



# Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

## Developmental Monitoring and Screening

You may have noticed that your health care provider conducts well-child visits starting from infancy. At these visits, they track your child's growth and development and may conduct a developmental screening to see how your child is learning and growing in their physical, communication, social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Most developmental screening use short questionnaires based on children's everyday activities. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends screenings at 9, 18, and 30 months.

While these visits are helpful, it is also important for you to monitor your child's growth and development. Developmental monitoring is something you already do every day. For example, it's when you notice your child first smiling, expressing his feelings, starting to crawl and walk, using gestures or words to communicate, and interacting with others. Keep in mind that children reach milestones at different ages and all children grow in their own way.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasizes the importance of both developmental monitoring and screening for all young children. These two practices are complementary: monitoring allows you to track your child's growth every day, while screening provides a more in-depth look at key developmental stages, or when specific concerns arise. The CDC's developmental milestone checklists for children aged 2 months through 5 years, found on their website, can be used to actively monitor your child's development.

In this newsletter, we will share some developmental milestones and activity ideas for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to support their growth in physical,



communication, cognitive, and social-emotional development.

### 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,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

# Infants

Infants experience rapid physical, social, and cognitive development in their first year (e.g., crawling, smiling, searching for objects). Keep track of your child's growth using the CDC milestone checklists for ages 2, 4, 6, 9, and 12 months. The following are milestones for typically developing infants:

- ♥ Beginning at 2 months, infants smile when you talk to them. They smile on their own to get your attention and look at you, move, or make sounds to get or keep your attention. Respond positively by talking to your infant when he makes sounds. This helps him learn to develop his social-emotional and communication skills.
- ♥ At 6 months, infants roll from tummy to back, push up with straight arms when on tummy, and reach to grab things they want. Offer objects for your infant to grab and explore during tummy time. This activity strengthens his physical skills.
- ♥ At 9 months, infants can sit up by themselves and use their hands to grab nearby objects and bang things together. During play time, offer your infant safe noise-making objects,



such as blocks, rattles, or wooden spoons and containers.

- ♥ At 12 months, infants put things in a container and look for things they see you hide. Tie colorful scarves together, put one end in a toilet/paper towel tube, and let your infant pull them out and then try to push them back in.

Regularly observe and take notes on your infant's play, speech, actions, and movement to track milestones. During the well-child visit, share your child's accomplishments and any concerns or questions you have with your health care provider.

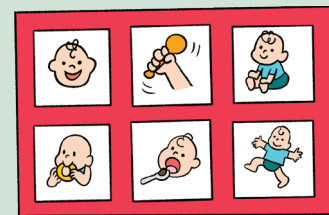
## Activity for Infants: : Milestone Board for the First Year

### What You Need:

- Poster board
- Colored markers
- Glue
- Scissors

### What to Do:

1. Choose the milestones you want to capture of your infant. For example, first smiles, first time sitting up, first solid food, or first steps. Use the CDC milestone checklist <https://www.cdc.gov/act-early/milestones/index.html> to guide you.
2. Take or gather pictures of your infant meeting the milestones.
3. Glue them on the board.
4. Label and decorate with colored markers.
5. Point and talk with your child about their milestone accomplishment.



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

## Toddlers

Toddlers begin learning new words and use them to express themselves when they communicate and initiate play with others. They show their interest in words when requesting to hear the same book or story repeatedly. While pointing at things or gesturing may be their go-to communication method, their verbal skills continue to advance along with their motor skills:

- ♥ At 15 months, toddlers may show you an object they like and try to use single words like “dada” for dad. Acknowledge his effort to engage in play and help him stretch his sentence by saying, “You want to share your toy with dada. You are playing with dada.”
- ♥ At 24 months, toddlers enjoy moving their bodies to kick a ball and run. You can use a bowling activity to teach your toddler new ways to use his body. Show him how to use two hands to roll a ball toward empty water bottles to knock them down, and then use his right or left hand when he masters the movements. Your child can also kick a ball to knock down the water bottles.
- ♥ By 30 months, you may notice toddlers figuring out how things work. Gather up different boxes (shoe boxes, cereal boxes, clean milk cartons, etc.) to use as building blocks. Build a tower



with your toddler. Point out how the tower is steady. If the blocks fall, talk about what he needs to do to keep them from falling, and try to build it differently.

Observe and track their development with the CDC checklist for 15, 24, and 30 months. Share your child’s accomplishments at his 2-year well-child visit. Your health care provider may offer the child development screening at this time.

### Activity for Toddlers: *Treasure Bag*

What You Need:

- 2 Paper bags
- Several small household objects, 2 of each (e.g., spoons, small plastic bowls, clean sponges)

What to Do:

1. Gather several small household objects. 2 of each item.
2. Get 2 paper bags. Put the same items in each paper bag.
3. Pull one item from one bag and talk about it (e.g., texture, size).
4. Ask your child to reach into the other bag and find the same item. “How did you know this is the same item?”

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



# Preschoolers

Preschoolers are advancing in both communication and problem-solving skills. They use complete sentences to tell you what is happening and to share stories of past experiences. They are increasing their understanding of how things work in the world and are curious about why things are the way they are. They will surprise you with many of their own new ideas. Continue tracking their milestones with the CDC checklists for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds.

- ♥ By age 3, preschoolers are becoming more skilled in self-care tasks and show you what they can do by saying, "Look at me". Have your child practice skills like buttoning and zipping clothing by letting him dress a large teddy bear. Make sure the clothes have a couple of large buttons or snaps. Encourage your child to also dress himself after practicing on the teddy bear. Acknowledge his effort in trying to complete the tasks.
- ♥ By age 4, preschoolers enjoy longer books. They can describe recent events with some detail and place the events in order with a little help. Look at the pictures in a book together and ask your child to talk about them. Ask your child to talk about the characters and what is happening in the story.



- ♥ By age 5, preschoolers follow rules or take turns when playing games and pay attention for 5 to 10 minutes during activities. Take turns playing "What doesn't belong?" with your preschooler. Gather three things that are similar or in the same category, such as crayon, marker, and pencil. Add a fourth item that doesn't belong, such as a bar of soap. Ask your child which one doesn't belong. Say, "What doesn't belong? Why doesn't it belong?" Then it is your preschooler's turn to gather items and your turn to guess the item that doesn't belong.

At the next well-child visit, be sure to share your observation or completed milestone checklist with your health care provider as well as any concerns about milestones that your child may not have met.

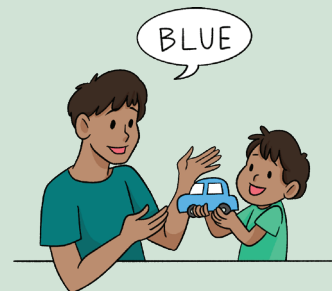
## Activity for Preschoolers: *Gimme Gimme Color*

### What You Need:

- Materials
- Items safe for children to reach for
- Items with a variety of colors

### What to Do:

1. Tell your child that you will be playing a game called "Gimme Gimme Color". Explain to your child that he needs to find something with the color you call out and bring the item to you. For example, "Gimme gimme something blue," then the child finds something with the color blue and brings it to you.
2. Take turns with your child and let him be the one to call out the colors for you to find.



*(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps his 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
- ♥ Learn to use his body with intention

### Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Feel important and good about himself
- ♥ Learn to cooperate with others

### Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Develop early reading skills and a love of reading
- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language



### Cognitive Development

- ♥ Recognize math concepts like numbers, sizes, shapes, sequence, volume, measurement, and time
- ♥ Develop early math skills like quantifying, comparing, sorting, grouping, and ordering

## Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons, including math (quantity and size), science (texture and appearance), fine motor skills (cutting and peeling), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with the child, discuss kitchen safety. Show them how to handle items safely and allow them to do as much as they are capable of. Praise his efforts and ask questions throughout the process to encourage his thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

### Pretzel Letters & Numbers

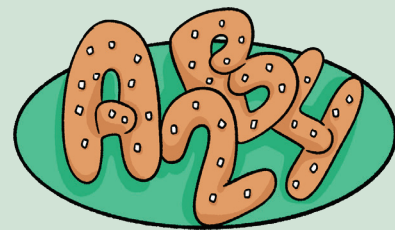
*Adapted from ASQ-3 Learning Activities*

#### Ingredients:

- Pizza dough (store-bought or homemade)
- Egg
- Salt

#### Directions:

1. Invite your child to make letter or number pretzels
2. Cut pizza dough into strips
3. Have your child form letters or numbers with the dough
4. Beat an egg to brush the pretzels.
5. Demonstrate and then allow your child to brush beaten egg on pretzels.
6. Sprinkle salt on pretzels
7. Bake at 400°F for 3-6 minutes or until golden brown. (Caution: keep children away from the oven)
8. Invite children to sound the letters and name the numbers before they eat.



## Resources

### *Ages and Stages ASQ-3 Learning Activities*

This book comes with 400 fun, easy, and developmentally appropriate activities for infants and young children.

Twombly, E., Fink, G., & Brookes, P. H. (2013). ASQ-3 learning activities. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

### *CDC's Developmental Milestones*

<https://www.cdc.gov/act-early/milestones/index.html#toc>

The CDC website shares the milestone checklists for children from 2 months to 5 years old. The checklists help families understand how children play, learn, speak, act, and move as they reach their milestones.



## Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library** [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org).

### Infants and Toddlers

#### *Watch Me Grow!* by Stephanie Meyers

This book is filled with delightful photographs that capture little ones' milestones from one month to twenty-four months.

#### *You Are Two* by Sara O'Leary

Baby's second year is full of milestones like walking, running, and saying their own names. This book is fun to read with little ones to show them how much they have grown in just 2 years.

### Preschoolers

#### *The Magical Yet* by Angela DiTerlizzi

This book is about things that we can't do yet, but we will as we grow.

#### *Celebrate You!* by Sherri Duskey Rinker

This book celebrates all the small but important milestones from the first wobbly steps to the time when they're ready to be on their own.



**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](http://www.learningtogrowhawaii.org) or visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii](http://www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii) and Instagram @uhlearningtogrow