

RESOURCE



Photo shared by family served by Child Development Resources in Williamsburg, VA

Infant/Toddler Development by Age and Early Childhood Outcomes

Adapted from **Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia**
January 2008

TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT: BIRTH TO 36 MONTHS

PURPOSE

This manual was developed to provide a resource to assist practitioners in determining how a child is functioning in relation to their same aged peers in the three functional areas:

1. social-emotional skills and relationships;
2. acquiring and using new knowledge and skills; and
3. taking action to get needs met.

The intent is to provide a hands on document with information readily available for practitioners both before and throughout the evaluation/assessment and determination process.

Using This Resource

The information in the following pages has been compiled from a variety of books, assessment tools and websites. The information is organized in accordance with the three Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) child outcomes to help practitioners, parents and other family members understand the kinds of functional behaviors displayed by typically developing children at various ages. It is very important to keep in mind there is a wide range for emergence of developmental skills for typically developing children. In order to understand a child's developmental functioning in comparison to same-age peers, evaluators must be familiar with the child's behavior over the variety of settings, situations, and interactions that make up the child's day to day life. The functional outcomes being rated address behaviors that are meaningful and used in the context of children's everyday lives. Evaluators should always be considering how the child is using skills and behaviors to achieve a result or outcome that is meaningful to him/her in his/her daily life.

These examples should not be considered or used as a checklist. They are descriptions of the kinds of behaviors that a child of a given age might use in their everyday routines and activities. The behavioral descriptors are to be used **as a supplement to, not a substitute for**, other assessment information gathered through use of validated assessment tools, observation, discussions with families and other caregivers, and review of reports from other individuals regarding the child's developmental. ***In determining the extent to which a child's functioning meets age expectations, the team must look at an overall pattern, rather than specific fragments, of development.***

Please Note: A thorough explanation and details of development are beyond the scope of this document. It is incumbent upon early childhood professionals to have a thorough knowledge of development. Resources listed in this manual can be used as one mechanism for professionals to increase their knowledge. Observation of typically developing children and specific coursework are other methods to increase professional competency in child development.

1 Month

General Impression:

Sleeping and eating is a major focus for baby. Baby is comforted by caregiver and relies on caregiver to meet physical and emotional needs.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

The infant is responding to the people around him; he stops crying when he sees someone's face, hears a voice or when he is picked up and held.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby looks at colorful toys briefly and focuses on objects as far away as three feet. He responds to voices and can already recognize his parent's voice.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

In order to look at people or respond to a noise, baby can slightly lift his head off parent's shoulder or floor when on tummy and can turn head to both sides when lying on back. Baby's hands are often fisted and therefore baby is not yet holding onto toys, but may use a reflexive grasp to hold onto a caregiver's finger.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Baby is able to coordinate his suck and swallow when breastfeeding or being fed from a bottle.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

He cries to let his caregivers know when he is hungry or uncomfortable. He may stop crying when picked up and held.

2 Months

General Impression:

Sleeping patterns are becoming more predictable. Baby is more alert and reacts to caregivers by watching them and moving arms/legs in response to caregivers.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

The baby is responding positively to her Mom and Dad. She gets excited when Mom or Dad comes in the room, and may cry when her Mother leaves the room. She is beginning to notice other people and shows excitement by smiling and moving her arms and legs.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby is beginning to be able to focus on people and objects further away from her (2-4 feet). She can visually recognize her parent and she stares and gazes at a toy or Mom or Dad. She is beginning to make single vowel sounds.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Baby is increasing her ability to move and control her body in response to a caregiver and she may be seen kicking her legs or straightening them out. Baby can also roll to her back from her side to look for a caregiver. She will be able to use her forearms to lift her head when lying on her tummy, which will begin her ability to explore toys, faces, etc.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Baby can coordinate several sucks before swallowing when nursing or bottle-feeding. Leakage is minimal.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Cries begin to have differentiated tones for hunger, etc..

3 Months

General Impression:

Interest in watching the faces of people talking to baby increases dramatically from the prior month. Crying diminishes as baby is interested in exploring the room and faces visually. Baby is starting to roll which allows him to look for toys or faces. He is beginning to look around while on his tummy. He tolerates being on his tummy without being uncomfortable in the position.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

The baby is showing a greater interest in people than objects by focusing longer on human faces than any objects. He looks closely at the face and eyes of the person talking to him. He may coo when talked to and has begun to give a small chuckle or laugh.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby is learning about his hands by bringing them close to his face and watching them, and by mouthing them. He recognizes his bottle. He is learning through his sense of hearing in addition to his vision, looking around the room when he hears a sound and cooing when talked to.

He continues to use his vision to learn, looking back and forth between toys, and looking at the face and eyes of the person talking to him. He still prefers human faces, but will look around the room to others and objects.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Baby is much more in control of his head and looks around from many positions (lying on back, being held at shoulder, lying on tummy). This allows him the opportunity to begin to seek out his toys or explore with his eyes.

Baby should tolerate being on his tummy and even use the time on his tummy to lift up on his forearms and begin to lift on straight arms to look at his caregiver or others in his environment. He can sit upright on someone's lap with support and turn his head to look around.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Several sucks before swallowing

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Definite cry for hunger distinguishable by caregivers

4 Months

General Impression:

Baby is able to hold her toys and will take some of those toys to her mouth for further exploration. Baby recognizes familiar people and will get excited, smile, vocalize and reach out for caregiver. Baby is rolling off of her tummy to get a fuller view of the world or communicate with caregiver.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

The baby vocalizes, smiles, and reaches out to a familiar person and may laugh aloud when playing. She may get upset and cry if her play is interrupted.

Vocalizes and jabbars when left alone. She may show distress when she hears an angry voice and laugh aloud when playing.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Watches movement of her own hands and will follow a dangling toy or object with her eyes. She gets excited when she sees her preparing her bottle.

She reaches for toys and is able to grasp a toy for a few seconds. She may bring the toy to her mouth.

She turns her head toward a voice or the sound of a rattle.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Baby is getting stronger and can tolerate being on her tummy with her head and chest up for longer periods of time. Baby has also figured out that she can elicit noise from toys by shaking them. She may not have perfect control when shaking, but it is purposeful. Baby can hold a toy in her hand for a few seconds and her interest in doing so can be seen by her work to reach towards a toy.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

May place both hands on bottle
Pats bottle

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Distinct cries for multiple needs - hunger, fatigue, pain.

5 Months

General Impression:

Baby has an increased interest in toys now and has become interactive with caregivers as seen in baby's social interactions, such as giggling and imitating faces. Baby can distinguish the difference between happy and angry voices.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Baby is engaging with others through cooing as if in a conversation. He laughs aloud when someone talks to or tickles him. He enjoys hearing and will respond by cooing or moving around. He can definitely distinguish between friendly and angry voices.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby has new ways of playing with toys including exploring them with his mouth. He will turn his head and look when a toy is dropped.

His social skills also impact learning as he will imitate a few simple facial expressions and laugh aloud when tickled or talked to.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Baby is getting more sophisticated with holding toys and can even hold a toy in both hands at the same time. If he drops a toy, he will look for it, then pick it back up – if it is still interesting to him.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

May begin taking food from a spoon.

Places both hands on bottle during feeding

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Baby continues to cry to get primary needs met, but may also use cooing or smiles to get social needs met.

6 Months

General Impression:

Baby is much more mobile now as she is able to roll and is showing signs of early prop sitting. Baby is making many sounds and enjoys smiling. Baby turns quickly to a caregiver's voice.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Baby recognizes her parent's voice and turns immediately when she hears it across the room. Her first separation anxiety is beginning as she can now distinguish strangers from those who are in her family circle.

She smiles and vocalizes to her image in the mirror and she gets excited when hearing someone nearby.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby is interested in her toys and actively reaches for them in play. She consistently puts the toys and other objects into her mouth while playing. When she drops a toy, she looks for it, showing she remembers that it exists even when out of sight.

She is imitating simple sounds as well as facial expressions. She smiles, vocalizes and pats at her own image in a mirror.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Baby is rolling in all directions to get to toys and caregiver. She can sit in a high chair for mealtime and has found a toy in her feet and toes as she enjoys playing with them.

Parents may enjoy standing their child up on their lap and baby also gets excited to be in this taller posture – she may respond positively (i.e. laughing, smiling, cooing, holding the position, etc.) to continue to be held in this upright position.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Baby is able to hold her bottle easily. She rakes up cheerios with her fingers against palm of hand (if opportunity exists). She is also able to pick up a sippy cup with a handle, but may not yet have opportunity for this experience.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Distinct cry/behavior for different needs

7 Months

General Impression:

Baby has a new view of his toys as he is able to sit by himself and use his hands freely to manipulate toys before taking them to his mouth. Baby's vocalizations are expanding to include some consonant vowel combinations. Baby is showing signs of wanting to crawl.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Baby continues to show a strong attachment to primary caregivers. He still enjoys looking at his mirror image. His coos and babbling continue to be a response to social stimuli as well as a way to engage others.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby's interest in toys and playing expands

- Plays with paper when it is offered
- Holds one toy in a hand and picks up another toy with the other hand
- Reaches persistently for toys, picks up and transfers toy from one hand to another, and bangs and shakes toys to elicit a noise

Vocalizations continue with additional vowel sounds being added. Baby may even be able to make consonant vowel combinations as he babbles in play.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Baby is really pushing to move to get to toys. He can sit and play with his toys, go onto his tummy and reach out with one arm, and **experiment** on his hands and knees by rocking back of forth. Most babies are able to scoot backwards.

Baby can use his hands to manipulate toys between them and he will reach out fully to get to a toy.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Eats solid foods from a spoon well

Can finger-feed dry cereal, little pieces of meat, fruits and vegetables

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Will reach or push away to indicate needs regarding food/drink

8 Months

General Impression:

Baby is exploring more now that she can sit, roll, scoot and maybe crawl forward. Everything in baby's world seems to be a new adventure.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Baby continues to increase her ability to vocalize in "conversation" to respond to people. Baby's first separation anxiety is resolving.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby has learned how to get her toys to make noises. She will shake them repeatedly to get the noise. She may be able to activate very simple cause/effect toys. She is still putting toys in her mouth, but now she is biting or chewing on them.

She has several consonant vowel combinations, such as ba, na, ka. She can make sounds like dada, baba and mama.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Many babies are scooting forward in a modified crawl to get to their toys, caregiver or bottle.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Baby is much more successful in finger feeding herself.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

May use shouting to get someone's attention (not just whining, crying)

9 Months

General Impression:

Baby is engaged and interactive with others. Early “conversation” is happening with others. Baby has newfound freedom with crawling, and may explore large areas of a room. More independent in finger feeding self snacks.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

By nine months old, baby will turn his head if his name is called, make eye contact and smile acknowledging the interaction. He will shake his head “no-no” and use vocalization, turning or pushing away to indicate he is finished or doesn’t like what is being offered.

Baby notices and vocalizes when Mom is preparing to leave the house. He will exchange smiles, loving faces and other expressions with his parents, including back and forth sounds. He will now play interactive games such as chase or peek-a-boo.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby has a clear understanding of object permanence, as he will now search for a toy when it is taken away. He purposefully releases a toy from his hand and will engage putting things in and out of containers.

Baby can shake his head “no-no” to indicate what he does/doesn’t want. He turns to make eye contact and smiles when his name is called, showing both an understanding of his name and the social interaction. He imitates simple sounds and many consonant vowel combinations can be heard now in play.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Baby is very sure in sitting and transitioning into other positions from sitting to play or to get other needs met. Many babies will be pulling up to stand using their caregiver or the furniture. Baby can show excitement and engage in play by clapping hands together. May enjoy banging objects to make very loud noises.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Holds, bites, and chews cracker or cookie
Grasps food and small toys/objects with thumb and forefinger (early pincer grasp – inferior. More refined/neat pincer grasp is by 12 months)

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Shakes head “no-no”

10 Months

General Impression:

Baby is beginning to respond to social games. Baby is very motivated by her ability to move as she can now pull up to standing from sitting position and crawl on hands and knees to get to her toys or caregiver or explore new areas. Baby may “push” boundaries with this new mobility.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Baby is showing early understanding of social games as she will respond with an action to a simple request i.e. wave bye-bye, peek-a-boo and so big. She is beginning to get an understanding of “no-no” as she will stop briefly what she is doing when told no.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby is showing an interest in books and will look at the pictures. She likes to imitate caregiver’s actions in play by banging, stirring, patting, etc. She is exploring toys by poking and touching with her index finger. She can easily uncover toys that are hidden and will move other objects in an attempt to find a lost toy. She may show a preference for certain toys and routinely seek those toys.

She calls “mama” and “dada” although it may not yet be specific (that would be expected by 12 months) and will stop what she is doing when told “no-no,” if only for a brief period.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Baby is crawling now to get her needs met (toys, caregivers). Baby likes standing and many babies will be cruising along the furniture to get to many items – even those that are “off limits” such as a glass with water.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is eating more foods and relying less on bottle and/or breast for nutrition

Makes Wants and Needs Known

May go to pantry/kitchen looking for food

11 Months

General Impression:

Baby is exerting more independence in mobility and feeding skills. Most babies will be experimenting with standing alone without support of caregiver or furniture. Baby repeats actions, such as laughing, to get a response from others in their environment.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Baby is showing an awareness of how actions get a positive response (i.e. laughing) from adults. He will do an action repeatedly to get the desired response.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Baby understands that his actions have an effect – he will repeat sounds or gestures when they are laughed at. He is actively seeking out his toys now that his motor skills allow him to do so. Baby can hold crayons and make marks on the paper but may prefer to put the crayons in his mouth.

Baby can make many different vowel consonant combinations. He is just about to emerge into language with consistent names for mom and dad in the upcoming month. His babbling may sound more like words.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Most babies will be somewhere in the walking stage, although true walking is not fully expected until 14 months. This level of independence opens up many ways for the baby to get his own entertainment and physical needs met. Many babies begin to have the opportunity to “color” and they are successful with making some marks on paper or other surfaces.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Finger feeds

Shows early spoon-feeding skills

Makes Wants and Needs Known

May say “baba” for bottle. Calls “mama” and/or “dada” to get needs met.

12 Months

General Impression:

By 12 months, the child's world is beginning to expand; she is getting into everything, becoming very vocal and asserting herself in new ways. Many children will be walking at this age, however, if not, then child will probably enjoy spending a great deal of time in a standing position. With this newfound independence also comes some separation anxiety when parent attempts to leave. Child begins to follow simple directions (i.e. handing his/her parent a toy, waving bye-bye, finding shoes).

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child is experiencing her second separation anxiety as she clings to her parent when the parent attempts to leave. Child has an increased dependence on her mother/primary caregiver as she is experiencing more independence with her emerging walking skills. Child likes to be able to hear and see an adult most of the time and may even protest going to bed because of this separation. She will also begin to hand a toy to her parent when asked.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child is showing increased curiosity about her environment. She will point to objects with her index finger and look back to her caregiver with a questioning look.

Child is connecting words with objects and can follow simple instructions such as "go get the ball." She will also understand simple directions related to her daily routine. She can say at least 2 words besides "mama" and "dada." She "sings" (makes sounds) when she hears music.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child has more control with how she plays with toys. She will enjoy putting things in and out of a container multiple times. She will probably enjoy playing with shape sorters and cause/effect pop-up toys now that she has more control over using her hands. She is still working on her new pattern of movement (walking is emerging or has emerged) , and enjoys exploring larger areas of the house.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Finger-feeds self for part of a meal

Can take off hat and shoes

Does not mind being dressed –cooperates with caregiver

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Indicates desire to "get down" or "get out" other than fussing or crying

Says "ba-ba" or other word to indicate food desires

13 Months

General Impression:

Child's mobility is continuing to open up his world. He is beginning to communicate using words for Mom, Dad, and simple food items, such as cup, juice, or cracker. Babbling is very common and child may pretend to imitate parents doing activities such as talking on the phone.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child engages in early conversation and follows directions to please adults. He is communicating with babbles and jargon and a few early words.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child is showing an increase in receptive language and cognition. He can point and will often point to pictures with the expectation that his caregiver will label the picture. He is following more simple one-step directions and will look around to find the object that is named by his parent.

Child is also showing better command of expressive language, as he will repeat simple sounds and words on request. Early words are emerging.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child's mobility has increased and he is all over the house, following behind parent and exploring on his own. For children who are already walking, they may resort to crawling if it will get them someplace quicker. Child can use his hands in a coordinated manner which is seen both in eating and play skills. Cause/effect toys or busy boxes are easier for the child to manipulate now. Child can purposefully throw a ball from a sitting or standing position.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is still cooperating with dressing and takes just a very few items off. He can finger feed himself a good portion of the meal / snack. Transition to an open or sippy cup and reduction / elimination of the bottle should be occurring.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Child will use mostly pointing and gestures to request items, but may have a word or two to request his cup, juice, milk or a favorite snack, such as cookie/cracker.

14 Months

General Impression:

Child begins to initiate games (i.e. peek-a-boo) with caregivers and gives hugs and kisses to Mommy and Daddy. Parents will have many “tricks” to show off what their child can do (i.e. wave bye-bye, blow kisses, where’s your belly, etc.). Child can chew most foods well and is independently eating half of her meal.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child is showing affection to Mom and Dad by giving kisses and hugs. She wants to be near adults and participates in many social games to please those adults. She will even initiate games such as peek-a-boo with caregivers.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child’s persistence and problem solving converge and child is able to unwrap a present to find a hidden treasure. She also wants to imitate siblings and adults by using a crayon to scribble in imitation.

She may now be able to name a few pictures in a book, but still wants caregiver to name the pictures. Child is gaining about one new word each week.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

By the end of the 14th month, child should be walking independently and fairly steadily throughout her environment. For those children who have been walking for a few months, they may begin to *attempt* to jump.

Child’s ability to use his hands can also be seen, as she is able to turn pages in a book and scribble with a crayon when shown what to do. Child is able to tear paper and unwrap a present.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is eating a larger variety of foods and is able to chew most foods well without the fear of choking. She can finger feed herself approximately ½ of the meal. Ability to undress has continued and includes pulling off her socks.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Child’s ability to request drink and food with gestures and 1-2 words is increasing. More sounds / word approximations accompany the gestures.

15 Months

General Impression:

At 15 months, the child is entering the toddler times and is full of activity. This is a child that is generally always on the go and into everything without a sense of danger. Normal concerns for parents are electrical outlets, the child climbing furniture or running out into the street. Child is beginning to communicate more by pointing and vocalizing wants and needs. Child gets around by walking and can climb stairs on hands and knees.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child gets anxious around strangers and instead prefers to be near caregiver. He will not yet walk around house independently even though he is capable of doing so. Child will probably use the word “no” or “stop” to assert himself and communicate his feelings to others.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child is very curious. His curiosity and learning are driven by his motor skills and it may be difficult to slow him down to do fine motor tasks or “read” books. He touches everything and lacks the sense of danger for outlets or climbing to high places.

Child is beginning to show his ability to play with toys. He may even be able to play with a single toy in a variety of ways (this should be mastered by 18-20 months).

He is using jargon mixed with single words. He will point and vocalize to his caregiver what he wants, such as pointing to the pantry or refrigerator when hungry.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child walks alone throughout his environment and can easily squat down to pick up a toy without falling. Child may spend time playing in a squatting position. As the child’s curiosity has grown with the ability to move about, the child will naturally attempt to go up stairs on his hands and knees. Parents may comment that the child is in constant motion.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is taking a more active role in dressing by raising his arms/lifting legs to help caregiver dress him.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Child is more specific with pointing and vocalizing to caregiver what he wants (e.g., points to pantry if hungry). He has several words (2-5) to request food items (cup, juice, cookie, eat, milk, cracker, etc.)

16 Months

General Impression:

This is a time when children are really beginning to show early learning skills such as making animal sounds and pointing to a few body parts (usually face parts first). Most children imitate grown-up activities.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child enjoys imitating grown up activities. She may pretend to talk on the phone or wipe down the table. She enjoys engaging with adults and doing activities to please caregivers.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child's ability to imitate will drive learning. She is imitating activities that Mom and Dad do (e.g., sweeping). She can use a toy in many different ways and can be seen using a simple block as a telephone or a bowl as a hat.

She can make several animal sounds recalling both the sound and matching it to the appropriate animal. She can point to all of her facial features upon request. Child has a vocabulary of 10-25 words.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child's gait is narrower now and she is able to walk and carry her toys from room to room. She is interested in going up stairs by walking with assistance from a caregiver.

Child will play with one toy in a variety of ways, as she is able to use her hands to manipulate small pieces. She may try to figure out what other ways the toy can fit together or work by changing the pieces around.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

The beginning signs of putting clothes on begin this month with the child able to put on a hat. Child will also begin to use a spoon (maximum spilling) and can hold an open cup and drink with moderate spilling.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Vocabulary continues to increase, especially related to wants/needs.

17 Months

General Impression:

At 17 months, child has many new skills including an increased vocabulary, dexterity with crayons and puzzles, and ability to use a spoon.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child is beginning to notice other children. This is a critical point for the child to begin understanding that other people exist and there is a whole world he can interact with. His egocentricity will not fully dissipate until nearly middle childhood, but this is an early step in beginning social relationships with other children. Although parallel play dominates, he may compete for a toy with another child.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child's hand-eye coordination and problem solving skills are working together as he is able to complete simple puzzles and also imitate simple lines with a crayon. He will enjoy coloring.

Child can pick up and put away toys when asked. His vocabulary is 10-20 words.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child is beginning to do a fast walk or stiff looking run. He can climb over anything in the house that may be in his way to getting to his toys or something else he wants. He has become quite adept at completing puzzles now that he has the ability to rotate his hands/fingers to complete them.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is trying to use a spoon independently, still has a significant amount of spilling (50%).

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Although child has several words, may use motor skills to go and get his own food / drink.

18 Months

General Impression:

Child is spending a lot of time running, climbing and moving toys around. Child is beginning to do simple pretend play and can follow two-step directions. Temper tantrums are common. Child is eating with a spoon and no longer places toys or objects in mouth (only food).

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Parallel play still dominates child's play with other children. Temper tantrums are common, especially when child is unable to communicate feelings or their play is interrupted. Child is much more independent and feels comfortable exploring the house without adults.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child is beginning to do simple pretend play (i.e. feeding the doll). She will experiment with unfamiliar objects to determine what their purpose is. She only puts food items in her mouth and no longer places toys or other inedible objects in her mouth.

Child's attention and interest in books has increased and she will listen to Mom or Dad read a modified/shortened version of a story. She points to pictures when asked, "where's the" She can point to body parts beyond her facial features, name familiar objects when asked, and repeat several words upon request.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child is very active and is running now. She can move large objects and toys and may be seen pushing a chair up to the kitchen counter to get something higher than she can reach. She can walk up stairs with one hand held. She can get into adult and child sized chairs to sit down on her own.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is still working on taking clothes off and can now unzip zippers, take off shoes, socks, hat and gloves. She will allow her teeth to be brushed without excessive fussing.

Independent eating is coming along as she can now spoon-feed herself with little spilling. She will hand her empty dish to parent when she is finished eating.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Has several words, however, often uses motor skills to get own needs met

21 Months

General Impression:

Child enjoys pretend play with dolls or figurines. Personality shines through all actions and he is very set in his ways, fussing when things aren't "just so." The child can now use his vocabulary to communicate 20 + words. He can now follow more complicated / multi-step directions and is often helpful to caregiver with daily tasks.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child has a better understanding of others' feelings, as he will try to comfort others when he notices they are upset. His independence allows him to move away from Mom and sit with other familiar adults. He will also attempt to problem solve independently rather than relying on adults to do it for him. Child will exhibit varying emotions during play. Adults may hear/see verbal or physical scolding of stuffed animals/dolls in play.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child is very independent and he will attempt to problem solve independent of adults. His attention has increased and he will sit and look at a book for several minutes. He can put away some of his toys/shoes. He may be very interested in small objects - bugs may be fascinating to him.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child is very interested in using his body to balance on curbs, playing in a squatting position, crawling backwards down the stairs. He is getting more skilled with his coloring and can imitate lines and copy circular scribbles.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is able to independently feed himself with little spilling. He is beginning to attempt to put his shoes on and may be successful getting slip-on or sandal type shoes on. He is also beginning to notice when his diaper is wet or dirty. He may separate himself to have a BM or pull at his diaper when it is not dry.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

His language is developed enough to enable him to ask for food when hungry. He may also ask for toilet or drink. Although many of the testing tools indicate toilet training beginning at this age, it is more likely to happen after 2 years old.

24 Months

General Impression:

Child prefers to be around other children and is very interested in what they are doing. Although interested in others, she will defend her toys often saying “mine.” Child is showing more awareness of body functions.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child has developed a strong sense of “mine” and will claim everything as her own. She may “hoard” some toys and definitely will protest them being taken from her. She is beginning to want to play with other children and may attempt to initiate play activities with them. Although sharing isn’t expected at this age, she may even be able to hand a toy to another child (assuming the toy isn’t holding too much of her interest). She certainly prefers to be around other children, showing an interest in playing with them even if she isn’t always able to initiate play activities. The child will role-play with dolls and figurines. During these play activities, she may express a wide variety of emotions, including aggression, which she is exploring and testing out.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Child is really into playing now. She is able to pretend with her dolls/figurines, as well as pretend that other household objects/toys are something other than their ordinary use (i.e. blocks are food, remote control is a telephone, etc.). Her attention span has increased dramatically and the intensity of that attention makes it sometimes difficult to transition her from activity to activity. Children at this age enjoy books, which is wonderful as this is a critical part to building vocabulary and exposure to a wider variety of objects, ideas and experiences. At 24 months, she can say more than 50 words (more likely 100 words) and put those words together in 2 word phrases to communicate with others. Strangers should easily understand about 50% of what she says. She uses the pronouns “I,” “you,” and “me”, although she doesn’t always have complete mastery of them. She can understand prepositions, such as under, over, in and out. She can refer to herself by her name or as “I.” Her understanding of language far exceeds what she is able to express. She understands and can point to many body parts, even beyond the simplest ones.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

The intense drive for motor activities has weakened some and the child can now sit to focus on specific toys. She can turn pages of a book one page at a time, purposefully control a crayon when coloring, and do 5-7 piece puzzles.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child may squat, hold herself, and/or verbalize toilet needs. She may be able to take off almost all of her clothes, but will still need help with buttons. She can also pull her pants/shorts off and on which assists with toilet training.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Child uses her language to claim ownership of her toys and personal belongings, and protests someone taking a toy from her and says “mine.” She asks for snacks or drinks when hungry/thirsty.

27 Months

General Impression:

Child is able to understand early concepts i.e. big/little. Child's natural curiosity for learning is very strong and he asks a lot of questions to learn about new things. Child may protest if there is a change in his routine – example: child normally reads a book, then brushes his teeth – reverse that order and he may resist doing it because it's not the "right" way.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

By this age, the child has developed a strong sense of independence and becomes very frustrated when he is unable to complete a task without assistance. This independence also carries over into the realm of his world and impacts his rigidity around his schedule and routine. While he struggles with wanting to be independent, parents may see some instances of separation anxiety.

Child's interest in other children is continuing to grow. He will be able to offer toys to others and initiate play activities with those other children. Those play activities may not always be successful, but they are becoming more regular.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

During this time period, there is an explosion of "school type" learning. The child is beginning to understand concepts such as big/little. Early counting is emerging and some parents may be working on identifying letters in the child's name (though there is no expectation the child would be able to achieve this yet). The child enjoys coloring and wants to imitate "writing" to the extent that he can imitate drawing several different types of lines and a circle. He has mastered the skill of verbal imitation and will imitate words and phrases upon request with ease.

The child is still acquiring language at a rapid pace. Two word phrases dominate his communication and his vocabulary is 75+ words.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child can build large towers with wooden and with interlocking blocks - loves to build and knock down. He can easily manipulate small toys.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child can undress himself almost completely – may change clothes several times a day simply because he can. He can begin to follow social/health rules i.e. sneezing into his elbow. If snacks are kept in lower cabinets, he can go and get own snacks/cereal.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Child has the language skills to request all needs related to hunger and thirst. May opt to just "do it himself" rather than request verbally.

30 months

General Impression:

This a time when parents may be beginning to look at preschool programs. Many children are able to name their friends, identify one or two colors correctly, and understand social rules. Child loves routines and still becomes upset when they are altered, or when things are not done “correctly” – as perceived by the child.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child has a very set routine – she loves her routine and does not have the flexibility to immediately accept changes to this routine (she may fuss or protest, but will be able to move beyond the change). She is keen on things being done correctly – of course, “correct” is how she defines it and wants it to be. She is becoming more social and will even ask for a friend by name. She is starting to understand social rules, i.e. dessert comes after dinner.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Additional preschool skills are emerging. Child can match primary colors and may be able to name one or two colors correctly; depending upon the exposure and experiences she has had with these tasks. She can give her first and last name and also the names of some of her friends and teachers. She can look at pictures or objects and tell what they are used for – items such as keys, money, and shoes. The child will tell parents that something is “broken” when it doesn’t give the child the expected effects.

The child’s language is exploding into simple sentences using 100+ words. Her mastery of spoken language includes the ability to make words plural and even using some early action/ – ing words.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Ability to hold crayons and pencils has developed to a more mature grasp and away from holding them in her fist. Child will help to pick up and carry toys to put them away. She may enjoy helping parents unpack groceries or other “heavy” items.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child will begin to use a fork, brush her own teeth and dry her own hands after washing them. She may be able to put on a piece of clothing independently.

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Child can ask in two to three word sentences for food/drink items. May also tell what should be given for specific meals according to her regular routine.

33 months

General Impression:

Child is beginning to participate in associative play behaviors (several children playing together, interacting, in a loosely organized manner). He is beginning to accept routine changes without the intense resistance.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child is becoming truly social now. He has associative play skills with friends and participates in simple conversations with both caregivers and peers. He can point himself out in pictures along with other close family members and friends.

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

Around this age, it is easier to assess what a child knows and understands since their language has progressed so dramatically. The child can be heard telling caregivers about events that have happened in the past, although their concept of time is not yet fully developed. He is using 3-4 word sentences with a clarity of speech that is about 75% understandable by strangers. He is still very curious and asks a number of questions each day. His questions are becoming more complex and include “why” questions about items in his daily life.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Controls Body to Get Wants and Needs Met

Child can now go up and down stairs with alternating feet. He can control his hands and draw circles and other lines without demonstration.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is much more independent in the self-care area. He may be toilet trained during the day; he can dress (with supervision) most items and can even put on a coat. He can follow multi-step directions, which involve his self-care (i.e. go to the bathroom, get your toothbrush and bring it to Mommy)

Makes Wants and Needs Known

Expresses hunger and thirst verbally with ease.

36 months

General Impression:

Child is frequently asking questions such as “why” and “where.” Child can put on her own shoes and feed herself without any difficulty. Child is participating in singing songs and nursery rhymes.

Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relations)

Child engages in simple group games (e.g., “Ring Around the Rosey”) with adult help. She will join in nursery rhymes and songs. She will talk about her interests and feelings. She will have friends and will enjoy playing with them (associative play).

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication)

The child’s preschool / school readiness skills are continuing to blossom. She answers correctly to “Are you a boy or a girl?” She understands several prepositions. She enjoys pretending to play different characters with a friend or caregiver. She will make her dolls or action figures talk and move around. She asks many questions and can correctly answer “what,” “where,” and “who” questions.

Ability to Take Actions to Get Needs Met

Mobility and Use of Hands to Play

Her ability to go up and down stairs has improved to the point of using alternating feet. She can hop on one foot for a couple of hops. She can use scissors to cut a piece of paper from one side to the other.

Self Care (Feeding, Dressing & Toileting)

Child is gaining more skills and can pour a drink from a pitcher into a cup. She puts on her shoes (cannot yet tie them); undresses completely without help and can unbutton front buttons. She feeds herself without any difficulty.

Expressing Needs (Hunger and Thirst)

She has all the verbal skills necessary to indicate her needs related to hunger and thirst.