



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ♥ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Developmental Milestones

Developmental milestones are the skills children acquire in a specific sequence. They generally fall into four categories: physical, social/emotional, cognitive or thinking and communication or language.

As a parent or caregiver of a young child, it is important to be aware of developmental milestones, as this will give you a general idea of the changes to expect as your child grows older. It is also important to remember that each child is unique and develops at her own pace. For this reason, it is common to see variations in abilities among children of the same age. Monitor your child's growth and if you feel that your child is not meeting typical milestones, or if you have specific concerns, talk to your child's health care provider about your concerns. It is crucial to address any developmental issues early because intervention is likely to be more effective when it is provided sooner rather than later, and it can improve outcomes for your child.

This newsletter contains developmental milestones to be aware of in infancy, the toddler years, and preschool years. It provides some age-appropriate activities you can do support a child's development during each of these life phases.



In This Newsletter:

To support you in fostering your child's healthy development and school readiness, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

In just 12 short months, your baby undergoes an incredible transformation—from a newborn to an active one-year-old. The following are examples of milestones your baby may achieve.

- ♥ **Physical** – Roll over, sit alone, crawl, bat at anything within her reach, and possibly take her first steps.
- ♥ **Cognitive** – Explore and learn about objects by tracking with her eyes, mouthing, throwing,



and pointing to what she wants; may also play games such as patty cake and peek-a-boo.

- ♥ **Social and emotional** – Develop bonds with important people in her life and learning about trust; may be afraid of strangers.
- ♥ **Language and communication** – Skills will transform from cooing to babbling to possibly saying a word or two; may also respond to familiar words like her name, and recognize the names of people and things.

During this time, she thrives on positive interactions with you. The following are ways to support your baby's development:

- ♥ Talk, sing, and read to your baby.
- ♥ Respond when she makes sounds by repeating the sounds and adding words.
- ♥ Praise and hold your baby and give her lots of loving attention.
- ♥ Play with your baby when she's alert and relaxed. For example, give her supervised "tummy time" by placing her belly down on the floor and give her opportunities to safely explore her surroundings.

Activity for Infants: *Face Time with Baby*

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. Make eye contact with baby (about 10 inches from her face)
Say, "Hi Malia, look at mama."
2. Move your face in a variety of direction: slowly up, down, left, then right.
Be sure to begin and end each move directly in front of her face.
3. If she reaches for your face, move closer and let her touch you.
4. Next, cover your face with your hands and pause.
5. Then pull your hands slowly away, revealing a different facial expression each time, (e.g., excited, surprised, tired, sad, funny).
6. Talk to your baby after making your facial expression, ask "Did you like that face?"



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Toddlers

As your baby progresses into her toddler years, you will see her enjoying her ability to move and explore. This exploration helps her make sense of the world.

- ♥ **Physical** – Walk and start to run, climb, throw, and jump; may also eat with a spoon and make or copy straight lines and circles.
- ♥ **Cognitive** – Play make-believe with dolls, animals and people; begin to sort shapes and colors; and understand quantity such as “more.”
- ♥ **Social and emotional** – Make simple choices for herself, and may insist on doing things on her own or say “no” frequently.
- ♥ **Language and communication** – Use two to four word sentences; may repeat words overheard in conversations; and understand simple instructions.

The following are ways to support your toddler’s development:



- ♥ Encourage her to push and pull toys and crawl through safe objects like a large cardboard box.
- ♥ Talk with her and add to words she uses. For example, if she says “baba”, you can respond, “Yes, you are right — that is a *bottle*.”
- ♥ Encourage her growing independence by letting her help with dressing and feeding herself.
- ♥ Pay attention and praise her when she follows instructions or is engaged in positive activities. Limit attention for defiant behavior like tantrums.

Activity for Toddlers: *Float Your Boat*

Materials:

Household objects that can get wet
Large container of water

Materials:

1. With your child collect items around your home that are safe for your child to play with (and can get wet), such as a metal and plastic spoons, leaves, and a toy car.
2. Fill a large container with water.
3. Explain to your child what the terms “sinking” and “floating” mean by placing an object on the water and showing her.
4. Have your child choose one object at a time. Ask her, “Does it sink or float?” Repeat this for all the objects.
5. Make a pile of objects that sink and objects that float.

⚠ Safety Alert! Never take your eyes off your child while she’s playing with a container of water. Your toddler’s top-heavy head may cause her to fall forward into the water and not be able to get up. Children can drown in just a few inches of water.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Preschoolers

During the preschool years, you will see your child's play, exploration, and interactions with others become more complex.

- ♥ **Physical** – Run, climb, throw a ball and ride a tricycle with coordination; use hands and fingers more skillfully when dressing self, drawing, using child-safe scissors, and stringing beads.
- ♥ **Cognitive** – Ask a lot of “why” questions; demonstrate a clearer understanding of abstract concepts such as symbols (numbers, letters), size, quantity, time; and be more creative in make-believe play.
- ♥ **Social and emotional** – Play with other children, show more independence, and be more cooperative.
- ♥ **Language and communication** – Experience a vocabulary explosion, retell parts of stories, and use more complicated sentences.

Here are some ways to support your preschooler's development:

- ♥ Help her meet other children her age by going to play groups or story times.
- ♥ Talk about your daily events and what she is feeling and experiencing.

- ♥ Give your child two-step directions such as, “Please take the bowl to the sink then wash your hands.”
- ♥ Ask questions to stimulate her imagination, “What would it be like to be small like a mouse?”
- ♥ Take her outdoors where she can run, climb, swing, balance, throw and catch a ball, and engage in other physical activities.



Activity for Preschoolers: *Nature Walk*

Materials:

Bag or box to hold collected objects

What to Do:

1. Walk outdoors with your child and collect natural materials such as small rocks, sticks, twigs, and dried leaves that you find.
2. Encourage your child to sort the objects into piles of the same types of items. For example, one pile of rocks, one of leaves, and so on. Talk about how the items in each pile are alike or different.
3. Ask questions such as, “Which pile do you think has the most? Which one has the least?”
4. Confirm guesses by counting the items with her.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ learn through senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching
- ♥ use and strengthen small muscles, e.g., facial muscles, fingers, hands, and toes

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ develop a close bond with you
- ♥ feel important and good about themselves

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language
- ♥ increase observation, listening and understanding skills, and attention span

Cognitive Development

- ♥ develop creativity and imagination
- ♥ recognize math concepts such as numbers, sizes, shapes, sequences, volume, measurement, and time



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you make this recipe with your child, talk about kitchen safety. Show her how to handle items safely and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

Banana Pudding in a Bag

Adapted from: Cooking Matters

Ingredients:

- ½ cup low-fat granola
- 3 large bananas
- ½ cup applesauce, unsweetened
- ½ cup non-fat vanilla yogurt

Directions:

1. Have your child add granola into a large zip-top plastic bag. Together, crush the granola into small pieces using a rolling pin or a canned good.
2. Together, peel the bananas, break them into small pieces, and add them to the bag of crushed granola.
3. Have your child mix the applesauce and yogurt together in a small bowl and then pour the mixture into the bag.
4. Together, squish the bag to blend the ingredients together. Talk about how the mixture has changed and have her predict what it will taste like.
5. Seal tightly and refrigerate. Serve by cutting a corner off the bottom of the chilled bag and squeezing the mixture into a serving dish or cup.



Community Resources

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Includes developmental milestones by age and as well as a checklist and other resources that can be downloaded.

Positive Parenting Tips

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/index.html>

Tips of things you can do to help your child as she grows and develops.



Suggested Books

Recommended by **Hawaii State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

You are My Baby Ocean by Lorena Siminovich

Children will delight in this book that has a little book nestled inside a bigger one. When your child turns the pages she will be able to match the baby animals to their parents, and learn concepts about these sea creatures.

That's Not My Monkey/Bunny/Kitten? by Usborne Touchy

Feeling books

This series of interactive books allows your child to feel different textures. As your child reads these books she will have the opportunity to develop sensory and language awareness.

Preschoolers

It's Raining, It's Pouring by Polly Peters

Bad weather doesn't stop three children from using their imagination to play indoors. They create home-made props and go on lots of adventures.

Wave by Suzy Lee

In this wordless picture book, a little girl spends the day at the beach playing in the waves, and running back and forth along the shoreline. This delightful book presents a wonderful opportunity to increase your child's creativity in storytelling.



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowhawaii.org