

Children's Developmental Needs

Source: Early Childhood Counts: A Programming Guide on Early Childhood Care for Development*

What children do	What children need
Birth to 3 months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the world through all their senses • Track people and objects with eyes • Respond to faces and bright colors • Reach, discover hands and feet • Lift head and turn toward sound • Cry, but are often soothed when held • Begin to smile • Begin to develop a sense of self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection from physical danger • Adequate nutrition (exclusive breastfeeding is best) • Adequate health care (immunization, oral rehydration therapy as required, hygiene) • An adult with whom to form an attachment • An adult who can understand and respond to their signals • Things to look at, touch, hear, smell, and taste • Opportunity to be held, sung to, and rocked
4 to 6 months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smile often • Prefer parents and older siblings • Repeat actions with interesting results • Listen intently • Respond when spoken to • Laugh, gurgle, imitate sounds • Explore hands and feet • Put objects in mouth • Sit when propped, roll over, scoot, bounce • Grasp objects without using thumb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above, plus: • Opportunities to explore the world • Appropriate language stimulation • Daily opportunities to play with a variety of objects
7 to 12 months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember simple events • Identify themselves, body parts, familiar voices • Understand own name, other common words • Say first meaningful words • Explore, bang, shake objects • Find hidden objects, put objects in containers • Sit alone • Creep, pull themselves up to stand, walk • May seem shy or upset with strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above, plus: • Introduction of supplementary foods • Opportunities to hear stories, be read to • A safe environment to explore

* Evans, J. L., Myers, R. G., & Ilfeld, E. M. (2000). **Early Childhood Counts: A Programming Guide on Early Childhood Care for Development**. Washington, DC: World Bank.: *Table 1.3 p. 12-15 (Adapted from National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1985, 1995; Donohue-Colletta, 1992; additions made by others.)*

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1 to 2 years	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imitate adult actions • Speak and understand words and ideas • Enjoy stories and experimenting with objects • Walk steadily, climb stairs, run • Assert independence, but prefer familiar people • Recognize ownership of objects • Develop friendships • Solve problems • Show pride in accomplishments • Like to help with tasks • Begin pretend play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above: • Support in acquiring new motor, language, thinking skills • A chance to develop some independence • Help in learning how to control their own behavior • Opportunities to begin to learn to care for themselves • Opportunities for play and exploration • Play with other children • Read to/tell stories daily • Health care must also include deworming if required
2 to 3½ years	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy learning new skills • Learn language rapidly • Are always on the go • Gain control of hands and fingers • Are easily frustrated • Act more independent, but are still dependent • Act out familiar scenes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above, opportunities to: • Make choices • Engage in dramatic play • Sing favorite songs • Work simple puzzles

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3½ to 5 years	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a longer attention span • Act silly, boisterous • Talk a lot, ask many questions • Want real adult things • Keep art projects • Test physical skills and courage with caution • Reveal feeling in dramatic play • Like to play with friends, do not like to lose • Share and take turns sometimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above: • Opportunities to develop fine motor skills • Encouragement of language through talking, reading, singing • Activities which will develop a positive sense of mastery • Opportunities to learn cooperation, helping, sharing • Experimentation with pre-writing and pre-reading skills • Hands-on exploration for learning through action • Opportunities for taking responsibility and making choices • Encouragement to develop self-control, cooperation, persistence in completing projects • Support for their sense of self-worth and pride in accomplishments • Opportunities for self-expression (drawing, painting, work with clay or mud) • Encouragement of creativity • Rhythmic movement • Listening to music of all kinds

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5 to 8 years	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow curious about people and how the world works • Show an increasing interest in numbers, letters, reading, and writing • Read • Become more and more interested in final products • Gain more confidence in physical skills • Use words to express feeling and to cope • Like grown-up activities • Become more outgoing, play cooperatively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above: • Support in acquiring additional motor, language, thinking skills • Additional opportunities to develop independence • Opportunities to become self-reliant in terms of personal care • Opportunities to develop a wide variety of skills • Support for further development of language through talking, reading, singing • Activities that will further develop a positive sense of mastery • Opportunities to learn cooperation, helping, and teamwork • Hands-on manipulation of objects to support learning • Opportunities for taking responsibility and making choices • Support in the development of self-control and persistence in completing projects • Support for their sense of self-worth and pride in accomplishments • Motivation and reinforcement for academic achievement • Opportunities to practice questioning and observing • Opportunities to make music, accomplish art, dance • Attend basic education

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