

Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



Nurturing the Development and Learning of Infants and Toddlers through Responsive Caregiving



Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines

To Nebraska's parents, caregivers, teachers, child care and early education professionals:

We are pleased to present the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3!

These voluntary guidelines are a resource for adults who care for infants and toddlers, and they serve as a companion to the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3 to 5 published in January 2005.

We hope you find this document useful in better understanding how positive relationships, care, interactions, and routines support the learning and development of babies from the very beginning. These Guidelines are not intended to cover every possible aspect of early development, but instead to offer some ideas as you think about the many interesting and supportive ways you can promote the growth, learning, and well-being of children in your care every day.

Your interest in nurturing and providing responsive care for babies from the time they are born shows an understanding of the importance of early development and learning. With your commitment, we can ensure a good start for Nebraska's youngest children.

We hope you will find this publication useful, and we encourage you to share this information with others who work to make a difference in the lives of children in Nebraska.

Respectfully,

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NEBRASKA EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES for Ages Birth to 3



Preface

Research shows that the first three years of life is the period of most rapid development for a child. Infants are born with well-developed senses, and have a wide range of reflexive abilities with which to begin the important tasks of forming relationships and developing trust, having their basic physical needs met and exploring the world around them. With nurturing and responsive caregiving, appropriate environmental stimulation, optimal health, and adequate nutrition, babies will grow from being totally dependent to becoming active participants in exploring and shaping their world.



The human brain is not fully developed at birth. Sensitive, trusting interactions with people and the environment are necessary to complete the infant brain's network of connections. These connections grow most rapidly in the child's first three years of life and establish the foundation for all future learning.

Infants and toddlers are eager and curious learners, gaining knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world around them from every experience of daily living. Dramatic changes occur in every area of development, and growth in one area influences growth in all other areas.

Each child is born with a unique, natural disposition that shapes behaviors and plays a significant role in the development of relationships with parents, family members, caregivers and other children. From birth, infants display differences in temperament, activity level, biological rhythm, mood, intensity of reaction, sensitivity, adaptability, distractibility, and persistence. Recognizing and understanding these differences is essential to develop nurturing and responsive relationships and to create optimal learning opportunities.

Who was Involved in Developing the Early Learning Guidelines?

Several partners took a leadership role in the development of the Guidelines. These partners were the Nebraska Department of Education, the Nebraska Health and Human Services System, the Nebraska Head Start Association, the Nebraska Head Start-State Collaboration Office and the Early Childhood Training Center. Additional guidance and expertise was provided by infant and toddler specialists from across the state.

As you will see on the following pages, the Development Team was composed of representatives from each of these partners and from early childhood consultants. The document was sent to a Review Team comprised of representatives from higher education and state organizations as well as other experts in the field of early care and education in Nebraska.



Additional feedback was gathered by presenting the Guidelines at various meetings and to groups around the state including professional organizations and parent groups. The Guidelines were placed on the Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood web site along with a feedback form for yet another opportunity to gather information.

This document is designed to address the growth and development of children from birth to age 3. It is further divided into two distinct age categories: birth to 18 months (Infants), and 18 months to 3 years (Toddlers). This was done intentionally so that the age breakdowns would match Nebraska's child care licensing statutes as they relate to adult:child ratios.

It is important to note that children in both of these age categories go through periods of rapid growth and development, and not all of them go through these changes at the same time or at the same pace. This is especially true in the health and physical development areas, as all children follow their own internal schedules for such things as walking, talking, toileting, etc. Through predictable routines and secure attachments, children will feel secure and develop competence and confidence as they progress through their preschool years.

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What Tools Were Used in the Development of These Guidelines?

The Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for ages birth to 3 are formatted to represent the continuum of development that precedes ages 3 to 5. These Guidelines are consistent with several Nebraska documents and policies that are recognized as high quality, inclusive and family-centered:

- The Primary Program: Growing and Learning in the Heartland. A joint project of the Nebraska Department of Education, the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Area Education Agencies and the Iowa and Nebraska Head Start-State Collaboration Offices. This project is a research-based framework for curriculum, instruction, and assessment for early childhood education. The program facilitates continuous learning by accommodating the broad range of children's abilities, their learning rates and styles, and their knowledge, experiences and interests.
- Rule 11, Regulations for Early Childhood Education Programs. Title 92 NAC, Chapter 11, Nebraska Department of Education. Rule 11 is a set of basic standards to guide program planning and development for all center-based programs serving children age birth to 5, operated by public schools and/or Educational Service Units.
- Rule 51, Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs. Title 92 NAC, Chapter 51, Nebraska Department of Education. Rule 51 contains requirements for school districts in the provision of special education and related services for children and youth with disabilities age birth-21, specifically in Section 007: Individual Education Program (IEP) and the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), and in Section 008: Placement of Children with Disabilities.
- Rule 24, Regulations for Certificate Endorsements. Title 92 NAC, Chapter 24, Nebraska Department of Education. Guidelines Recommended for Use with Rule 24, Nebraska Department of Education. Rule 24 and accompanying Guidelines govern the provision of teaching endorsements by approved teacher education programs in Nebraska colleges and universities. These include teaching endorsements for early childhood education, early childhood education unified, and preschool disabilities.
- Nebraska PreK-16 Initiative. A Nebraska Department of Education and University of Nebraska statewide initiative to promote a seamless educational path for Nebraska students in the areas of Mathematics, Language Arts/English, and World Languages across preschool through post secondary programs.
- Child Care Licensing Standards, 391 NAC, Department of Health and Human Services, Regulation and Licensure. These standards identify health and safety regulations for child care centers, family child care homes and preschools.
- Nebraska Mathematics Content Standards, Nebraska Reading/Writing Content Standards, Nebraska Science Content Standards, Nebraska Social Studies/History Content Standards, Title 94 NAC, Chapter 1. The State Board of Education adopted these voluntary content standards to identify what students should know and be able to do and what teachers should teach for students in grades K-12.
- Indicators of Quality: Guiding the Development and Improvement of Early Childhood Care and Education Programs, Nebraska Department of Education. The indicators are designed to promote quality and excellence in early care and education settings.

In addition to these Nebraska documents and policies, the committee also drew extensively from some national sources.

- Head Start Performance Standards. Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. These are mandatory regulations that grantees and delegate agencies must implement in order to operate a Head Start program. The Standards define the objectives and features of a quality Head Start program in concrete terms; they articulate a vision of service delivery to young children and families; and they provide a regulatory structure for the monitoring and enforcement of quality standards.
- Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework is intended to guide Head Start programs in their ongoing assessment of the progress and accomplishments of children, and in their efforts to analyze and use data on child outcomes in program self-assessment and continuous improvement.
- Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation. A Joint Position Statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). This position statement outlines ways to build an effective, accountable system in programs for children birth through age 8.
- Position Statement on Inclusion. Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. This position statement outlines the importance for all children, regardless of abilities, to actively participate in natural and inclusive early childhood settings within their communities.
- DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education. Identifies effective practices based on research and shared beliefs to help early childhood educators, other practitioners, families and administrators provide quality learning experiences that result in better outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families.
- Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success. A Joint Position Statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education. This position statement defines the desired content and outcomes of young children's education.

The Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3 are connected to the Guidelines for Ages 3 to 5 through the use of the same design, layout, and developmental domains. The information, resources and activities described in these Guidelines, when used as a set, provide a strong foundation for the growth and development of children ages birth to 5.

It is important to note that both sets of Guidelines are not only aligned with Nebraska's K-12 Standards, but also to other state and national standards and regulations to ensure best practice. These publications are an effort to recognize and promote early care and education experiences that support lifelong growth and development.

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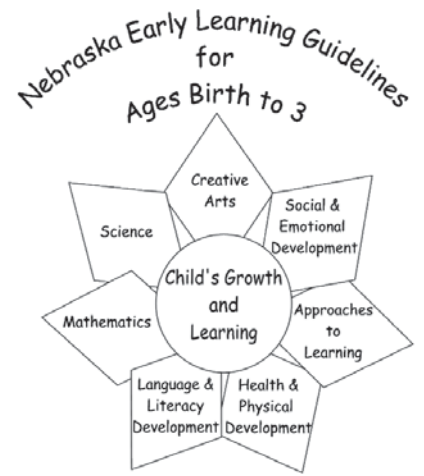
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Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



Welcome to the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines!

This exciting new resource provides information to assist parents, family members, early childhood teachers, caregivers, and other adults in promoting the learning and development of young children ages birth to three. It is a companion to the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3 to 5, and uses the same format and domains of development.

This voluntary guide has been developed to provide information about: 1) what to expect in the development and learning of young children from the time they are born to age 3, and 2) what adults can do to provide experiences and environments that support learning across developmental domains. It is intended to be a resource for teachers, caregivers, family members and other adults to develop positive relationships with infants and toddlers and to plan meaningful learning experiences. All of the individual areas of the guide are considered important, and should be integrated into all of the daily routines, interactions and activities. Also, the guide is not intended to limit any child's progress. The individual needs of each child must be met on a daily basis. It is important to remember that infants and toddlers develop skills, knowledge and abilities at their own pace. These Guidelines should not be used as a developmental checklist, rather as a general guide to how infants and toddlers develop and learn.

The Early Learning Guidelines address seven domains of development and learning:

- ✘ Social and Emotional Development
- ✘ Approaches to Learning
- ✘ Health and Physical Development
- ✘ Language and Literacy
- ✘ Mathematics
- ✘ Science
- ✘ Creative Arts

Each domain contains information specific to the development of skills and knowledge in that area, including information on:

- **Widely Held Expectations:** generalizations about most children's development and learning over time
- **Learning in Action:** examples of what children do to show evidence that they meet the expectations, and what adults can do to support their growth and learning
- **The Environment:** considerations to keep in mind when setting up the indoor/outdoor space and materials

It is important to remember that infants and toddlers are growing and learning all of the time, and that not all children will attain all of the expectations by age three. The Guidelines provide a map from which adults can understand the developmental "path" that children will follow as they develop and learn during the first three years of life. Infants and toddlers will show emerging abilities toward these expectations as they grow. To reflect this growth, the Guidelines provide information on each domain specifically for infants (birth to 18 months) and toddlers (18 to 36 months).



Each developmental domain can be addressed every day in homes and early childhood settings through the activities and materials that are chosen and the adult support provided. The Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines is not a curriculum; rather it can be used as a framework to guide decisions about activities, materials, and the environment.



Use of the Guidelines can help to promote continuity and consistency across all settings and promote successful transitions across environments. When adults consider using children's development together with the adults' actions as described in the Guidelines, the result is an environment that meets the developmental needs of all children.

Although the Early Learning Guidelines are voluntary, adults are encouraged to use this resource as they plan activities and interact with infants and toddlers. Providing rich learning experiences, supportive learning environments, and positive relationships with children during the first three years will provide the critical foundation for learning.



The Early Learning Guidelines can also serve as a resource for families as they select quality programs for their very young children. The Guidelines can help to broaden their understanding of development and learning from the time their child is born, as well as identify ways parents can effectively interact with their children and support their learning.

Working together, adults and families can assure that all children have a good start in life, and that their early experiences will continue to support a lifelong love of learning.



This document is intended to be used to guide practices with children ages birth to three. A companion document, intended to be used for children ages three to five, is available from the Nebraska Department of Education. Parent materials and training plans for teachers and caregivers of young children are also being developed.

Visit the web site at the Early Childhood Training Center <http://www.esu3.org/ectc/ELG/elg.htm> for resources and other information to learn more about using the Guidelines. Current workshops and other professional development experiences are also featured there.

Resources to support each domain are included at the end of each domain section, as well as a list of recommended books for children. More general resources as well as a page of definitions can be found at the back of the document.

Guiding Principles About Infants' and Toddlers' Growth and Learning

- ❖ **Nurturing relationships are the foundation for healthy growth and development.**

Strong attachments created between adults and very young children are the key to establishing infants' and toddlers' capacity to learn and grow. It is only through these consistent nurturing relationships that children feel safe and secure, providing them with the necessary support to freely explore and discover how their world works.

- ❖ **Learning is integrated across all areas of development.**

Children construct knowledge and integrate new ideas and concepts into their existing understanding. Their development in language and learning is influenced by the social and emotional aspects of their environment. Communication influences mathematical and scientific understandings. There are no clear lines between the individual domains or areas of learning. Young children learn best when activities are integrated across all areas of growth and learning.

- ❖ **Each child is an individual learner.**

All children are learners with unique characteristics that influence learning. The rate of development and learning varies for individuals and is not the same for every child of the same age. The individual learner is impacted by genetics, the environment and experiences, interests, motivation for and approaches to learning. Learning may be uneven or occur in spurts.

- ❖ **Children are active learners.**

Children learn through experiences with people, objects and things in their world. Play, knowledge, curiosity and sense of wonder are primary elements for children's learning. Children's ideas about themselves impact their interactions with adults, other children, and how they view themselves as learners.

- ❖ **Learning is continuous and sequential.**

Children's understanding grows from simple to complex (or from concrete to abstract). New skills are built on earlier acquired concepts. As a result, infants and toddlers are uniquely different from older preschool children, and interactions need to match their developing skills and abilities.

- ❖ **Development and learning are rooted in culture and supported by the family.**

The language, knowledge, traditions, and expectations of the family are the primary influences on the growth and development of infants and toddlers. Learning is enriched by stable, nurturing relationships within the family and community.

How Adults Can Support Infants' and Toddlers' Growth and Learning

Children's learning is fostered and enriched by adults who understand young children's growth and development, and who establish positive relationships which influence the extent of children's learning.

During the first three years of life, a child's development undergoes changes that are more rapid and dramatic than at any other time. Changes in body proportion, coordination and strength reflect the increase in brain development. This allows infants and toddlers to make extraordinary gains in physical and sensory coordination, dexterity and balance. Physical health and well being are important for the success of this development. Ensuring optimal health and well being requires the commitment and vigilance of parents, caregivers, and teachers. Some key points about how adults can support the learning of infants and toddlers are:

- ❖ Relationships and responsive interactions with adults and peers are the basis of high quality experiences for infants and toddlers.
- ❖ Environments and adults are predictable, consistent, and nurturing.
- ❖ Families, teachers, and caregivers are valued partners in each child's development and share information regularly.
- ❖ Adults use effective observational skills to understand and assess children's learning.
- ❖ Physical wellness is maintained through partnerships between families and the professionals with expertise in infant and toddler development from the health, mental health, dental, and nutrition fields.



Creating Learning Environments for Infants and Toddlers

It is important that the environment respect and value the diversity that children and families bring, and build upon their unique strengths.

The focus of the learning environment is on activities and settings that are interesting and important to the child and family. Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth. Each child develops and learns at a different rate and in different ways. Developmentally appropriate programs plan for individual differences among children, including:

- individual personality, temperament and learning style
- experiences and family background, including language, culture, and ethnicity
- special health considerations, including food allergies
- physical or cognitive disabilities
- preferences based on child and family interests



The learning environment helps develop individual children's potential. Some children may have a developmental delay or disability that requires program staff to make changes in materials, routines or experiences so that all children will be successful.

The environment should be a place that gives infants and toddlers freedom to safely explore the world in their unique way in both home- and center-based programs. It should:

- allow for choice
- be a place for socialization in a climate of trust, and foster a sense of belonging
- be a place to explore the physical world, both indoors and outdoors, to build their motor and language skills
- be a place to use their play to explore and build trust in a new learning experience
- provide separate and appropriate places for sleeping, eating, diapering and/or toileting, and for movement and play
- include interest areas where materials with similar use are placed together in an organized fashion
- provide safe, child-sized furnishings and supplies to promote independence and harmony that are both available and accessible throughout the day
- include a daily schedule with materials and activities that are designed to meet the individual needs of each child

The Adult and the Learning Environment

The role of the adult is to provide a responsive and supportive environment. Adults should interact with infants and toddlers in ways that support the child's growth and learning through discovery.

The adult:

- **Builds** relationships with families and **exchanges** information about the child with the family on an ongoing basis
- **Learns** about each individual child in order to be responsive to each child's interests, needs and development
- **Relates** and **responds** to all children with warmth, sensitivity, and consistent caring to establish and sustain a climate in which learning is trusting and joyful
- **Invites** children to participate in a rich, safe and stimulating environment which encourages interaction, exploration, and choices by all children
- **Provides** encouragement, support, and appropriate challenges to help young children develop trust and independence to grow
- **Models** respect for people, materials and equipment in the environment
- **Partners** with other professionals and families to plan, create, and sustain a safe climate and healthy environment in which children may grow and play harmoniously and creatively
- **Maximizes** use of space and **integrates** a variety of materials and equipment that stimulate active learning
- **Structures** opportunities for infants and toddlers to play individually and to form caring relationships with other children, with adults, and in groups of different sizes and groupings formed for different purposes
- **Focuses** on the ongoing learning of each individual child using developmentally appropriate observation, assessment and evaluation procedures
- **Supports** or **increases** the young child's participation in existing or desired learning activities
- **Models** and **demonstrates** enthusiasm for learning, and **helps** children to enjoy learning as meaningful, relevant, and personally satisfying
- **Uses** the information gained through observation, assessment and evaluation to make thoughtful, informed, and appropriate interventions as needed/indicated
- **Acknowledges** personal beliefs and biases regarding children and families, and is able to make objective decisions and act in the best interests of the child
- **Reflects** children's home language and culture in daily routines



The Early Learning Guidelines

Support Family Relationships

The family is the strongest and most important influence on a child's development because the time that children spend with their family members generally exceeds the time spent with other caregivers. Attributes such as language, culture, values, and beliefs are part of the child's early experiences in the family setting, and provide the basis for learning throughout life.

It is through strong partnerships between family members, teachers and caregivers that the child's needs are truly met.

Infants and toddlers need the security of loving relationships in order to grow. This security most often begins in the home and is extended to other settings through partnerships between families and high quality early childhood programs.

The Early Learning Guidelines can assist families in being more effective advocates for their children. They are available to guide parents in understanding what to look for as they choose programs for their young children. Strategies that are listed can be used to help provide appropriate developmental activities at home and in other settings.

A key responsibility of the adults who are involved with infants and toddlers is to support the relationship between parents and their children. The bond between infants/toddlers and their parents is often still developing when the child is enrolled in an early childhood program. The adult provides encouragement to parents and other family members in defining their evolving role as the most important adults in the child's life.

The early childhood setting supports the family by incorporating the child's home language and culture as much as possible. Words, foods, care practices, music and objects that are familiar to the child provide a greater sense of comfort. These increased feelings of safety and security make it possible for learning to occur more readily.

Through their partnership with teachers and caregivers, family members can provide information about their expectations, as well as the child's abilities, needs, preferences, etc. Teachers and caregivers can provide guidance on child development and what the program can offer the child and family. Family members, teachers and caregivers can share information and work together to reach their shared dreams for the child. Families' participation in the program is welcomed; adults are flexible in accommodating families' interests and abilities.

Other characteristics of the partnership between family members and their child's teacher or caregiver include open communication, mutual respect, trust, and honesty.

It is through strong partnerships between family members and the teacher or caregiver that the child's needs are truly met. Such partnerships build a foundation that impacts the future of the child far beyond the first three years of life.

Supporting Inclusive Learning Environments

Opportunities for learning occur as part of typical life activities, and in routines both planned and spontaneous. Inclusion of children with differing abilities, children from diverse cultures, and children learning English as a second language fosters caring attitudes and teaches children about interdependence and acceptance of human differences. In high quality early childhood programs, inclusion is simply an example of the regular practice of meeting the individual needs of each child and family. This means that every child is an active participant in daily interaction with responsive adults, other children and the environment.

All children and families benefit from inclusive learning environments.

Children with a Wide Range of Abilities

All children have the right to the supports, resources, and services they need to participate actively and meaningfully in any early childhood setting. All early care and education programs must also be prepared to work together with families. Teachers need to know how to make referrals, if there are concerns, to the Early Development Network (888-806-6287), collaborate with children's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individual Education Program (IEP) teams, modify/adapt program activities, routines, and materials/equipment (make reasonable accommodations), and implement appropriate interventions within the context of the family and/or early childhood setting.

The following are some general accommodations that can be made to support children with special learning or developmental needs. More specific accommodation suggestions can be found in each individual section of these Guidelines and in the Resources to Support Early Learning on page 86 of this document. This is a sampling of the types of accommodations that might be made and should not be considered a complete list. It is also important to remember that not only are adaptations needed within the learning environment to accommodate children with disabilities, sometimes the expectations or standards themselves need to be adapted. Many of these strategies are ones that can be used by adults to support the growth and learning of all children and in all settings.

- ❖ Provide adaptive equipment and materials when the child needs support to be active and successful in program routines and activities
- ❖ Provide adult assistance/support/modeling as the child initiates interest or action, then reduce adult supports when the child shows ability to do some actions independently
- ❖ Provide regular, ongoing opportunities for interaction with adults, and companionship, support from and play with typically developing peers
- ❖ Add new, interesting and/or adapted activities as needed to meet individual needs

- ❖ Modify materials and/or activities so the young child can participate with increasing independence
- ❖ Natural learning opportunities are intentionally provided throughout daily routines and activities to encourage children to use materials both independently and cooperatively
- ❖ Provide visual supports in addition to verbal interactions (pictures, drawings, labels, color coding, picture schedules, etc.)
- ❖ Assure that child care homes, centers, and preschool environments meet the physical, health and emotional needs of all children

Children from Diverse Cultures

For activities to be developmentally appropriate, they must be individually and culturally appropriate to each child. Therefore, the children, their families, society, teachers, and caregivers are important resources for an anti-bias, multicultural curriculum (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992).

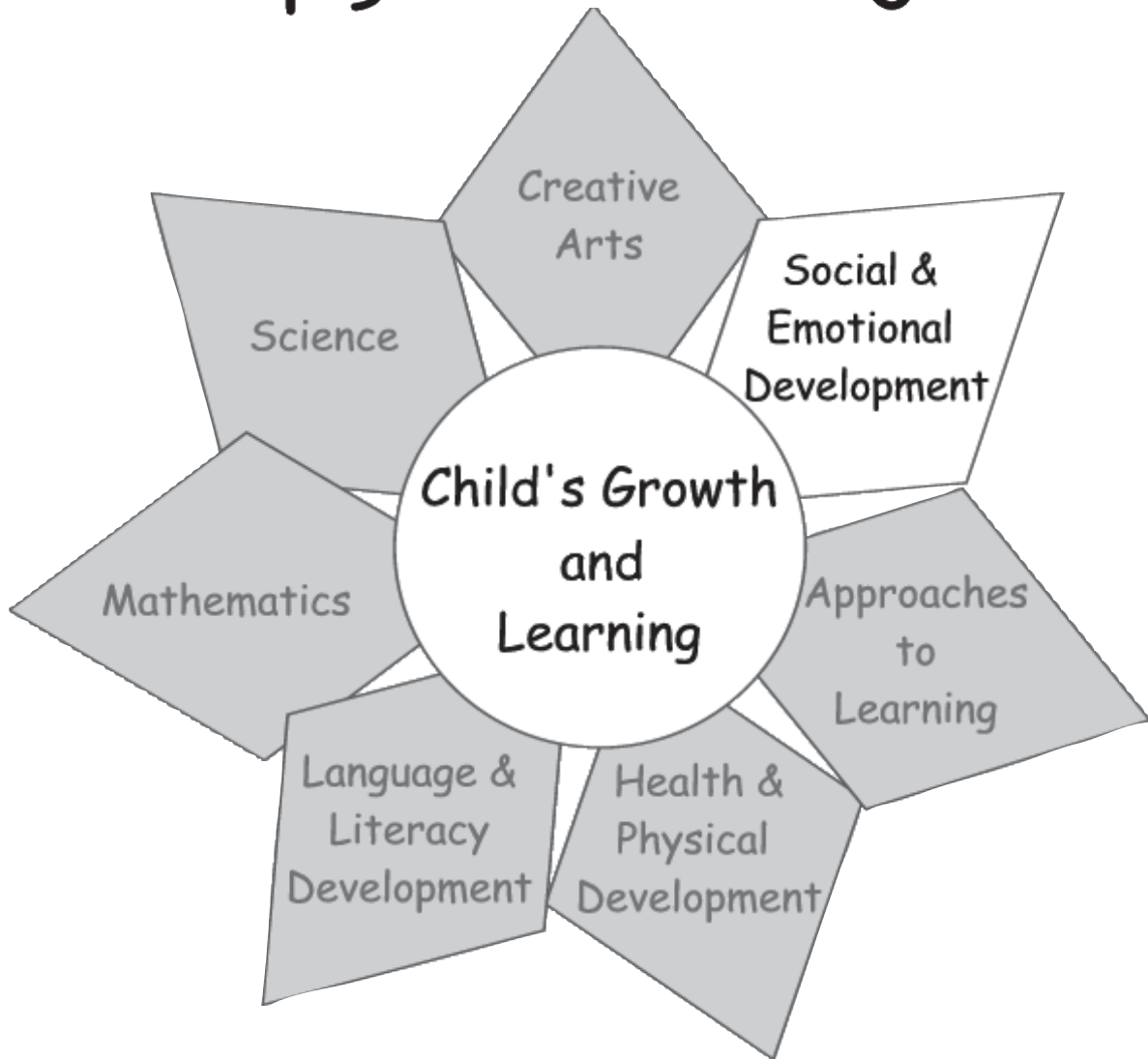
Some children may be learning to speak a home language other than English, thus calling upon the adults to extend the child's learning of a new language while supporting and strengthening the home language. Linguistic and cultural diversity must be woven into all aspects of the program. Children have words, actions, stories, songs, dances, art, traditions, celebrations and beliefs, that are unique to their family, culture and experience. The adult uses opportunities to integrate each child and family's history, cultural uniqueness and family practices into the curriculum and weave it into the fabric of everyday learning experiences. Families should be encouraged to talk with their children in their home language, even as their children are developing English language skills.



By being mindful of the home and family culture for each child, adults can achieve the goals of empathy, respect, and understanding that characterize a multicultural, family-centered classroom.

All children learn about the world when they learn about each other.

Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



Social and Emotional Development

- Social Relationships
- Sense of Self
- Self Regulation

One of the primary goals of a quality program for infants and toddlers is to foster social and emotional development. When babies and young children feel emotionally and physically secure, they have the opportunity to freely explore their environment. They are able to interact with adults and other children, and gain a sense of identity through an understanding and confidence in themselves as individuals.



Strong, positive, secure relationships are the key to social and emotional development. Infants and toddlers need consistent, nurturing adults who are supportive and responsive. Caring adults provide safe, stable, and predictable environments that support young children's growing independence. Such environments promote a healthy sense of self and connections with others.

Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Carefully observe child to child and child to adult interactions, and provide opportunities that will promote positive relationships
- ❖ Provide opportunities for natural, ongoing interactions with typically developing and socially competent peers
- ❖ Provide choices so children have more control over their environment

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 of this document, and in NDE Rule 51.

Social Relationships

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child is responsive in interactions with others and shows evidence of attachment process
 - Develops an attachment with caring adults
 - Begins to develop a curiosity about others
 - Shows an interest in things in the environment
 - Displays pleasure when with familiar people

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Responds to familiar adults' and childrens' interactions (gazes, cuddles, accepts assistance from familiar adult, etc.)
- Engages in social games with familiar people through playful back and forth interactions (exchanges smiles, coos, plays peek-a-boo, etc.)
- Expresses self using verbal and nonverbal cues (cries, laughs, turns head away, reaches for familiar adult, etc.)

The Adult

- Knows and builds a trusting relationship with each child
- Understands and responds to different temperaments of children
- Provides opportunities and participates in back and forth communication (uses eye contact and allows sufficient time for children to respond)
- Interacts playfully with babies, verbally describes infants' actions
- Meets infants' bodily needs for comfort (responds to cries, holds baby when bottle feeding, makes eye contact while diapering, etc.)
- Provides opportunities and support to help children develop close relationships with caring adults (responds to children's cues, talks to them during routine care, etc.)
- Provides opportunities for non-mobile infants to interact with other children
- Uses a calm, soothing voice; holds and cuddles each child routinely throughout the day
- Provides opportunities for children to develop an awareness of their own feelings, as well as ideas and actions of others

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Unbreakable mirrors and accessible materials for independent choice
- Interesting toys and materials that represent families and diverse cultures (family photographs, sturdy picture books, etc.)
- Predictable schedules and routines, individualized for each child

Social Relationships

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child is responsive in interactions with others and begins to build relationships
 - Develops and maintains secure relationships with caring adults
 - Demonstrates growing interest in interactions with adults and other children
 - Imitates the social interactions of others
 - Shows awareness of and responds to the feelings of others
 - Develops social play (peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake, finger plays, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Engages in social games (playful give and take, itsy-bitsy spider, etc.)
- Recognizes familiar people, in person or in a photograph
- Expresses self verbally and nonverbally (laughs, cries, says "No", names the emotion, etc.)
- Responds to and initiates interaction with others (offers toy, hugs, pats, asks to be read to, etc.)
- Begins to show empathy toward others (identifies feelings of others, comforts or offers a comfort item, etc.)
- Plays alongside a peer, imitating actions or using similar materials

The Adult

- Knows the children and families as individuals, and appreciates differences in values and backgrounds
- Provides opportunities for children to develop an awareness of their own feelings, as well as ideas and actions of others
- Provides opportunities for children to feel accepted in the group
- Comforts children when they are distressed
- Builds trust by providing support while children are interacting with others
- Speaks to child in a calm voice at eye level
- Provides consistent routines (group time, lunch time, nap time, etc.)
- Interprets children's communication attempts to other children and adults ("You said, 'ba'- do you want the ball?")
- Encourages turn-taking and cooperation during communication and play

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Duplicate materials and accessible equipment that allow for young children to explore alone or together with others
- Interesting toys and materials that represent families and diverse cultures (family photographs, dolls, play materials, books representing other cultures, etc.)

Sense of Self

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child initiates, explores and plays with objects and materials
- Child begins to distinguish self from others
- Child shows likes and dislikes for people and materials
- Child shows growing independence in a range of activities, routines and tasks

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Begins to discover self (puts fingers or toes in mouth, coos and babbles, touches own image in the mirror, etc.)
- May become upset when an unfamiliar person approaches
- Notices and mimics responses as reflected by adults
- Explores materials and the environment freely by looking, tasting, smelling, feeling and hearing
- Engages in natural problem solving activities (looks at or reaches for desired object, repeats an action to make something happen, etc.)
- Provides cues to indicate needs (turns head away when full, reaches for bottle, feeds self finger food when ready for table food, etc.)

The Adult

- Observes child and responds based on individual needs throughout the daily routine
- Consistently nurtures and responds to the physical and emotional needs of the child
- Provides a variety of interesting materials for children to explore using their senses (different textures, colors, scents, tastes, etc.)
- Models self-confidence and positive attitude in interactions with children and others
- Promotes independence and self-help skills
- Follows child's lead during play and exploration

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Safe space with interesting materials that encourage children's interaction, involvement, exploration and experimentation (mirrors, water and sand play areas, shape sorters, etc.)
- Materials that reflect the lives of the children and their families, and the world around them (family photos, pictures, books, dolls, foods, etc.)

Sense of Self

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to distinguish self from others
- Child develops independence, confidence, and competence
 - Likes self and shows pride in accomplishments
 - Shows growing independence and problem solving in a range of play activities, routines and tasks
 - Shows initiative through decision making and exploration
 - Shows increasing concentration or persistence on tasks

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Identifies self and others in person, in the mirror, and through photographs
- Openly expresses moods, emotions and desires (laughs, cries, states desires, "Me do it", "Mine", "Up", "No", etc.)
- Selects and explores chosen materials and activities independently, engages in pretend play
- Practices problem solving skills (crawls out from under a table before standing up, going around an object that is in the way of the push toy, etc.)
- Does things for self (assists with dressing, feeding, drinking from a cup, etc.)
- Accomplishes part or all of tasks (begins to use the toilet, washes hands, etc.)

The Adult

- Observes child and responds based on individual needs throughout the daily routine
- Provides individualized care throughout the daily routine
- Consistently nurtures and responds to the physical and emotional needs of the child (answers questions, responds to attempts at language, reflects emotions, etc.)
- Provides a variety of interesting materials for children to explore using their senses (different textures, colors, scents, tastes, etc.)
- Models self-confidence in interactions with children and others
- Promotes independence and self-help skills
- Invites families to share traditions, special games, foods, dance, etc.

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Safe space with materials that encourage children's interaction, involvement, exploration and experimentation (mirrors, water and sand play areas, shape sorters, etc.)
- Materials that reflect the lives of the children and their families, and the world around them (family photos, pictures, books, dolls, foods, etc.)

Self Regulation

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child expresses emotions and begins to initiate ways to calm self
- Child explores the environment freely, responding to supportive guidance
- Child provides cues indicating wants and needs through purposeful actions and gestures
- Child depends on frequent reminders to learn boundaries

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Communicates feelings through nonverbal cues (smiles, cries, laughs, gestures, etc.)
- With support from trusted adults, recovers from distress and calms self with familiar comfort items (sucks thumb, touches and smells a favorite blanket, etc.)
- Calms when adults provide nurturing and consistent responses to children's signals throughout the daily routine (for attention, food, diaper change, rest, etc.)
- Responds appropriately to repeated reminders and redirection

The Adult

- Establishes a trusting, caring, relationship with each child
- Provides words and positive responses to guide children's behavior
- Models how to treat people and materials gently
- Maintains consistent and individualized routines to meet the physical and emotional needs of the children
- Soothes and calms the child in response to the child's feelings and behaviors

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A consistent daily routine designed to meet the individual needs of each child
- A safe space for exploration (low shelves, carpeted and tile areas, grass, etc.)
- Softness and harmony to promote relaxation (soft lighting, comforting music, and gentle voices, etc.)

Self Regulation

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child expresses emotions and shows concern for others
 - Expresses emotions nonverbally, eventually developing the communication skills to express self verbally or through other alternative means
 - Shows awareness and responds appropriately to the feelings of others
 - Calms self after excitement or frustration
- Child begins to develop an understanding of boundaries and routines, and follows them when reminded
 - Responds appropriately to supportive guidance
 - Anticipates daily events in a consistent routine

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Expresses feelings and emotions through gestures, sounds, and words
- Calms self with familiar comfort items and reminders (touches and smells a favorite blanket, looks at pictures of familiar adults, etc.)
- Begins to participate in the daily routine (assists with picking up before going outside, washes hands before meal time, etc.)
- Begins to learn behaviors to deal with aggressive feelings (uses words, finds adult, walks away, etc.)
- Carries out simple rules when stated in positive, brief statements and are reminded in advance ("We walk down the hall," "Feet on the floor," etc.)

The Adult

- Establishes trusting, caring and reassuring relationships with each child
- Assists and encourages child to use language rather than aggressive actions in their relationships with others (asks peers to share, expresses feelings, etc.)
- Remains calm and supportive during children's struggles with independence
- Coaches and reinforces positive social interaction (turn-taking, hugs, playing side by side, etc.)
- Anticipates the actions of toddlers to prevent them from getting hurt or hurting others
- Maintains consistent and individualized routines to meet the physical and emotional needs of the children
- Provides reminders of ways that children can calm themselves

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A consistent daily routine that allows for a variety of active and quiet times, movement, and time to explore alone or with others
- A safe space for exploration (low shelves, carpeted and tile areas, grass, etc.)
- Spaces and/or materials that allow children to calm themselves (cozy area, books, soft toys, stuffed animals, etc.)

Resources

Baby Minds: Brain Building Games Your Baby Will Love -- Linda Acredolo and Susan Goodwyn

Bright Futures in Practice: Mental Health -- Michael Jellinek

The Developing Child (10th Edition) -- Helen Bee and Denise Roberts Boyd

Magic Trees of the Mind: How to Nurture Your Child's Intelligence, Creativity, and Healthy Emotions from Birth Through Adolescence -- Marian Diamond and Janet Hopson

Me, Myself and I: How Children Build Their Sense of Self: 18 to 36 Months -- Kyle D. Pruett

Play Time/Social Time: Organizing Your Classroom to Build Interaction Skills -- Samuel L. Odom

Right from Birth: Building Your Child's Foundation For Life -- Craig T. Ramey and Sharon L. Ramey

Tender Care and Early Learning: Supporting Infants and Toddlers in Child Care Settings -- Jacalyn Post and Mary Hohmann

Touchpoints -- T. Berry Brazelton

Books for Children

Animal Kisses -- Barney Saltzberg

Baby Faces -- Roberta Grobel Intrater

The Baby's Lap Book -- Kay Chora

Be Gentle! -- Virginia Miller

The Chocolate-Covered-Cookie Tantrum -- Deborah Blumenthal

Counting Kisses -- Karen Katz

I Can -- Helen Oxenbury

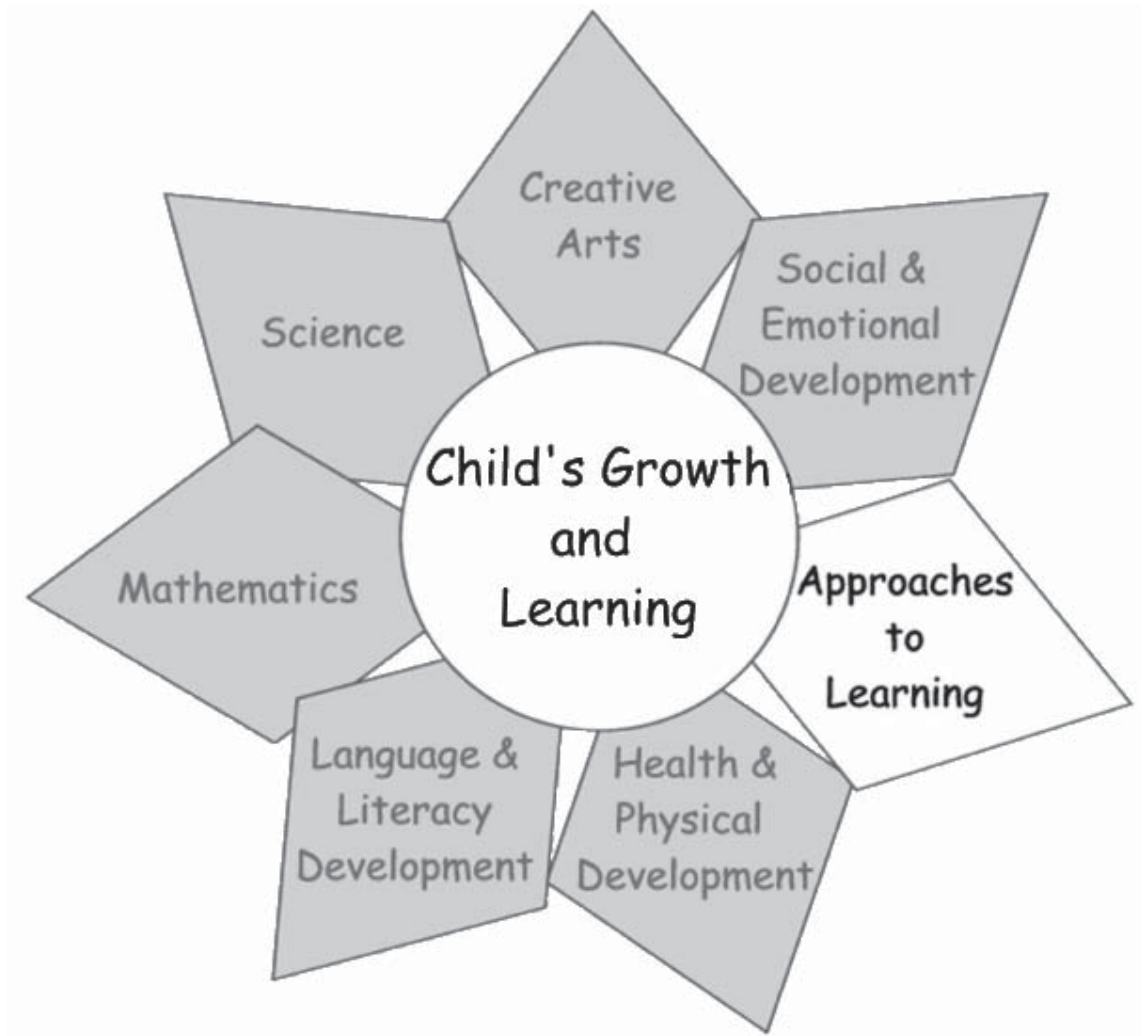
"More More More" Said the Baby -- Vera B. Williams

Pat the Bunny -- Dorothy Kunhardt

Peek-A-Boo! -- Janet Ahlberg and Allan Ahlberg

You're Just What I Need -- Ruth Krauss

Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



Approaches to Learning

- Initiative and Curiosity

- Sensory Exploration and Problem Solving



For young children, growing and learning begins with each child's personal experiences, and their openness and curiosity about new discoveries. With consistent environments and trusting, responsive adults, children have the emotional security necessary for exploring, growing and learning.

A child's learning style is nurtured in an environment of trusting exploration, and is reflected in the ability to use persistence, initiative and the motivation to learn new skills.

Infants and toddlers gain new knowledge by taste, touch, smell, sight, sound, feelings, and through their physical actions. They begin to develop an awareness of themselves and others through their social interactions.

Adults need to identify children's current knowledge and understanding of their world, and use it as a basis for making new experiences, ideas, and concepts meaningful. The learning experiences for young children need to focus on concepts that are related to the child's everyday life, and that encourage the child to try new things and experience success.

Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Use appropriate verbal, visual, and physical cues in interactions and activities to meet the special needs of individual children
- ❖ Whenever possible, use words and phrases in the child's native language when introducing new ideas/concepts
- ❖ Provide opportunities for interaction with typically developing peers

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 of this document, and in NDE Rule 51.

Initiative and Curiosity Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child uses initiative, curiosity and persistence to learn about the world
 - Explores the environment through movement and the use of senses including mouthing toys, kicking legs, waving arms, etc.
 - Learns through discovery, imitation, and repetition
- Child communicates through sounds, gestures, and beginning oral language
- Child chooses from a variety of materials and methods of exploration

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Observes other children and adults
- Engages in a variety of methods of communication (cries, uses sounds, points to desired objects, begins to use one word statements or signs, etc.)
- Imitates the actions of adults and other children (sounds, facial expressions, gestures, self-help skills, etc.)
- Explores using movement, space, and materials (looks towards sound, mouths toys, kicks or swats at mobile, bangs on table or floor, etc.)
- Shows interest in stories, rhymes, songs, or simple games

The Adult

- Provides a reliable routine designed to meet each child's individual needs
- Describes to children what they are experiencing (feeling, hearing, touching, seeing, etc.)
- Asks questions and helps children find answers through active, hands-on exploration
- Provides a variety of materials and experiences that encourage exploration, movement and hands on discovery (rattles, activity boxes, soft books, etc.)
- Responds to children's exploration and discovery with enthusiasm and encouragement

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A safe, natural space for children to explore (minimal use of playpens, cribs, car seats and other confining spaces, etc.)
- A variety of sensory experiences (mirrors, rattles, bells, open containers to fill and empty, lightweight blocks, etc.)
- Safe materials of cloth, plastic, rubber in a variety of shapes, textures and sizes (large enough not to be a choking hazard)

Initiative and Curiosity

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child uses initiative, curiosity and persistence to learn about the world
 - Explores the environment through movement and the use of senses
 - Learns through discovery, imitation, and repetition
- Child learns through imaginative and interactive play
- Child uses oral language or other alternative methods of communication to ask questions or find solutions
- Child chooses from a variety of materials and methods of exploration

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Explores using movement, space, and materials (rolls or kicks a ball, manipulates shape sorters, builds creations with blocks, etc.)
- Engages in an activity alongside another child
- Imitates the actions of adults and other children (sounds, facial expressions, gestures, self-help skills, etc.)
- Makes choices about which stories, rhymes, songs, simple games, etc. to read, sing, play; which clothes to wear, etc.
- Asks questions repeatedly ("Why?", "How come?", "What's that?", etc.)
- Engages in pretend play around familiar events (arranges a row of chairs to become a bus, creates a tea party, talks on a toy phone, etc.)

The Adult

- Describes to children what they are experiencing (feeling, hearing, touching, seeing, etc.)
- Asks open-ended questions to engage children's imagination (require more than a one-word answer), including questions asking why, what, how, etc.
- Asks questions and helps children find answers through active, hands-on exploration
- Provides a variety of open-ended materials, opportunities and choices (water play, art materials, stacking and sorting materials, etc.)
- Responds to children's curiosity and questions with enthusiasm and encouragement

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A safe, natural space for children to explore with duplication of favorite toys and materials
- A variety of sensory experiences (boxes, large colored beads for stringing, water play materials, dress-up clothes, materials from nature, etc.)
- Safe materials of cloth, plastic, rubber in a variety of shapes, textures and sizes (large enough not to be a choking hazard)

Sensory Exploration & Problem Solving Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child notices and shows interest in and excitement with familiar objects, people and events
- Child explores environment and persists when facing challenges
- Child Experiments with cause and effect

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Looks for and finds an object or person that disappears from sight
- Tries one or two ways to reach an object or person (pulls on a blanket to bring a toy closer, rolls over, moves around obstacles to reach a desired object, etc.)
- Explores using materials and movement spontaneously (puts fingers/toes in mouth, rolls toward a toy, plays peek-a-boo, presses key or button to make noises, etc.)
- Uses repetition to discover materials and new skills
- Looks to the adult for help when trying to accomplish a task (makes eye contact with adult when experiencing difficulty, hands a toy to an adult, etc.)

The Adult

- Watches closely and describes to children what they are experiencing (feeling, hearing, touching, seeing, etc.)
- Asks questions and helps children find answers through active, hands-on exploration
- Provides opportunities to increase the child's ability to make independent choices
- Gives children ample time to problem solve without intervening
- Responds to children's exploration and discovery with enthusiasm and encouragement
- Arranges the environment to encourage problem solving and minimize "No's"
- Understands that 'getting messy' is part of the child's learning experience
- Shows excitement when child attempts new activity

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials that encourage discovery, imitation, and repetition (mirrors, books, music, wind up toys, etc.)
- Stacking blocks, activity boxes, containers to fill and dump, squeaky toys, outdoor play time, etc.
- Musical toys, materials of various textures, things to push, roll, swing, etc.

Sensory Exploration & Problem Solving Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child tries multiple ways to solve a problem and is highly involved and persistent
 - Uses active exploration, trial and error, and words to solve problems
 - Demonstrates persistence in problem solving
 - Increases ability to find more than one solution
 - Uses previously successful methods to solve a problem
- Child Experiments with cause and effect
- Child shows increasing ability to identify similar objects from a variety of materials

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Demonstrates increasing control in manipulation of materials and movement
- Manipulates materials to cause an action (winds up a toy to make it go, hits the drum to make a sound, etc.)
- Attempts a task for a minute or two before asking for assistance
- Tries several methods to solve a problem (moves obstacles to reach a desired object, twists, pounds and pulls to take an object apart, etc.)
- Uses an object as a tool (a low chair to climb higher, a paintbrush to paint, etc.)
- Selects items that match (cars from a bucket of vehicles, blocks of the same color, etc.)

The Adult

- Asks questions and helps children find answers through active, hands-on exploration
- Helps children identify people, places, and things in their environment
- Provides opportunities to increase the child's ability to make independent choices
- Encourages and provides materials for a variety of sensory experiences (to touch, taste, listen to, observe, etc.)
- Gives children ample time to problem-solve without intervening
- Responds to children's curiosity and questions with enthusiasm and encouragement
- Arranges the environment to encourage problem solving and minimize "No's"
- Understands that 'getting messy' is part of the child's learning experience

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials that encourage discovery, imitation, and repetition (mirrors, books, musical instruments, wind up toys, etc.)
- Simple puzzles, sand and water play toys, nesting cups and containers, finger paint, wind chimes, etc.

Resources

125 Brain Games for Babies -- Jackie Silberg

125 Brain Games for Toddlers and Twos: Simple Games to Promote Early Brain Development -- Jackie Silberg

Baby Play and Learn -- Penny Warner

Childspace Infants and Toddlers: A Program Guide and Caregiver Workbook -- Jane Warren

Games to Play with Babies (3rd Edition) -- Jackie Silber

Higglety Pigglety Pop -- Jackie Weismann

Infant/Toddler: Introducing Your Child to the Joy of Learning -- Earladeen Badger

Learning Through Play: Blocks -- Ellen Booth Church

The Right Stuff for Children Birth to 8; Selecting Play Materials to Support Development (NAEYC) -- Martha Bronson

Thrifty Nifty Stuff for Little Kids -- Dee Blose

What's Going On In There?: How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life -- Lise Eliot

Books for Children

Alphabet Under Construction -- Denise Fleming

The Boy Who Wouldn't Go to Bed -- Helen Cooper

Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See? -- Bill Martin, Jr.

Color -- Ruth Heller

Corduroy -- Don Freeman

From Head to Toe -- Eric Carle

Goodnight Moon -- Margaret Wise Brown

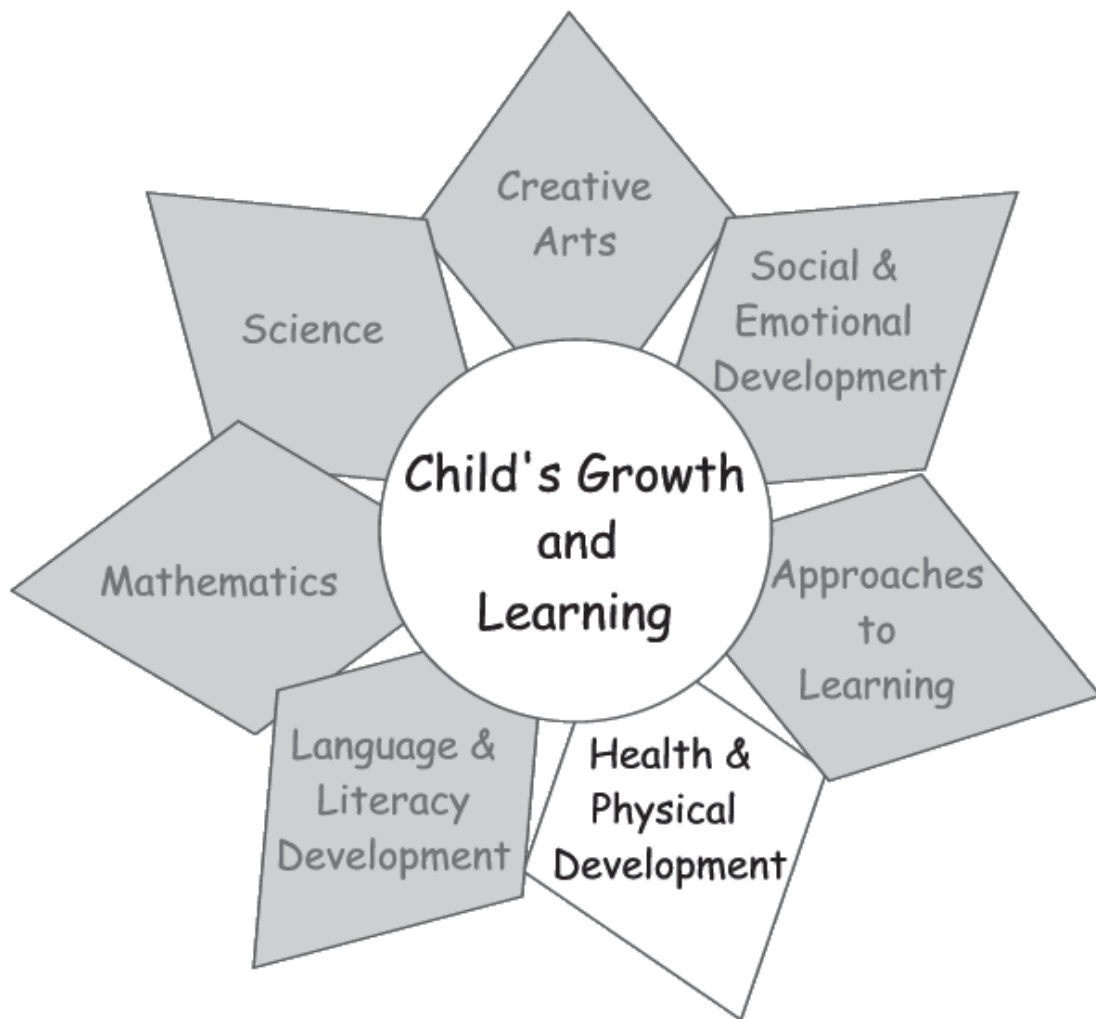
I Can -- Helen Oxenbury

Maisey Drives The Bus -- Lucy Cousins

Snow Play -- Kate Spohn

What Does Baby Say? -- Karen Katz

Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



Health and Physical Development

- Fine (Small) Motor Skills
- Gross (Large) Motor Skills
- Health Behaviors and Practices
- Nutrition
- Self Help Skills

All young children require consistent, caring adult supervision and support to make sure health needs are being met. These needs include good nutrition, primary and preventive health and dental care, and healthy, safe environments. Learning experiences are integrated into these basic activities, which should be structured to encourage infants and toddlers to explore their world, promote coordination and strength, enhance thinking skills, and develop an "I can do it" mentality. Young children should be introduced to indoor and outdoor space and facilities that allow them to experience a variety of developmentally appropriate physical activities and help them develop the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.



The development of fine (small) motor and gross (large) motor skills, as well as self-help skills, is a critical part of development for infants and toddlers. These skills are essential for the successful achievement of developmental milestones during the first three years. They also serve as a foundation for the development of future academic skills such as reading and writing.

Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Ensure that materials in indoor and outdoor environments are safe and easily accessible (height, size, location)
- ❖ Use verbal, visual, and physical cues to help the child know what to do
- ❖ Provide encouragement and support for the child to maximize successful attempts to accomplish tasks
- ❖ Provide physical guidance and support, if needed, for children having difficulty with motor tasks
- ❖ Provide adaptive equipment and materials as needed to ensure child's successful participation.

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 of this document, and in NDE Rule 51.

Fine (Small) Motor Skills Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child uses eyes, mouth and hands to explore large and small objects that are within reach, developing more purposeful actions over time
 - Increases eye-hand coordination to perform a variety of simple activities
 - Begins to develop fine (small) motor skills through playing with toys and materials
- Child actively explores the environment and manipulates objects
 - Discovers the properties of objects (texture, sound, taste, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Engages in activities which require eye-hand coordination and the use of small muscles (puts items in mouth, bats at objects, grasps toys, etc.)
- Explores textures in the environment (carpet, tile, rugs, grass, etc.)
- Handles objects with growing skill (rattles, simple toys, etc.) that are large enough not to be a choking hazard
- Begins to manipulate materials (kicks at mobile, puts objects into containers, dumps items, stacks blocks, etc.)
- Begins cause and effect play with toys (pushes button on toy to hear music or see lights flash)

The Adult

- Ensures that materials do not present choking or other safety hazards
- Plans meaningful and challenging activities with materials that support the development of fine (small) motor skills (plays with rattles, blocks, plastic keys, etc.)
- Allows opportunities for spontaneous exploration that encourage fine (small) motor skill development
- Provides daily opportunities for hands-on activities and manipulation of materials during indoor and outdoor play, including tummy time for non-mobile infants
- Protects children from toxic materials, such as those containing lead, and cleaning products

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Variety of age appropriate toys and materials and household items (rattles, musical toys, simple blocks, pots, pans, spoons, etc.)
- Various toys and materials placed at the child's level for independent access (soft animals, dolls, nesting cups, books, etc.)

Fine (Small) Motor Skills Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child uses hands and fingers to control objects to demonstrate increasing fine (small) motor coordination
 - Increases eye-hand coordination skills to perform a variety of tasks
 - Develops fine (small) motor skills through playing with toys and materials
 - Uses strength and control to perform simple tasks
- Child actively explores the environment and manipulates objects
 - Explores drawing and writing by scribbling and painting
 - Puts puzzles together, sets table with dishes and play food, etc.

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Explores textures in the environment (indoor and outdoor materials that are smooth, rough, soft, hard, squishy, etc.)
- Participates in activities which require the use of small muscles (cause and effect play, action activated toys, container play, etc.)
- Handles objects with growing skill (places shapes in corresponding opening in shape box, strings large beads, completes simple puzzles, etc.)
- Puts connecting blocks together and pulls them apart with relative ease
- Holds and uses large crayons and pencils, paint brushes, scissors, etc.

The Adult

- Ensures that materials do not present choking or other safety hazards
- Provides daily opportunities for outdoor play
- Provides meaningful and challenging activities to help children build more advanced fine (small) motor skills
- Protects children from toxic materials, such as those containing lead, and cleaning products

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Variety of age appropriate toys and materials and household items (puzzles, musical toys, simple blocks, pots, pans, spoons, etc.)
- Various toys and materials placed at the child's level for independent access (cars, dolls, puppets, pegs/peg boards, etc.)

Gross (Large) Motor Skills Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to develop gross (large) motor skills
 - Waves arms, kicks legs, rolls over, sits up, etc.
- Child builds skills in coordination, balance, body awareness and coordination
- Child actively explores a safe and supportive environment, both indoors and outdoors
 - Crawls, cruises, walks with increasing ability

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Gains voluntary control of arm and leg movements
- Begins to use arms and legs purposefully (lifts head, claps hands, holds arms out for dressing, pulls to stand, throws objects, etc.)
- Engages in gross (large) motor activities (rolls over, sits, crawls, stands, walks, etc.)
- Imitates activities involving gross (large) motor movement (pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo, so-big, etc.)

The Adult

- Allows the child floor time to move freely and use gross (large) motor skills to explore the environment
- Encourages the child to use a variety of gross (large) muscle movements (roll, crawl, sit, stand, etc.) both indoors and outdoors, on a daily basis
- Plays imitation games with the child to encourage development of body awareness and gross (large) motor skills
- Provides a safe environment for exploration (outlets covered, toxic materials out of reach, sharp objects/corners removed or covered, etc.)
- Limits infant's time in confining equipment (swings, bouncers, exersaucers, cribs, car seats, etc.); walkers should not be used

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of equipment and materials to encourage gross (large) motor development (balls, push/pull toys, small climbing structures, etc.)
- Open space for movement and exploration, both indoors and outdoors (open floor space for crawling, pulling up to stand, cruising, walking, etc.)
- Soft surface materials of various heights for climbing over, on, around, etc.

Gross (Large) Motor Skills Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child develops gross (large) motor skills
 - Runs, jumps, hops, throws, etc.
 - Coordinates both hands to manipulate large objects
- Child demonstrates coordination, balance, and body awareness
- Child actively explores a safe and supportive environment, both indoors and outdoors
 - Walks, runs, climbs, hops, rolls, etc.
- Child shows growing skill in climbing up and down steps

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Plays actively in both indoor and outdoor settings daily
- Engages in increasingly complex gross (large) motor tasks (runs, climbs, walks up stairs holding someone's hand or a rail, rides a tricycle, etc.)
- Participates in a variety of gross (large) motor activities (dances, throws a ball, "Ring Around the Rosey", etc.)

The Adult

- Acknowledges and supports the child's need to move and be active throughout the day
- Provides adequate time for the child to practice, explore and expand motor skills and interests
- Provides space and supervision for both indoor and outdoor activities on a daily basis
- Provides a safe environment for exploration (outlets covered, toxic materials out of reach, sharp objects/corners removed or covered, etc.)

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of equipment and materials to encourage gross (large) motor development (riding toys, climbing apparatus, steps, etc. and balls, push/pull toys, blocks, etc.)
- Open space for movement and exploration, both indoors and outdoors, that meet safety standards including cushioning material under climbing equipment
- A variety of surfaces to explore outdoors (grass, dirt, sand, cement, etc.)

Health Behaviors & Practices Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child shows increasing awareness of health and safety practices through repetition, imitation and adult conversation about what is happening
- Child shows interest in physical activities that promote health
- Child begins to understand and initiate good hygiene practices (offers hands to be washed, mimics cleaning, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Participates in health and hygiene activities (diapering, washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Responds to adult guidance related to health and safety practices ("Let's wash your hands", "Time for a diaper change", etc.)
- Participates in physical activities, both indoors and outdoors

The Adult

- Provides a safe physical environment; completes regular safety checks, both indoors and outdoors
- Models good health and safety practices, especially proper hand washing techniques
- Performs caregiving routines slowly and carefully, telling child what is coming next, and waiting for child readiness before taking each step
- Provides opportunities for children to be physically active
- Closely supervises children and monitors their physical health including procedures to follow regarding allergies, medications, etc.

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Safe physical space for children to explore without risks to health and safety, both indoors and outdoors
- Space and furnishings which allow for sound health and hygiene practices (separate diapering and food prep areas, sinks, refrigerators, etc.)
- Posted health and safety guidelines, including schedule for washing/sanitizing toys and materials
- Safe sleeping environment (crib or playpen with firm mattress, no thick blankets, toys, pillows, bumper pads, or other soft items)

Health Behaviors & Practices Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child shows increasing awareness of health and safety practices and guidelines
- Child shows interest in physical activities that promote health (wiping off tables, dressing for the weather, etc.)
 - Begins to understand the benefits of exercise
- Child begins to understand and initiate good hygiene practices (washes hands, offers to help with cleaning, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Participates in a variety of physical activities, both indoors and outdoors (runs, jumps, climbs, swings, hops, etc.)
- Cooperates with and participates in health and hygiene activities (washing hands, brushing teeth, etc.)
- Responds to adult guidance and reminders related to health and safety ("Feet on the floor", "Time to wash hands", etc.)

The Adult

- Provides a safe physical environment; completes regular safety checks, both indoors and outdoors
- Models good health and safety practices, especially proper hand washing techniques
- Provides encouragement and opportunities to learn health and safety practices
- Provides opportunities for children to be physically active
- Closely supervises children and monitors their physical health including procedures to follow regarding allergies, medications, etc.

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Safe physical space for children to explore without risks to health and safety, both indoors and outdoors
- Space and furnishings which allow for sound health and hygiene practices (separate diapering and food prep areas, child-sized toilets and sinks, refrigerators, etc.)
- Posted health and safety guidelines, including schedule for washing/sanitizing toys and materials

Nutrition

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child gains weight within normal growth range
- Child begins to develop healthy eating and lifestyle habits
 - Successfully transitions from breast milk or formula to milk or milk substitute, such as soy
 - Begins eating solid food
- Child shows increasing independence in ability to feed self

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Shows increasing interest in food and meal times (from recognizing breast or bottle to holding bottle or cup; from opening mouth for food to finger feeding, etc.)
- Tries and eats a variety of foods
- Uses actions or words to indicate needs/preferences (turns head away, reaches toward food, etc.)

The Adult

- Is aware of allergies of individual child; serves foods that do not pose a choking hazard
- Responds to infants' individual feeding needs and schedules
- Holds infants while bottle feeding
- Follows health and safety guidelines related to child nutrition
- Works with parents and health care providers to coordinate the introduction of new foods
- Acknowledges families' cultural or religious food preferences
- Respects the child's food preferences and developing self-feeding abilities
- Encourages the child to establish healthy eating habits
- Provides accommodations for breast feeding, and/or use of expressed breast milk

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials and furnishings to support children's developing nutrition habits and independence in eating (child-sized furniture, dishes, utensils, cups, etc.)
- Good hygiene and sanitation practices related to food and nutrition; hand washing procedure signs are posted and followed
- Posted individual feeding schedules for infants including allergies and family food preferences

Nutrition

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to develop healthy eating and lifestyle habits
 - Eats a variety of table foods
- Child shows increasing independence in developing eating abilities
 - Eats own food at the table with other children and/or adults
- Child communicates nutrition-related information
 - Asks for more
 - Names foods that are served

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Tries a variety of foods (vegetables, meat, breads, dairy, fruits, etc.)
- Begins to serve self some foods with adult assistance
- Eats independently using child-sized dishes and utensils
- Exhibits food preferences; may have periods of picky eating or increased appetite
- Shows interest in dramatic play materials related to food and nutrition

The Adult

- Is aware of allergies of individual child; serves foods that do not pose a choking hazard
- Provides assistance to children in feeding themselves and helping with cleanup
- Encourages children's interest in and exploration of foods, both real and pretend
- Acknowledges families' cultural or religious food preferences
- Follows health and safety guidelines related to child nutrition
- Sets realistic expectations for children in developing manners and etiquette

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials and furnishings to support children's developing nutrition habits and independence in eating (child-sized tables, chairs, etc.)
- Visual (books, pictures, etc.) and dramatic play props (dishes, foods, etc.) that support children's growing interest in foods and nutrition
- Good hygiene and sanitation practices related to food and nutrition; hand washing procedure signs are posted and followed
- Posted information on individual child allergies and family food preferences

Self-Help Skills

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child calms self with familiar, comforting items and adult support
- Child shows increasing awareness of the function of self-care materials
 - Puts tissue to nose, toothbrush to mouth
- Child cooperates with care routines
 - Dressing, bathing, feeding

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Uses different cries, words and gestures to indicate wants and needs (hunger, sickness, sleepy, joy, etc.)
- Shows body awareness related to basic care routines (quiets when placed on changing table, puts brush/comb to hair, etc.)
- Begins to participate in care routines (washes and dries hands with adult assistance, puts arms out when shirt is being put on, participates in picking up toys, etc.)
- Holds own spoon while being spoon fed

The Adult

- Understands and recognizes the meaning of different cries
- Meets the child's basic care needs in a consistent and timely manner
- Talks about care routines as they are occurring ("Now we're going to put on your socks.")
- Encourages the child's interest and participation in basic care routines (diapering, dressing, bathing, etc.)
- Makes care routines an enjoyable experience

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Equipment and furnishings that promote health and safety for both children and staff (hand rails, cabinet locks, outlet covers, fenced playground, etc.)
- Sinks, diapering areas, refrigerator, cubbies, cribs, etc., including low sinks or step stools to encourage self-help skills in older infants

Self-Help Skills

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child shows increasing awareness of the body and its functions
 - Uncomfortable when wet or soiled; may hide to have bowel movement
- Child shows increasing development of self-help skills and materials
 - Knows how various self-care items are used (toothbrush, towel, hairbrush/comb, etc.)
- Child cooperates with care routines
 - Begins to dress self, brush teeth, etc., with assistance from adult

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Shows increasing independence in dressing, brushing teeth, bathing, toileting, eating, etc.
- Begins toilet training process
- Picks out clothes to wear; may have favorites
- Tries to do things independently (wipes nose with tissue, washes and dries hands independently)

The Adult

- Encourages the child's independence in learning self-help skills
- Accepts messiness and accidents as part of the learning process
- Makes care routines an enjoyable experience
- Works with families to coordinate timing and process for toilet training
- Reinforces healthy practices such as brushing teeth or making healthy food choices

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Equipment and furnishings that promote health and safety for both children and staff (hand rails, cabinet locks, outlet covers, fenced playground, etc.)
- Appropriate furnishings to encourage development of self-help skills (steps to sink or toilet, coat hooks and cubbies at child's level, etc.)

Resources

Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Birth to Five Years--
National Association for Sports and Physical Education

Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents--
American Academy of Pediatrics

Bright Futures in Practice: Nutrition -- Mary Story

Caring for our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs -- American Academy of Pediatrics

Creative Resources for Infants and Toddlers -- Judy Herr and Teri Swim

Outdoor Play Everyday: Innovative Play Concepts for Early Childhood -- Karyn Wellhousen

Stepping Stones to Using Caring for Our Children -- American Academy of Pediatrics

Books for Children

Busy Toes -- C.W. Bowie

Can't You Sleep, Little Bear? -- Martin Waddell

Each Peach Pear Plum -- Janet Alhberg and Allan Ahlberg

Baby Faces: Eat! -- Roberta Grobel Intrater

Fingers, Nose and Toes -- John Pinderhughes

The Foot Book -- Dr. Seuss

Jamberry -- Bruce Degen

Good Night, Baby -- Cheryl Willis Hudson

Growing -- Fiona Pragoff

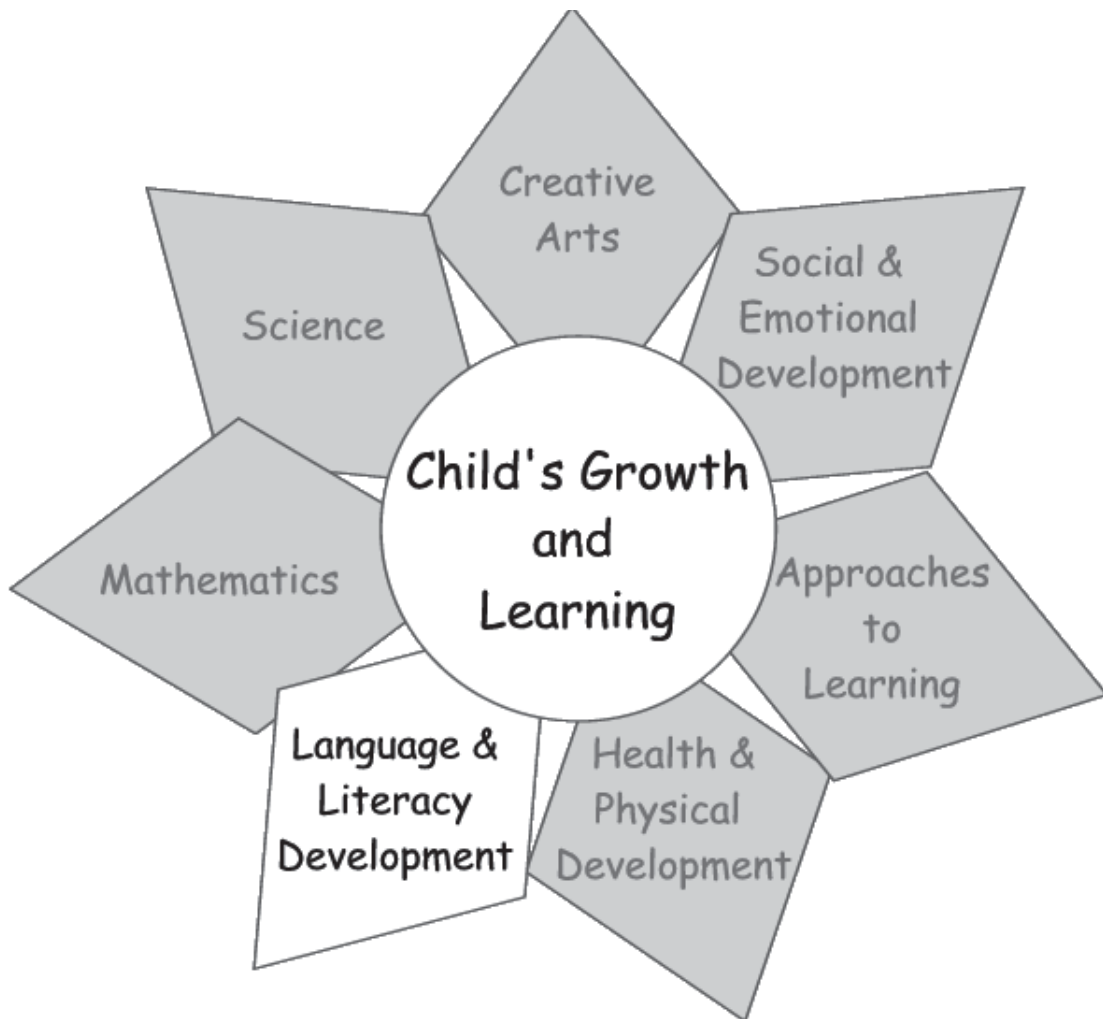
How a Baby Grows -- Nola Buck

Time for Bed -- Mem Fox

The Wheels On The Bus -- Raffi

Where Is Baby's Belly Button? -- Karen Katz

Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



Language and Literacy Development

- Listening and Understanding
- Speaking and Communicating
- Book Knowledge and Appreciation
- Print Awareness and Early Writing



Between birth and three years of age, children begin to learn that they can communicate with adults through crying, gestures, expressions, sounds, and later through words or other alternative methods.

These language skills develop through playing, listening, talking, reading, and learning the skills that adults use to communicate. Early nonverbal interactions (smiling, facial expressions, gestures, etc.) are followed by spoken language, sign language or other alternative communication methods to practice the rules of communication within their culture and family. These skills set the foundation for development in all areas, but especially literacy development.

The adult plays an important role in helping the very young child understand and communicate by being responsive to the infant's/toddler's attempts to communicate, and by providing a rich language environment. During the first three years young children are also beginning to learn about print and writing, and how oral language is reflected in written symbols (drawings). Literacy skills are promoted and supported through play, reading books, scribbling, back-and-forth communication, and interactions with adults. A solid foundation in oral language development in the early years before a child enters school will promote success in reading and writing in the future. Young children who have rich language and literacy experiences are more likely to be successful in learning to read independently.

Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Acknowledge the child's current level of communication and build upon it
- ❖ Provide good models of communication, including sign language and native language if needed
- ❖ Use special or adaptive devices and/or processes to increase level of communication and/or participation
- ❖ Use a favorite toy, activity or person to encourage communication and/or participation

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 of this document, and in NDE Rule 51.

Listening and Understanding Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child responds to sounds in the environment
 - Turns in the directions of sounds
 - Begins to identify sounds with particular objects (phone, doorbell, car horn, etc.)
- Child begins to listen to words with understanding
- Child begins to follow simple directions
- Child demonstrates understanding of native and/or English language
 - Begins to attach meaning to the sounds, gestures, signs and words heard or seen

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Startles or turns to sounds in the environment (loud sounds, voices, car horn, etc.)
- Responds to familiar words or gestures (stops crying when caregiver says "bottle", smiles or laughs when told "Mommy/Daddy is here" etc.)
- Recognizes familiar social games and routines (smiles or pats hands together when the adult says "pat-a-cake", etc.)
- Responds to simple questions or requests (searches for a toy when asked, "Where's your ball?" etc.)
- Points to objects, pictures, and body parts (nose, eyes, ears, etc.) as part of interactions with adults

The Adult

- Engages children in social games and back and forth communicating
- Pairs words with actions and objects during play activities and daily routines
- Names and describes people, things, and actions during play activities and daily routines
- Follows the child's lead, commenting on the child's actions and sounds
- Encourages parents to develop and maintain their first language in the home

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Stories, songs, words, games and daily schedules in English and the languages of non-English speaking children
- Durable cloth, board or vinyl books, soft toys, and puppets, which are accessible throughout the day

Listening and Understanding Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child listens to simple directions and conversations with understanding
 - Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of stories, social games, songs and poems
- Child follows directions, responds to simple instructions/requests
 - Follows single- and two-step directions
- Child listens to others and responds to feelings and expressed ideas
 - Responds to simple, direct, conversational sentences, either verbally or by actions or gestures
- Child demonstrates understanding of many vocabulary words
 - Builds a growing vocabulary of everyday events, people, and things

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Attends to and gains information from short stories, rhymes, finger plays, songs, etc.
- Demonstrates understanding of native and/or English languages
- Responds with understanding to action words, such as "Let's put the baby in bed"
- Follows directions such as "Please go wash your hands, then sit down at the table"
- Answers simple questions using short sentences
- Imitates sounds and simple rhythms

The Adult

- Engages children in songs, rhymes, finger plays, and stories
- Uses short phrases to describe toddlers' actions in play activities and daily routines
- Names and describes people, things, and actions
- Expands on child's language and answers questions
- Encourages parents to develop and maintain their first language in the home

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Stories, songs, words, games and daily schedules in English and the languages of non-English speaking children and their families
- Sturdy board, vinyl, and cloth books, photo albums, magazines with pictures, catalogs, flannel boards, puppets, etc.
- Quiet location for listening to books on tape
- Opportunities to play listening games and listen to different types of sounds

Speaking and Communicating Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child communicates needs, wants, feelings, or thoughts through words, gestures, actions, or expressions
 - Cries to indicate different needs
 - Begins to use words and gestures to communicate (coos, babbles, makes sounds, uses sign language, etc.)
 - Begins to initiate interactions with adults and peers
- Child communicates for a variety of purposes
 - Signals for more
 - Greets adults and peers

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Communicates nonverbally with adults and other children (reaches for or turns away to end an interaction, waves, smiles, etc.)
- Communicates verbally with adults and other children (cries, babbles, uses simple words or signs, etc.)
- Engages in vocal play and back and forth communication games with responsive adults
- Communicates needs and interests to get responses from others for comfort, warmth, nourishment and satisfaction

The Adult

- Uses alternate ways to communicate when needed (sign language, gestures, etc.)
- Builds on children's interests to introduce new words and ideas during play activities and daily routines
- Engages children in back and forth communication
- Creates a climate of trust by responding to infants' cues and communications
- Understands that young infants do not intentionally cry or act out in order to "be naughty" or "make you angry", but that they are developing ways to communicate their wants and needs

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials that encourage face-to-face interactions (books, puppets, dolls, mirrors, etc.)
- Pictures of children and their families (books, photos, etc.)

Speaking and Communicating Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child communicates needs, wants, feelings, or thoughts through words, gestures, actions, or expressions
 - Uses words, phrases, short sentences and gestures to communicate
- Child communicates for a variety of purposes
 - Asks questions
 - Initiates social interactions with other children and adults
 - Communicates to show or share with adult
- Child uses new vocabulary words that have been learned

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Communicates nonverbally through expressions and gestures
- Communicates verbally ranging from single words to simple sentences
- Uses words or phrases to express wants, seek attention, protest, comment, or offer greetings
- Names objects or actions in picture books
- Asks questions to achieve more information ("What's that?" , "Why?" etc.)

The Adult

- Uses alternate ways to communicate when needed (sign language, gestures, etc.)
- Builds on children's interests to introduce new words and ideas during play activities and daily routines
- Provides opportunities for children to engage in conversation
- Responds to toddlers' cues and communications
- Engages children in back and forth communication

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials that encourage face-to-face interactions (books, puppets, dolls, mirrors, etc.)
- Pictures of children and their families (photos, books, etc.)

Book Knowledge & Appreciation

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child responds to language and shows enjoyment of the sounds and rhythms of language
- Child explores books with interest
 - Mouths, touches, shakes, throws
 - Points at pictures
- Child responds to pictures in book
 - Names pictures in books

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Explores physical features of books (chews, touches, handles, mouths, etc.)
- Explores books (looks at, pats pictures, turns pages, etc.)
- Vocalizes and attends to book as adult talks about the pictures
- Looks at and recognizes favorite books by the cover
- Points to pictures
- Babbles with growing consistency using speech-like words

The Adult

- Provides a variety of books and pictures that are accessible (those that can be manipulated, ones with textures, pop-ups, etc.)
- Looks at and names pictures in books with the child
- Provides books with simple, realistic pictures to build vocabulary, exploring and extending children's understanding of the meaning of new words
- Provides daily lap reading time
- Provides durable books that engage the senses (different textures, bright colors, sounds, etc.)

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Many types of durable children's books (cloth, vinyl, board, etc.)
- Soft, cozy place for looking at books (pillows, rugs, stuffed animals, etc.)

Book Knowledge & Appreciation Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child demonstrates interest in and appreciation of reading-related activities
 - Explores books
 - Shows interest when stories are read
 - Relates events in story to own knowledge and experience
- Child increases knowledge about books and how they are typically read
 - Holds book right side up
 - Turns pages front to back
- Child responds to pictures in book
 - Describes pictures in books

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Points to and names pictures in book
- Chooses favorite book and looks through as though reading
- Requests favorite book to be read repeatedly
- Uses phrases to describe events in books
- Holds book right side up and turns pages from front to back

The Adult

- Places interesting books and signs/posters in all interest areas
- Reads books with rich, descriptive pictures and vocabulary
- Explores and extends children's understanding of the meaning of new words
- Reads to children daily, individually and/or with others
- Helps children to care for and respect books

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Many types of durable children's books (cloth, board, big books, etc.)
- Soft, cozy place for looking at books (soft chairs, rugs, pillows, stuffed animals, etc.)

Print Awareness & Early Writing Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to develop eye-hand coordination
- Child manipulates materials with increasing precision (reaches for toys, plays with toes, shakes keys to make sound, carries blanket, etc.)
- Child explores with writing materials

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Develops eye-hand coordination, (follows objects with eye, passes objects from one hand to another, waves bye-bye, etc.)
- Scribbles on paper using large crayons or pencils
- Uses thumb and forefinger to pick up items (pincer grasp)

The Adult

- Provides crayons and other art materials for infant to explore
- Respects scribbles as early forms of writing
- Writes child's name on artwork, cubby, and all personal supplies

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of writing tools (large sheets of paper, large crayons and pencils, large paint brushes, etc.)
- Displays of children's art around the room at child's eye level
- Pictures, posters, labels on cubbies and materials, toy shelves etc.

Print Awareness & Early Writing Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child manipulates materials with increasing precision
- Child shows an awareness of print as a form of meaningful communication
 - Environmental print (road signs, signs on stores, symbols, etc.)
- Child shows an interest in early writing
 - Uses scribbles, shapes or pictures to represent specific thoughts, ideas, stories
- Child begins to recognize own name on artwork or possessions

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Uses a variety of writing tools and art materials (easel, brushes, large crayons, pencils, markers, etc.)
- Scribbles spontaneously, often using circular motions
- Identifies familiar symbols or environmental print (names, logos, food signs, etc.)
- Tells adults about drawing and asks adults to write their stories

The Adult

- Displays children's names on artwork, cubbies and all personal supplies
- Models the use of writing and drawing in everyday activities
- Write child's dictation on artwork
- Promotes literacy related play activities (reads stories, play with magnet letters, etc.)
- Respects children's attempts at writing

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Durable books and a variety of writing tools accessible to children (variety of paper, large crayons and pencils, paint brushes, markers, etc.)
- Displays of children's art (including children's beginning attempts at writing) around the room at child's eye level
- Pictures, posters, labels on cubbies and materials, toy shelves, etc.

Resources

The Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers -- Amy Laura Dombro, Laura J. Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge

Growing Up Reading: Learning To Read Through Creative Play -- Jill Frankel Hauser

Learning Language and Loving It: A Guide to Promoting Children's Social and Language Development -- Elaine Weitzman and Janice Greenber

Literacy: The Creative Curriculum Approach -- Cate Heroman and Candy Jones

Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever -- Mem Fox

Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success -- Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin

The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us About the Mind -- Alison Gopnick, Andrew N. Meltzoff, and Patricia K. Kuhl

Tender Care and Early Learning: Supporting Infants and Toddlers in Child Care Settings -- Jacalyn Post and Mary Hohmann

Young Children and Picture Books: Literature from Infancy to Six (NAEYC) -- Mary Renck Jalongo

Books for Children

I Love You, Sun I Love You, Moon -- Karen Pandell and Tomie dePaola

My First Animal Board Book -- Dorling Kindersley Publishing

My First Baby Games -- Jane Manning

My Very First Mother Goose -- Iona Archibald Opie

Time For Bed -- Mem Fox

Who's Peeking? -- Charles Reasoner

What Is That? -- Tana Hoban

In the Tall, Tall Grass -- Denise Fleming

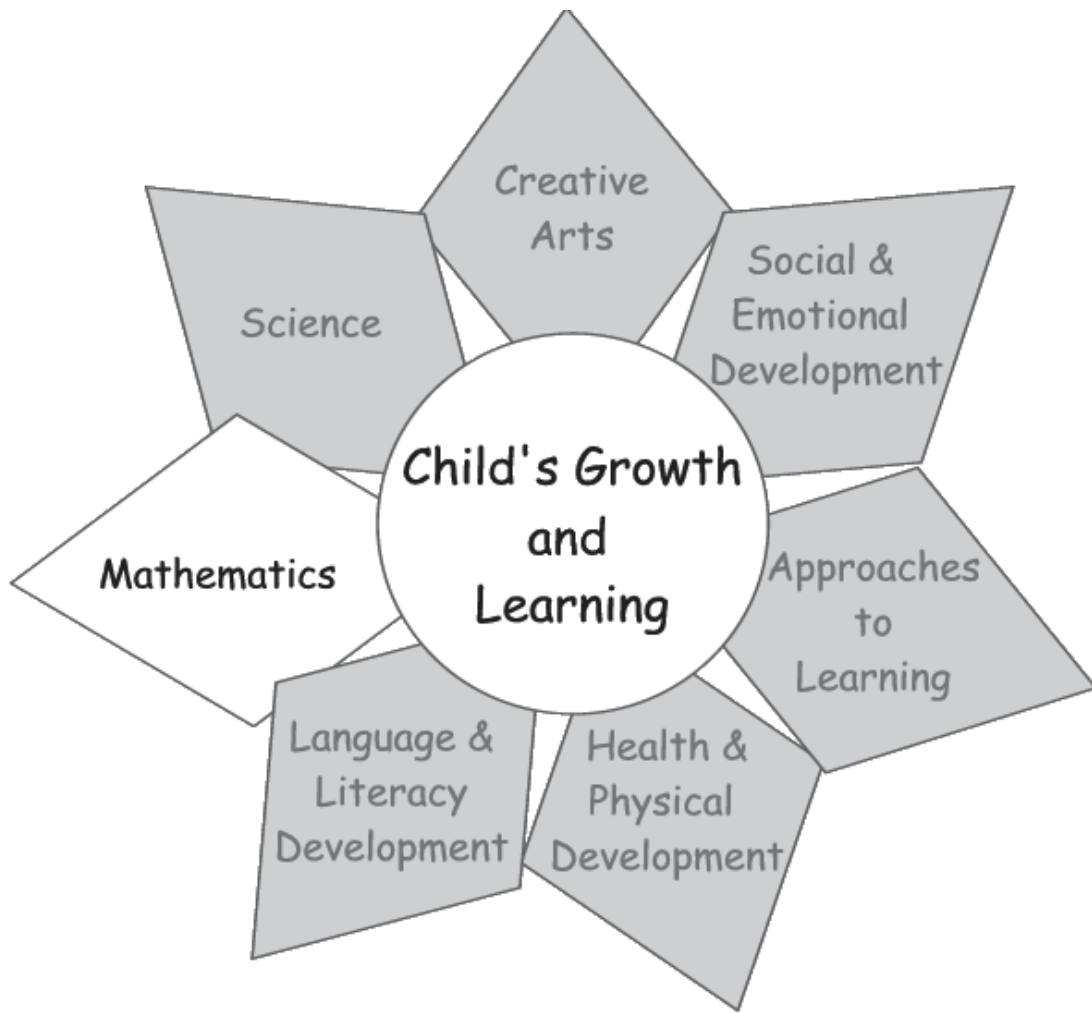
Jessie Bear, What Will You Wear? -- Nancy White Carlstrom

Mama Mama or Papa Papa -- Jean Marzollo

On Mother's Lap -- Ann Herbert Scott

Ten, Nine, Eight -- Molly Bang

Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



Mathematics

- Number and Operations
- Spatial Sense
- Patterns and Measurement

Very young children develop mathematical concepts through meaningful and active learning experiences that are broader in scope than numbers and counting.

In an inclusive, developmentally appropriate, play-based environment, infants and toddlers have opportunities to acquire and understand math-related skills and concepts using hands-on materials during play activities and in real-life situations.

These activities can help facilitate the concepts of quantity, time, and space. Adults must be flexible during daily routines and try to capture teachable moments to describe comparison concepts.

Adults must also facilitate activities that build upon young children's existing skills based on their curiosity and enthusiasm for the objects in their environment.



Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Simplify a complicated task by breaking it into smaller parts or reducing the number of steps
- ❖ Use shorter but more frequent activities and routines

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 of this document, and in NDE Rule 51.

Number and Operations Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to develop awareness of quantity
 - Explores a variety of materials
 - Puts toys into containers of various sizes
- Child begins to show interest in real life mathematical concepts
 - Understands the concept of "more" in reference to food or play
- Child begins to imitate counting using some names of numbers

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Indicates preferences (more crackers, no more milk, more music, wants to get down, etc.)
- Experiments with quantities and space (stacks blocks, fills containers, dumps objects, etc.)
- Manipulates similar objects (blocks, large beads, etc.) that are large enough not to be a choking hazard

The Adult

- Describes child's activities using words related to quantity (one, more, another, etc.)
- Exposes child to numbers and number concepts in pictures, books and songs
- Provides materials to explore and manipulate that are large enough not to be a choking hazard
- Models counting objects in child's environment

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials available and accessible within the daily routine for manipulation and exploration (rattles, blocks, stacking rings, etc.)
- Materials that provide examples and encourage use of numbers (books, pictures, toys, etc.)

Number and Operations

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child develops awareness of numbers
 - Counts up to five
 - Uses one to one correspondence
 - Understands quantities up to 3
- Child develops an understanding of the counting process
 - Uses counting words
 - Imitates counting rhymes or songs

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Counts in nursery rhymes or songs ("Three Little Monkeys", "One Two Buckle My Shoe", etc.)
- Places object in 1 to 1 correspondence within play activities and routines (hands each child a cup, places a pretend cookie on each plate, etc.)
- Compares the quantities of small groups of objects, (all, some, none, more, less, etc.)
- Counts to five or higher from memory (recites one, two, three...)
- Identifies a single puzzle piece as "one"

The Adult

- Provides counting finger plays, books, songs and other activities and materials throughout the daily routine and program
- Provides opportunities for children to pair objects, to count, and to develop and practice using number words
- Uses descriptive words throughout the day (before, after, later, etc.)

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials available and accessible within the daily routine for sorting and counting (blocks, large beads, magnetic shapes, etc.)
- Objects that include numbers and number words (clocks, play cash register, measuring cups, etc.)

Spatial Sense

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to develop knowledge of where things are in the environment
 - Explores materials
 - Experiments with gravity and space
- Child develops sense of self in relation to the environment

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Visually follows movement of objects and people
- Gazes at own hands as they move about, waves arms to touch the dangling toy overhead, etc.
- Explores materials by using different actions with toys (shakes rattles, slides cars, rolls balls, etc.)
- Explores space by moving self over, under, through, in and around various objects and spaces
- Experiments with gravity (stacks 2-3 blocks, dangles objects on rings, drops objects off tray, etc.)
- Explores materials by pointing and poking

The Adult

- Provides experiences with toys with different properties (mobiles, squeaky toys, bells, toys with moving parts, cars, etc.)
- Provides blocks, empty boxes, tubes and containers for children to use in creating and constructing
- Uses descriptive words related to spatial concepts (over, under, more, less, etc.)
- Provides large boxes and climbing equipment for children to explore the physical space
- Takes children outside to explore nature and neighborhood

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of materials to explore space (blocks, containers, rattles, activity boxes, etc.)
- Time and space to explore both indoors and outdoors

Spatial Sense

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child develops knowledge of where things are in the environment
 - Begins to recognize buildings, stores, signs, parks, etc.
- Child develops geometry and spatial sense
 - Uses comparison words correctly (more, less, bigger, smaller, etc.)
 - Uses words that describe the relative position of things (close, far, up, down, etc.)
 - Learns about shapes (circle, square, triangle, etc.)
- Child groups objects together that are the same in some way
- Child uses language to demonstrate understanding of space and time (next to, on top of, in, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Matches and sorts objects of different sizes and shapes
- Stacks objects and completes structures using a variety of different blocks
- Fills and dumps a variety of containers with different materials
- Moves through obstacle course (climbing over, under, through, around, in, out, etc.)

The Adult

- Provides a variety of puzzles to encourage children to problem-solve and to make comparisons (single and multiple piece puzzles, shape sorters, etc.)
- Provides experiences with different sizes and shapes of objects
- Provides blocks, empty boxes, tubes and containers for children to use in creating and constructing
- Uses descriptive words related to spatial concepts (over, under, more, less, etc.)
- Provides large boxes and climbing equipment for children to explore the physical space
- Takes children outside to explore nature and neighborhood

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of materials to explore space (blocks, boxes, puzzles, containers etc.)
- Time and space to explore both indoors and outdoors

Patterns and Measurement Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to create own patterns of self-regulation for sleeping, eating and wakeful play
- Child begins to demonstrate awareness of patterns, first visually, then through manipulation
 - Plays with toys and objects of different sizes and shapes
 - Orders a few objects by size, with assistance
- Child begins to understand time words (after, before, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Shows visual interest in contrasting colors, patterns, textures
- Begins to recognize time sequences ("After we change your diaper, we will read a story," etc.)
- Manipulates objects in a variety of ways to learn about their properties
- Uses simple nesting or stacking toys (nests two to three cups, stacks three to four blocks of graduated size, etc.)

The Adult

- Provides interesting materials for child to look at and play with (posters, stuffed animals, books, mirrors, pictures, balls, etc.)
- Talks about the child's activities using descriptive language related to patterns, and size, etc.
- Provides toys that have incremental sizes (nesting cups, stackable rings, etc.)

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials of various sizes, colors, textures, and shapes that can be manipulated in a variety of ways (blocks, snap beads, shape sorter, etc.)
- Mobiles, mirrors, visual patterns, etc.

Patterns and Measurement Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to develop knowledge of patterns
 - Begins to complete simple puzzles with varying sizes and shapes
- Child begins to demonstrate knowledge of measurement concepts
 - Understands concepts of big/little, short/tall, heavy/light
- Child shows some understanding of time sequence within the daily routine
- Child compares the size of various everyday objects (puts different people's shoes side by side to see which is longest, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Matches like objects, shapes and colors
- Completes puzzles with pieces of varying sizes and shapes
- Fills and empties containers (with sand or water, etc.)
- Recognizes times in daily routine (time to eat, time to go home, group time, nap time, etc.)
- Describes objects in play using size concepts, (talks about the tall tree on a walk to park, describes big dog, little kitty, etc.)
- Explores measuring tools (measuring cup, ruler, scale, etc.)

The Adult

- Engages in conversations with children about size comparisons as they interact with materials throughout the day
- Helps children see similarities and differences in objects
- Provides a variety of puzzles with different sizes and shapes
- Charts child's changes in height and weight
- Provides sand and water play, giving child opportunities to pour, fill, scoop, weigh, count, dump, etc.

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials of various sizes, colors, textures, and shapes (blocks, beads, peg boards, matching games, etc.)
- Opportunities for indoor/outdoor sand and water play
- Posted daily schedule done in both pictures and words

Resources

Creative Resources for the Early Childhood Classroom (4th Edition) -- Judy Herr

Everyday Discoveries: Amazingly Easy Science and Math Using Stuff You Already Have -- Sharon MacDonald

Learning Through Play: Math-A Practical Guide -- Sandra Waite-Stupiansky and Nicholas G. Stupiansky

Math for the Very Young: A Handbook of Activities for Parents and Teachers -- Lydia Polonsky, Dorothy Freedman, Susan Leshner, and Kate Morrison

Showcasing Mathematics for the Young Child: Activities for Three, Four and Five Year Olds -- Juanita Copely (Editor)

Books for Children

Anno's Counting Book -- Mitsumasa Anno

Baby Minds: Brain-Building Games Your Baby Will Love -- Linda Acredolo and Susan Goodwyn

Baby Play and Learn -- Penny Warner

Catch Me & Kiss Me & Say It Again -- Wendy Watson and Clyde Watson

Five Little Monkeys Jumping On The Bed -- Eileen Christelow

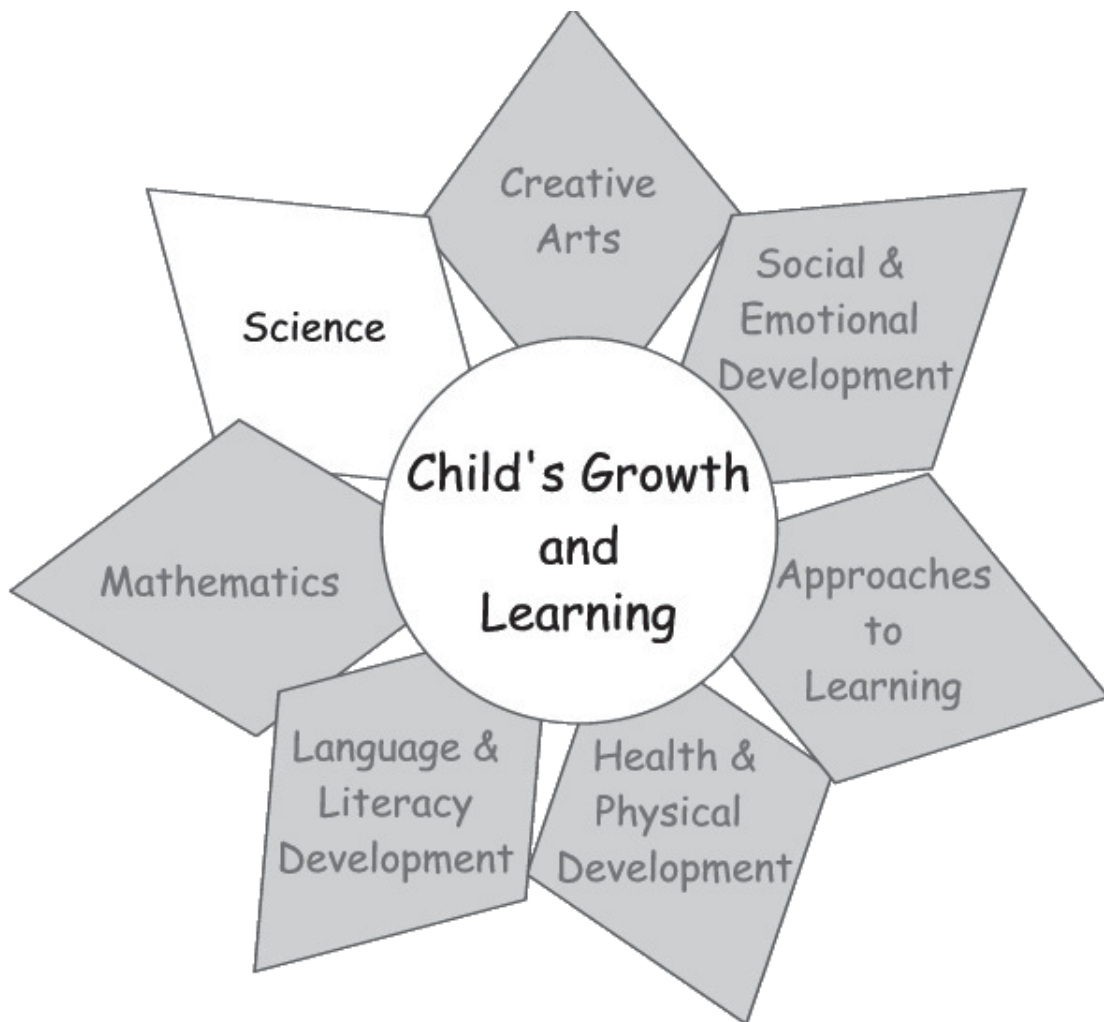
Hand Rhymes -- Marc Tolon Brown

Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young -- Jack Prelutsky

Ten, Nine, Eight -- Molly Bang

Two Shoes, New Shoes -- Shirley Hughes

Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



Science

• Scientific Skills and Methods

• Scientific Knowledge



Very young children are natural scientists and are easily fascinated by everyday happenings. During the infant and toddler years, they use their senses to learn about the world around them. Through varied and increasingly complex explorations, they observe, manipulate, listen, reflect, and respond to guidance and encouragement from the adults around them. As they enter their preschool years, they are prepared to make decisions and become higher-level thinkers.

In quality early childhood settings for infants and toddlers, science experiences require a balance of content and process, using a multi-sensory approach. Before age three, children can begin to acquire a foundation of science-related concepts and knowledge on which to build a clear understanding of their world.

Adults should look for opportunities to expose infants and toddlers to science-related concepts and experiences, especially those present in the natural world around them.

Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Use special or adaptive devices to increase a child's level of participation
- ❖ Encourage hands-on and sensory experiences such as touching, holding, exploring, tasting, smelling, and manipulating
- ❖ Use physical guidance and support when needed to promote the child's full participation

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 of this document, and in NDE Rule 51.

Scientific Skills & Methods

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child shows interest in surroundings by focusing on faces and objects in close range
- Child gathers information through the senses (mouthing, grasping, reaching, etc.)
- Child repeats actions that have been successful in reaching a goal
 - Uses cause and effect strategies (drops toys over side of highchair, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Learns about the environment through movement and sensory exploration (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, etc.)
- Shows initiative and curiosity (pursues interesting object - first visually, then by reaching, crawling, etc.)
- Manipulates new toy to discover what it will do
- Pats, pushes, squishes, and pounds play dough to experience how it feels

The Adult

- Provides toys and materials that encourage safe, active exploration based on the child's abilities (rattles, balls, water play, etc.)
- Describes the child's actions and the properties of objects as the child explores and manipulates them
- Supports the child's interest in and exploration of the environment, both indoors and outdoors

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials that are accessible throughout the day for observation, exploration and manipulation (rattles, blocks, activity boxes, etc.)
- Opportunities to experience natural objects and events (rain and snow, living creatures, plants, etc.)

Scientific Skills & Methods

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to develop scientific skills and methods
 - Makes observations, describes objects and actions in the environment
 - Begins to make comparisons between objects that have been observed
 - Demonstrates initiative and curiosity in exploring the environment
- Child uses descriptive words in speech
- Child uses senses, materials, events in nature, and the environment to investigate and expand knowledge

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Explores the environment and uses objects in a variety of ways to find out how they work, what they can do, etc.
- Describes objects and actions (big ball, run fast, lights off, etc.)
- Initiates activity and makes choices (toy to play with, clothing to wear, etc.)
- Uses water and sand toys to explore texture, weight, measurements, etc.

The Adult

- Provides materials that invite and encourage safe manipulation and exploration (blocks, puzzles, art materials, books, puppets, etc.)
- Promotes children's active exploration of the environment, both indoors and outdoors
- Talks with children about their activities (including open-ended questions)
- Encourages children's curiosity and answers questions

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials that are accessible throughout the day for observation, exploration and manipulation, including natural objects and events (plants, fish tank, scales, water and sand toys, etc.)
- Opportunities to experience and interact with sand and water, rain and snow, plants and animals

Scientific Knowledge Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child uses all five senses to explore and understand surroundings
- Child begins forming a basic understanding of simple cause and effect relationships
- Child begins to name common objects in the environment

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Explores strategies to create a result (shakes rattle to see if it produces a sound, tries to activate musical toy, etc.)
- Gains knowledge about the environment through observation and physical manipulation (banging hard objects together produces a sound, stack of blocks falls when pushed, water splashes, etc.)
- Names some natural items (dog, tree, bird, snow, etc.)

The Adult

- Provides natural objects for children to explore, both indoors and out, as well as experiences related to science concepts (snow, wind chimes, animal sounds, various textures and scents, etc.)
- Names natural objects and describes comparisons between objects (big/little, soft/hard, wet/dry, etc.)
- Provides books, pictures, and toys that represent nature realistically (photos of animals rather than cartoon-type animals, etc.)
- Talks with children about everyday events as they occur in nature

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of materials, both indoors and outdoors, from the natural world (plants, animals, etc.)
- Time outdoors to observe natural objects and events

Scientific Knowledge

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child develops scientific knowledge through active exploration of the environment
 - Shows interest in the natural world
 - Interacts with materials to gain knowledge about them
- Child develops understanding of simple cause and effect relationships
- Child shows interest in scientific concepts related to space and time
- Child shows increased knowledge and memory for details and routines

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Gains knowledge about the environment through physical manipulation (puts shapes in shape box, engages in sand and water play, etc.)
- Recognizes and identifies properties of objects (big/little, hot/cold, in/out, etc.)
- Expands vocabulary related to scientific concepts: names animals, describes weather (rain, snow, sun, etc.)
- Goes to sink to wash hands when called for lunch or snack

The Adult

- Provides natural objects for children to observe and explore, both indoors and outdoors
- Provides books, pictures, and toys that represent nature (photos of animals rather than cartoon-type animals, etc.)
- Talks with children about natural objects and everyday events as they occur in nature
- Encourages children to make comparisons between objects (big/little, soft/hard, wet/dry, etc.)

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of materials, both indoors and outdoors, from the natural world (plants, animals, etc.)
- Time outdoors to observe natural objects and events
- Field trips to farm, aquarium, zoo, nursery, garden, etc.

Resources

Bugs to Bunnies -- Ken Goin, Eleanor Ripp, and Kathleen Nastasi Solomon

Everyday Discoveries: Amazingly Easy Science and Math Using Stuff You Already Have -- Sharon MacDonald

Hollyhocks and Honeybees: Garden Projects for Young Children -- Sara Starbuck, Marla Olthof, and Karen Midden

Kitchen Science -- Shar Levine and Leslie Johnstone

Learning Through Play: Blocks -- Ellen Booth Church

More Mudpies to Magnets: Science for Young Children -- Elizabeth A. Sherwood, Robert A. Williams, and Robert E. Rockwell

Nature in a Nutshell for Kids: Over 100 Activities You Can Do in Ten Minutes or Less -- Jean Potter

Pint-size Science: Finding-Out Fun for You and Your Young Child -- Linda Allison and Martha Weston

Your Child At Play: Birth to One Year: Discovering the Senses and Learning About the World (2nd Edition) -- Marilyn Segal

Science

Books for Children

Farm Animals -- Phoebe Dunn

Growing -- Fiona Pragoff

I Love You, Sun I Love You, Moon -- Karen Pandell and Tomie dePaola

I Can, I See, I Hear, I Touch -- Helen Oxenbury (4 books)

Machines At Work -- Byron Barton

Mud! -- Charnan Simon

The Five Senses -- Keith Faulkner

Animal Sounds for Baby -- Cheryl Willis Hudson

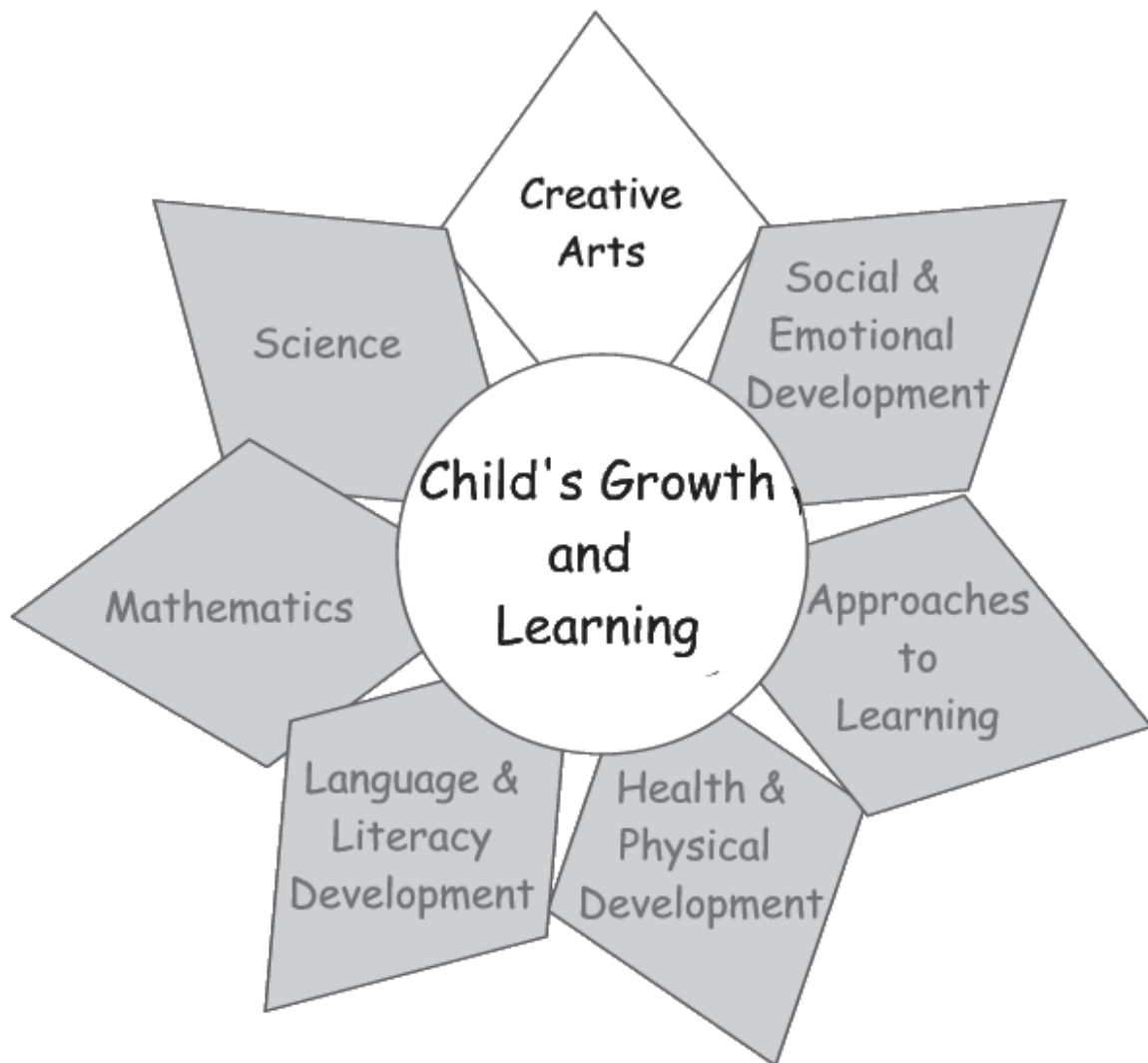
Ring! Bang! Boom! -- Little Golden Books

Touch and Feel Series -- Dorling Kindersley Publishing

Push, Pull, Empty, Full: A Book of Opposites -- Tana Hoban

The Very Hungry Caterpillar -- Eric Carle

Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages Birth to 3



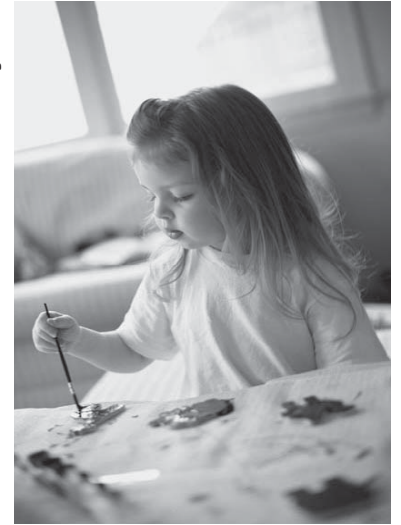
Creative Arts

- Music
- Art
- Movement
- Dramatic Play

Creative arts experiences open an avenue for the development and expression of individual ideas, feelings, and interests. Although these are more readily observed in older preschoolers, they have their beginnings in the infant and toddler years.

Music, movement, dramatic play, and tactile sensory activities - including but not limited to art - can all provide opportunities for creative exploration and individual expression in children younger than three years of age.

Creative arts promote the growth of individuality, self-confidence, self-esteem, and imagination. They encourage expression of the child's personal and cultural uniqueness. They also provide opportunities to enhance the child's physical, social, and cognitive development.



Materials and activities should be available to provide creative arts experiences. The child's experience should provide a process for self-expression rather than focusing on a specific product or outcome. Children should be encouraged but not forced to participate in creative arts activities, in keeping with their level of development and individual interests. Child safety should be a primary consideration in any activities that are offered. As with all activities involving infants and toddlers, they must be concrete and hands-on in order to provide a meaningful learning experience.

Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Provide materials that can be easily adapted for independent participation
- ❖ Materials should be easily accessible to encourage participation
- ❖ Adapt the environment to promote participation, engagement and learning using a variety of textures

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 of this document, and in NDE Rule 51.

Music

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child becomes calm when sung to, or talked with in a soothing voice
- Child shows interest in and responds to music
- Child enjoys producing music and other sounds with rattles, bells, music boxes, etc.
- Child delights in new ability to produce sounds (smacks lips, squeals on purpose, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Responds to music in the environment (calms to lullaby, looks for sound from musical toy, etc.)
- Enjoys listening to favorite songs and may participate through simple movements such as clapping or touching body parts
- Enjoys own music and noises (bangs spoon on tray, claps and giggles, mimics sounds, etc.)

The Adult

- Provides musical experiences for the child in a variety of ways, (singing, musical toys, recorded music, etc.)
- Encourages the child's interest and participation in musical activities
- Exposes the child to a variety of types of music (lullabies, classical, children's songs, etc.) from a variety of cultures/languages/backgrounds

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of types of music such as lullabies, classical, jazz, folk music, children's songs, and songs from other cultures and languages
- Simple instruments and toys that make sounds

Music

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child shows interest and participates in music activities through gestures, movement and dancing
- Child expresses self creatively to variations in music in the environment (rhythm, volume, tempo, etc.)
- Child enjoys producing music with instruments and singing simple songs
- Child enjoys repetition of favorite songs and other musical experiences

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Claps, bounces, and begins to dance to music
- Uses instruments to produce rhythm and musical sounds
- Experiments with a variety of sound-making objects
- Participates in musical activities (singing, dancing, finger plays, etc.)
- Knows and asks for favorite songs
- Participates in group singing activities for short periods of time

The Adult

- Provides musical experiences for the child in a variety of ways (singing, musical instruments, recorded music, etc.)
- Plans for and encourages the child's participation in musical activities including learning through repetition
- Exposes the child to a variety of types of music (classical, ethnic, children's songs, etc.) from a variety of cultures/languages/backgrounds

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of types of music such as lullabies, classical, jazz, folk music, children's songs, and songs from other cultures and languages
- Simple instruments and toys that make sounds

Art

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child responds to visual elements present in the environment (light, color, patterns, etc.)
- Child participates in and enjoys a variety of tactile/sensory experiences such as water, textures, etc.
- Child begins to use art media such as large crayons, finger paint, etc.
- Child explores the shape of objects

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Looks at pictures and other types of displays in the environment
- Responds to sensory experiences such as water play, texture books or toys, etc.
- (Older infant) experiments with finger paint, large crayons, and other suitable art materials

The Adult

- Provides safe art materials and opportunities for children to use them in a variety of ways (avoids items that create a choking hazard, toxic or eye/skin-irritating materials)
- Provides a variety of visual displays in the environment (mobiles, pictures, etc.)
- Provides a variety of sensory experiences for children

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Colorful paper, markers, crayons, finger paint, smocks, etc.
- Opportunities for active exploration which is encouraged through access to materials and ease of clean-up
- Pictures and art displayed at the child's level

Art

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child experiments with art media by painting, scribbling, using play dough, etc.
- Child shows pride in ability to use art materials
- Child uses a variety of materials creatively to represent other items (blocks, dramatic play materials, clay, etc.)
- Child shows preferences for colors or pictures
- Child uses various tools to make marks (fingers, crayons, big brushes, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Scribbles with a variety of art tools (large pencils, crayons, paint brushes, etc.)
- Experiments with new materials (clay, fingerpaint, markers, art paper, etc.)
- Uses a variety of materials to create art (play dough, popsicle sticks, yarn, paint, glue etc.)
- Enjoys showing his/her completed art to others

The Adult

- Provides safe art materials and opportunities for children to use them in a variety of ways (avoids items that create a choking hazard, toxic or eye/skin-irritating materials)
- Focuses on process rather than product in art activities, allowing children to use art as a form of self-expression
- Displays children's artwork; calls attention to and discusses displayed art with children

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Materials to experiment with (paint, easels, crayons, markers, various types of paper, soft clay, stamps, etc.)
- Opportunities for active exploration which is encouraged through access to materials and ease of clean-up
- Pictures and art displayed at the child's level
- Art equipment at child's level available and accessible throughout the day (low tables, crayons, paper, easels, paints, smocks, etc.)

Movement

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to discover own body
- Child demonstrates balance and body coordination in movement
 - Changes positions smoothly
- Child shows growing skill in physical activities
 - Progresses from rolling over to creeping, crawling, standing with help, cruising around furniture, to walking

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Shows increasing body control (rolls, sits, crawls, walks, etc.)
- Kicks and wiggles upon hearing familiar sounds
- Likes to engage in movement activity with adult (dances, finger plays, etc.)
- Begins to initiate or imitate simple body movements (claps hands, touches body parts, etc.)
- Uses body to make sounds (slaps tray, bangs blocks, splashes water in tub, etc.)

The Adult

- Allows many opportunities for children to move and explore their environment
- Provides movement experiences through toys, materials, activities, and equipment
- Engages in movement activities with children and encourages their participation

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Open space, both indoors and outdoors, for children to move freely according to their level of development and ability
- Open floor space and equipment to support safe active movement (crawling, cruising, walking, etc.)

Movement

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child demonstrates balance and body coordination in movement
- Child represents experiences and concepts through movement
- Child runs with ease, stops and starts with precision

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Shows increasing body control (hops, jumps, marches, etc.)
- Enjoys creative movement ("hops like a rabbit", "flies like a bird", etc.)
- Enjoys silly songs ("Ring Around the Rosey", "Hokey Pokey", etc.)
- Plays "Follow the Leader" around a simple course
- Enjoys riding and action toys (pretends to be riding a truck, motorcycle, plane, etc.)
- Imitates the ways adults use tools/appliances around the house
- Dances to music and songs

The Adult

- Provides movement experiences through materials, equipment, and simple games, both indoors and outdoors
- Engages children in movement activities and encourages their participation as a means of self-expression

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Open space, both indoors and outdoors, for children to move freely according to their level of development and ability
- Materials that encourage movement (riding toys, boxes for pretend play, balls, scarves, streamers for dancing, etc.)

Dramatic Play

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child responds to pretend play activities initiated by adult (facial expressions, animal and vehicle sounds, peek-a-boo, etc.)
- Child uses body to make sounds (slaps tray, bangs blocks, splashes water, etc.)
- Child plays with dramatic play materials (animals, vehicles, dolls, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Focuses on and responds to adult facial expressions and voice tones
- Shows enjoyment in interaction with adults who provide dramatic play experiences (music and songs, facial expressions and gestures, animal sounds and actions, etc.)
- Imitates sounds, facial expressions, and gestures of another person
- Plays with toys that represent real objects (animals, vehicles, dolls, spoons, etc.)

The Adult

- Interacts with the child, using various facial expressions and voice tones
- Provides toys and materials that encourage the child to use representation for the real item (stuffed animals or puppets, dolls, spoons, cups, etc.)
- Shows enjoyment when the child initiates actions

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of toys and materials that encourage exploration and interaction (mirrors, phones, play food, etc.)
- Materials representing various cultures (pictures, food, dolls, books, clothes, music, toys, etc.)

Dramatic Play

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child participates in a variety of dramatic play activities
 - Uses words and/or actions to portray a role, situation, or setting
 - Uses a variety of dramatic play materials (dishes, dolls, cars/trucks, telephone)
 - Uses an object to represent something else (block becomes a phone, ball becomes an apple, etc)
- Child begins to assume the role of someone or something else in dramatic play
 - Engages in role play independently or next to other children
 - Acts out simple games or stories with adult support

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Engages in dramatic play activities alone or with others
- Relates or acts out scenes from home or other familiar setting
- Uses props that represent real objects (animals, vehicles, puppets, spoons, etc.)
- Enjoys pretending to be different things (elephant, monkey, tree in the wind, etc.)
- Babbles in a flow of words while pretending to "talk" to stuffed animals
- Plays actively in the dramatic play area sometimes watching and sometimes imitating actions

The Adult

- Plans for and provides opportunities for children to engage in dramatic play
- Provides materials to encourage dramatic play, including duplicates of popular toys to minimize conflict
- Interacts with children to encourage their involvement in dramatic play activities

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A variety of toys, materials, and equipment that stimulate dramatic play (dolls, phones, dishes, dress-up clothes, shoes, play food, hats, etc.)
- Duplicates of favorite toys
- Materials representing various cultures (flags, pictures, food, dolls, books, clothes, music, toys, etc.)

Resources

Beginning With Babies -- Mary Lou Kinney and Patricia Witt Ahrens

First Art: Art Experiences for Toddlers and Twos -- Mary Ann F. Kohl

Making Sounds, Making Music, and Many Other Activities for Infants: 7 to 12 Months --
Judy Herr and Terri Swim

Playtime Props for Toddlers -- Carol Gnojewski and Priscilla Burris

Poking, Pinching, and Pretending: Documenting Toddlers' Explorations with Clay --
Dee Smith and Jeannie Goldhaber

The Power of Play -- Claire Lerner and Sharon Greenip

Rhyming Books, Marble Painting, and Many Other Activities for Toddlers: 25-36 Months --
Judy Herr and Terri Swim

Your Child at Play: One to Two Years: Exploring, Daily Living, Learning and Making Friends
(2nd Edition) -- Marilyn Segal

Your Child at Play: Two to Three Years: Growing Up, Language, and the Imagination
(2nd Edition) -- Marilyn Segal

Books for Children

1, 2, 3 Music! -- Sylvie Auzary-Luton

Baby Dance -- Ann Taylor

Clap Hands -- Helen Oxenbury

Color Zoo -- Lois Ehlert

From Head to Toe -- Eric Carle

In the Garden with Van Gogh -- Julie Merberg

The Lucy Cousins Book of Nursery Rhymes -- Lucy Cousins

Peek-A-Boo! -- Janet Alhberg and Allan Ahlberg

Rolie Polie Olie -- Bill Joyce

Many Colors of Mother Goose -- Cheryl Willis Hudson

A Picnic with Monet -- Julie Merberg

In My World -- Lois Ehlert

General Resources

These selected general resources are offered as a starting place, with words and images that may bring new appreciation for and understanding about our meaningful work with young children. Relevant research is also cited as foundational to all of the domains of learning. Additionally, references that are specific to each of the learning domains are presented within the various sections of the document.

These and many other resources may be borrowed by Nebraska residents from the Early Childhood Training Center. A web-based search of these media materials is offered at www.esu3.org/ectc or telephone contact may be made: 1-402-597-4826, or toll-free 1-800-89CHILD.

Nurturing Interactions and Relationships

The Baby Bond: How to Raise an Emotionally Healthy Child, Dianna Hine. Tuscon, AZ: Cocoon Books, 1998.

Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant and Toddler Caregiving, Lella Gandini and Carolyn Pope-Edwards. New York, New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2003.

Character Development: Encouraging Self-Esteem and Self-Discipline in Infants, Toddlers, and Two-Year-Olds, Polly Greenberg. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1991.

Culture and Attachment: Perceptions of the Child in Context, Robin L. Harwood, Joan G. Miller, and Nydia L. Irizarry. New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1997.

The Emotional Life of the Toddler, Alicia F. Lieberman. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1993.

Enhancing Early Emotional Development: Guiding Parents of Young Children, Jean W. Gowen and Judith B. Nebrig. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co., 2001.

Holding Time, Martha G. Welch. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1988.

The Irreducible Needs of Children: What Every Child Must Have to Grow, Learn and Flourish, T. Berry Brazelton and Stanley I. Greenspan. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2000.

Me, Myself and I: How Children Build Their Sense of Self: 18-36 months, Kyle D. Pruett. New York, NY: Goddard Press, 1999.

Right From Birth: Building Your Child's Foundation for Life: Birth to 18 months, Craig T. Ramey and Sharon L. Ramey. New York, NY: Goddard Press, 1999.

Simple Steps: Developmental Activities for Infants, Toddlers, and Two-Year-Olds, Karen Miller. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House. 1999

Tender Care and Early Learning: Supporting Infants and Toddlers in Child Care Settings, Jacalyn Post and Mary Hohmann. Ypsilanti, MI: High Scope Press, 2000.

Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development - Birth-3: The Essential Reference for the Early Years, T. Berry Brazelton. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 1994.

Celebrating Children’s Growth, Development and Learning

Responsive, effective teaching and caregiving depends on an understanding of how young children learn and grow, described in the following:

Attachment Disorganization, Judith Solomon and Carol C. George (Eds.), New York, NY: Guilford Press, 1999.

Building Healthy Minds: The Six Experiences That Create Intelligence and Emotional Growth in Babies and Young Children, Stanley Greenspan and Nancy Breslau Lewis. New York, NY: Perseus Publishing, 2000.

From Neurons to Neighborhoods, The Science of Early Childhood Development, Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah Phillips, (Eds.). Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.

Getting In Tune: The Powerful Influence of Music on Young Children’s Development, Claire Lerner and Lynette Ciervo. Washington, DC: Zero to Three Publications, 2002.

Handbook of Early Childhood Intervention, Jack P. Shonkoff and Samuel J. Meisels (Eds.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Handbook of Early Literacy Research, Susan B. Neuman and David K. Dickinson. New York, N.Y.: The Guilford Press, 2001.

Handbook of Infant Mental Health, Second Edition, Charles Zeanah. New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2000.

Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children, Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co., 1995.

Rethinking the Brain: New Insights Into Early Development, Revised Edition, Rima Shore. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute, 2003.

Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child’s Book of Poems – selected by Mary White, Eva Moore, Beatrice De Regniers, Jan Carr and illustrated by nine Caldecott Medal artists

The Social World of Children: Learning to Talk, Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co., 1999.

Where All Belong – Celebrating Our Diversity

Effective practices with young children value the unique and individual characteristics of children, including their special learning or developmental needs. Children’s growth and learning is fostered when the environment reflects the child’s culture and also supports both the child’s native language and English. Accommodations are made to insure that all children can actively and meaningfully participate in the early childhood setting.

DEC Recommended Practices: A Comprehensive Guide for Practical Application in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, Susan Sandall, Mary Louise Hemmeter, Barbara J. Smith, and Mary E. McLean. Longmont, CO: Sopris West, 2005.

Diversity in the Classroom, New Approaches to the Education of Young Children, Frances E. Kendall. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1996.

Infant Development and Risk: An Introduction, Anne H. Widerstrom, Barbara A. Mowder, Susan R. Sandall, Robert E. Nickel, Helen Harrison, and Harriet Able-Boone. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co., 1996.

Promoting Learning Through Active Interaction: A Guide to Early Communication with Young Children Who Have Multiple Disabilities, M Diane Klein, Deborah Chen, and C. Michele Haney. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co., 2000.

The Respectful and Inviting Environment

The physical environment of children can be a powerful invitation to children's learning. These selected resources provide guidance to the underlying values and present practical strategies that can engage children in a trusting and creative manner.

Alerta: A Multicultural, Bilingual Approach to Teaching Young Children, Leslie R. Williams and Yvonne De Gaetano. Boston, MA: Addison Wesley, 1984.

Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards. Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs. 2nd edition, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Public Health Association, 2002.

Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments That Work, Jim Greenman. Edmond, WA: Exchange Press, 2005

Creating Rooms of Wonder: Valuing and Displaying Children's Work to Enhance the Learning Process, Carol Seefeldt. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, 2002.

Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale, Thelma Harms and Richard Clifford. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1989

Design for Living and Learning: Transforming Early Childhood Environments, Deb Curtis and Margie Carter. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2003

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard Clifford. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2003.

Secure Relationships: Nurturing Infant-Toddler Attachment in Early Care Settings, Alice Honig. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2002.

Approaches to Young Children’s Learning

Children’s development and learning is fostered in an active, nurturing, relationship-based and safe environment that adults carefully and intentionally design, illustrated through the following resources.

Beautiful Beginnings: A Developmental Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers, Helen Raikes and Jane McCall Whitmer. Baltimore, MD: Brooks Publishing Co., 2005.

Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers, Revised Edition, Amy Laura Dombro, Laura Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1997.

Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care, Diane Trister Dodge and Laura J. Colker. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc. 1998.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (Revised Edition), Sue Bredekamp and Carol Copple (Eds.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997.

The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach in Early Childhood Education, Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini, and George Forman. Greenwich, CT: Ablex, 1998.

Prime Times: A Handbook for Excellence in Infant and Toddler Care, Jim Greenman and Anne Stonehouse. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1996.

The Power of Observation, Linda Jablon, Amy Laura Dombro, and Margo Dichtelmiller. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, 1999.

The Power of Play: Learning through play from birth to three, Zero to Three. New York, NY: authors, 2004.

The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, FarWest Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education, 1993.

Together in Care: Meeting the Intimacy Needs of Infants and Toddlers in Groups. Sacramento, CA: Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers (PITC) of WestED Center for Child and Family Studies and the California Department of Education Child Development Division, 1994.

Measuring Growth – Effective Assessment Practices

Assessment should utilize contexts and settings that are familiar to children and are reflective of their everyday work or routines. Multiple tools should be utilized, with heavy reliance on observational gathering and recording of children’s growing and demonstrated knowledge and skills.

Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System for Infants and Children, Diane Bricker. Maryland: Brookes Publishing Co., 2002.

Basics of Assessment: A Primer for Early Childhood Professionals, Oralie McAfee, Deborah Leong, and Elena Bodrova. Washington, DC: NAEYC, 2004.

Child Observation Record for Infants and Toddlers, Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope, 2001.

Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success, National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood specialists in State Departments of Education. Washington, DC: Author, 2001.

Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, Head Start. Washington, DC: Head Start, 2001.

The Ounce Scale, Samuel Meisels, Dorothea Marsden, Amy Laura Dombro, Donna Weston, and Abigail Jewkes. Lebanon, IN: Pearson Early Learning, 2003.

What's Next: Planning Strategies and Activities Around Infant-Toddler COR Observations, Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press, 2004.

Working Effectively with Families

Families play a critical role in children's growth and learning. Not only are they a child's first and primary early teacher, starting with their early relationships and interaction, they continue to influence their child's growth. Families and teachers/caregivers who partner effectively will enjoy a meaningful relationship and share valuable communication that supports a child's sense of trust, belonging and success as a learner.

Activities for Parent-Child Interaction, Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1982.

Circle of Love: Relationships Between Parents, Providers, and Children in Family Child Care, Amy Baker and Lynn Manfredi-Pettis. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 1998.

Continuity in Early Childhood: A Framework for Home, School, and Community Linkages, Regional Educational Laboratories' Early Childhood Collaboration Network. U.S. Department of Education, 1995.

Getting Men Involved: Strategies for Early Childhood Programs, James A. Levine, Dennis Murphy, and Sherrill Wilson. New York, NY: Scholastic, 1994.

A Guide to Creating Partnership with Parents, Mary Lane and Sheila Signer for Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education, 1990.

Parent Involvement Begins at Birth; Collaboration between Parents and Teachers of Children in the Early Years, Sally Goldberg. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.

Parenting Skills Workshop Series: A Manual for Parent Educators, John Bailey, Sandra Wilkins, and Susan Perkins. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension, 1995.

Partnering with Parents: 29 Easy Programs to Involve Parents in the Early Learning Process, Bob Rockwell and Janet Rockwell Kniepkamp. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House, 2003.

Supporting and Strengthening Families: Methods, Strategies and Practices, Carl Dunst, Carol Trivette, and Angela Deal (Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books, 1994.

Trainer's Manual, Module IV: Culture, Family and Providers, WestEd in collaboration with the California Department of Education. Sacramento, CA: FarWest Laboratory, 1995.

Definitions

Accommodations - Changes in the curricular material and experiences to accommodate a child's particular needs.

Approaches to Learning - General approach to learning includes child's attitudes, habits, and learning styles.

Assessment and Evaluation - A process through which evidence is gathered in a range of content areas to determine both a child's understanding and the ability to apply that understanding.

Attachment - The formation of significant and stable emotional connections between a child and the significant people in its life.

Biological Rhythm - A cyclical, repeated variation in a biological function.

Competence - Possession of required skill, knowledge, or capacity.

Cooperative Play - Making or doing something together that requires the skills, ideas, and contributions of each person.

Diversity - Recognizing and valuing differences; includes the belief that each family has its own structure, roles, values, beliefs, and coping styles. Respect for and acceptance of this diversity is a cornerstone of high quality, family-centered programs.

Developmental Delay - A child birth through age eight who has been identified by a multidisciplinary team as having either a significant delay in the function of one or more of the following areas: cognitive development; physical development; communicative development; social or emotional development; or adaptive behavior or skills development, or a diagnosed physical or medical condition that has a high probability of resulting in a substantial delay in function in one or more of such areas.

Developmentally Appropriate - Learning environment and teaching strategies which are based on theories and research about the growth and development of children.

Domains - Key areas of children's development and learning.

Dramatic Play Center - Area for children to play, pretend, and use their imagination.

Fine (Small) Motor Skills - Skills that use small muscle groups such as hands and fingers and frequently involve hand-eye coordination.

Gross (Large) Motor Skills - The movement and action of large and/or major muscle groups.

Inclusion - The practice in which all children, with a range of abilities and disabilities, participate together and are regarded as equal members of the learning community.

Integrated Curriculum - Connects separate subject areas by presenting information/activities in a thematic, holistic manner to meet the common needs of all learners.

Literacy Rich Environment - Program includes literacy activities in every component of the schedule, every day and throughout the environment.

Manipulatives - Materials that allow children to explore, experiment, or interact by using their hands or by mechanical methods.

Multicultural Curriculum - Understanding of a responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity in activities, materials, and actions.

Multi-Sensory - Experiences that allow children to respond to an activity using one of the five senses.

Open-Ended Questioning Techniques - Questions that must be answered with a response other than 'Yes' or 'No'.

Reflexive Abilities - Automatic responses.

Sensory Experiences - How things look, feel, taste, sound, smell.

Spatial Sense - An awareness of where one is in space.

Social & Emotional Development - Children's abilities to form and sustain social relationships with adults and peers.

Transition - Movement or change from one condition, place or activity to another.

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