from their play. They are busy developing skills and using language.

Three and four-year-old children want to establish themselves as separate from their parents and are more independent than toddlers. They can express their needs since they have greater command of language.

Three and four-year-old children may still have difficulty sharing and are beginning to develop cooperative play. Because of their developing imaginations they may have trouble telling fantasy from reality, including talking about imaginary friends.

The following are some of the typical milestones of three and four-year-old children:

THREE-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Walk on tiptoes.
- Stand on one foot.
- Jump horizontally.
- Ride a tricycle.
- Build towers of 6-9 blocks.
- Catch a ball.
- Smear or daub paint. Draw or paint in vertical, horizontal, and circular motions.
- Can handle small objects (such as puzzles, pegboards, and parquetry sets).

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Have a vocabulary of 2,000 to 4,000 words.
- Use simple sentences of three to four words.
- Ask many who, what, where, and why questions.
- Can communicate their needs, ideas, and questions.
- Can point to at least seven body parts when asked to.
- Can follow directions involving prepositions such as put the shoe on the table.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Enjoy dramatic play with other children.
• Begin to learn to share.
• Need to know clear and consistent rules and what the consequences for breaking them are.
• Have emotions that are usually extreme and short-lived. Need to be encouraged to express their feelings with words.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

• Have attention spans that are a little longer so they can participate in group activities.
• Sort objects by one characteristic at a time.
• Can say numbers 1 to 5.
• Draw pictures and then names them.
• Match objects in one to one correspondences.

SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT

• Undress without help but need some help getting dressed.
• Wash hands independently.
• Dish out own food with help and eats independently.
• Brush teeth.

FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

• Have more small muscle control. Can make representational pictures (for example, pictures of houses, people, and flowers).
• Run on tiptoes.
• Hop on one foot.
• Gallop.
• Begin to skip.
• Throw a ball overhand.
• Pump themselves on a swing.
• Like unzipping, unsnapping, and unbuttoning clothes.
• Can cut on a line with scissors.
• Can lace own shoes (but not tie).
• Can make designs and write crude letters.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

• Expand vocabulary from 4,000 to 6,000 words.
• Use five to six word sentences.
• Can retell a four or five step directive or the sequence in a story.
• Can follow three directions that are unrelated to one another without gesture cue.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

• Have a very active imagination.
• Sometimes have an imaginary friend.
• Can be aggressive but want friends and enjoy being with other children.
• Have language that includes silly words and profanity.
• Tend to brag and be bossy.
• Are learning to take turns and to share. Games and other activities can help preschoolers learn about taking turns.
• Enjoy pretending to be important adults (mother, father, doctor, nurse, police officer, mail carrier, etc.).
• Need to feel important and worthwhile.
• Need opportunities to feel more freedom and independence.
• Appreciate praise for their achievements.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

• Enjoy serious discussions.
• Count objects from 1 to 5.
• Sort objects using more than one characteristic.
• Understand colors and basic shapes.

SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT

• Dress and undress without help.
• Lace shoes.
• Comb hair without help.
• Rarely spills with cup or spoon.
SECTION 4: FIVE YEAR OLDS

Five Year-Old Children

Five-year-olds are enjoy planning, and spending time discussing who will do what. They especially enjoy dramatic play, usually with other children. Five-year-olds are more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others around them. It is less difficult for them to wait for a turn or to share toys and material. "Best friends" become very important.

The following are some of the typical milestones of five-year-old children:

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Can throw a ball overhead.
- Can catch bounced balls.
- Ride a tricycle skillfully; may show interest in riding a bicycle with training wheels.
- Balance on either foot for 5-10 seconds.
- Cut on a line with scissors.
- Copy simple designs and shapes.
- Left or right hand dominance is established.
- Walk down stairs, alternating feet without using a handrail.
- Jump over low objects.
- Can run, gallop, and tumble.
- Can skip and run on tiptoe.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Have speech that is completely understandable and pronounce words will little difficulty, except for some particular sounds such as /l/ and /th/.
- Have a spoken vocabulary of up to 8,000 words.
- Understand about 13,000 words.
- Use 5-8 words in a sentence.
- Like to argue and reason; use words like "because."
- Understand "more," "less," and "same."
- Understand “before” and “after,” “above,” and “below.”
- Can understand and use comparative terms like big, bigger, or biggest.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Invent games with simple rules.
• Organize other children and toys for pretend play.
• Still confuse fantasy with reality sometimes.
• Often fear loud noises, the dark, animals, and some people.
• Can take turns and share, but doesn't always want to.
• Express anger and jealousy physically.
• Often exclude other children in play.
• Like to try new things and take risks.
• Like to make own decisions.
• Notice when another child is angry or sad.
• Prefer company of 1 or 2 children at a time; may become bossy or sulky when others join in.
• Begin to have a very basic understanding of right and wrong.
• Play contentedly and independently without constant supervision.
• Take turns and shares (sometimes).
• Understand and respect rules - often ask permission.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

• Know basic colors like red, yellow, blue, green, orange.
• Are able to memorize address and phone number.
• Understand that stories have a beginning, middle, and end.
• Are able to remember stories and repeat them.
• Enjoy creating and telling stories.
• Understand that books are read from left to right, top to bottom.
• Enjoy riddles and jokes.
• Draw pictures that represent animals, people, and objects.
• Enjoy tracing or copying letters.
• Can place objects in order from shortest to tallest.
• Sort objects by size.
• Identify some letters of the alphabet and a few numbers (if taught).
• Count up to 10 objects.

SELF-HELP DEVELOPMENT

• Use a fork and knife well.
• Use knives to spread but not cut.
• Can zip coat, buttons well and may be able to tie shoelaces.
• Clean up spills and messes with little coaching.
• Put toys away without help.

References
