

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

What to look for

Your child...

- ✓ Can speak in complete sentences
- ✓ Can follow directions with at least two steps
- ✓ Can understand words such as 'top' and 'bottom', 'big' and 'little'
- ✓ Can follow directions in a simple game with other children or adults.
- ✓ Can say or sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes
- ✓ Can recognize when words rhyme, such as 'cat' and 'hat'

To encourage your child's language development:

- ★ Take time each day to listen to and talk with your child. Some good times for conversation are while traveling, at mealtimes and at bedtime.
- ★ Encourage your child to listen and use language to express ideas.
- ★ Involve your child in activities and games that require listening and following directions.
- ★ Read and tell stories that have interesting characters and easy-to-follow plots. Talk with your child about the stories after you read or tell them.
- ★ Read and sing nursery rhymes and rhyming stories with your child.



LEARNING AND THINKING

What to look for

Your child...

- ✓ Can match two pictures that are alike
- ✓ Can tell things that go together (a spoon and a fork, a fish and a boat)
- ✓ Can match, recognize and name circle, square, and triangle
- ✓ Can match, recognize and name at least 5 colors
- ✓ Can repeat a pattern you start (step, step, jump – step, step, jump)
- ✓ Can put 3 pictures in order (1. Planting flower seeds; 2. Flowers growing; 3. Picking flowers)
- ✓ Can work simple puzzles

To encourage your child's learning and thinking skills:

- ★ Collect real objects that go together: shoe/sock, hammer/nail.
- ★ Involve your child in putting pictures in order. You can use photos of your child at different ages, or pictures cut from a magazine.
- ★ Let your child help you fold laundry. Your child can match socks and other clothes by color or size.
- ★ Play "shapes" and "sizes" games with your child. Use coins, cut-out shapes, and other objects from around the house.
- ★ Have simple puzzles available for your child to play with. Make puzzles by cutting up greeting cards or the front of a cereal box into puzzle-shaped pieces.



BEGINNING READING

What to look for

Your child...

- ✓ Can make simple predictions and comments about a story being read
- ✓ Can tell a simple story back to you after listening to it
- ✓ Knows the letters in his or her own first name, and can recognize his or her own first name in print
- ✓ Can recognize words or signs he or she sees often (local restaurants and stores, street signs)
- ✓ Can hold and look at books right side up, turning the pages one at a time from front to back
- ✓ Knows and names at least 10 letters of the alphabet
- ✓ Can match a letter with the beginning sound of a word (such as the letter 'B' with a picture of a banana)

To encourage your child's beginning reading skills:

- ★ Set aside a special time each day to read with your child. Read your child's favorite books and rhymes over and over. Read some of your favorites from childhood, too. Talk with your child about the story and the characters.
- ★ Involve your child in putting pictures in order. You can use photos of your child at different ages, or pictures cut from a magazine.
- ★ Get a set of letter magnets, and put them on the refrigerator or a cookie sheet for your child to play with.
- ★ Make a name card for your child. Display the name card in a special place, and talk to your child about the names of the letters.
- ★ Using pictures from a magazine or real objects, and magnetic letters, help your child match pictures to their beginning sound.

BEGINNING WRITING

What to look for

Your child...

- ✓ Can express ideas through pictures he or she draws
- ✓ Can use pencils, crayons, and markers for drawing and writing
- ✓ Can copy and draw a line, circle, X and +
- ✓ Is beginning to write some of the letters in his or her own first name

To encourage your child's beginning writing skills:

- ★ Let your child use school tools such as pencils, washable markers, crayons and blunt-tipped scissors. Gather and organize these materials, along with some paper, in a box that your child can decorate and have access to.
- ★ Encourage your child to explore with drawing materials, and to use drawing to express his or her ideas.
- ★ Let your child see that written words are a part of daily life. Make grocery lists together, or write notes to relatives and friends. Point out the different ways that you use writing in your daily routine.
- ★ Label your child's belongings with his or her name. Let your child label some of his or her own things such as a notebook or crayon box.

NUMBERS AND COUNTING

What to look for

Your child...

- ✓ Can count at least 5 objects
- ✓ Knows that the written numeral '3' means 3 objects, such as 3 bears
- ✓ Can add and subtract small numbers of familiar objects, such as, "I have 3 cookies. You have 2. How many do we have all together?"
- ✓ Can put written numbers in order from 1 to 5
- ✓ Can count from 1 to 10 in the correct order
- ✓ Can use the words 'more' and 'less' correctly

To encourage your child's skills with counting and numbers:

- ★ Collect a variety of materials your child can use for counting and learning about numbers. Old keys, plastic bottle caps, thread spools, and pictures from magazines all work well.
- ★ Use materials from around the house to experiment with addition, subtraction and "more" and "less" activities.
- ★ Use number words, point out numbers, and involve your child in counting activities as you go through your day.
- ★ Read, tell stories, sing songs, and say poems about numbers and counting with your child. Try to include books in which characters are added or subtracted as the story progresses. (Good books include: *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*, by Eileen Christelow and *Roll Over! A Counting Song* by Merle Peek.)



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

What to look for

Your child...

- ✓ Can cut with child-sized scissors
- ✓ Can run at a comfortable speed in intended direction
- ✓ Can hop several times on each foot
- ✓ Can throw a ball or beanbag in intended direction
- ✓ Can catch a large ball or beanbag
- ✓ Can jump over a low object, such as a line, string, or balance beam
- ✓ Can bounce a large ball several times
- ✓ Can kick a stationary ball
- ✓ Can walk along a line or a low balance beam
- ✓ Can pedal and steer a tricycle

To encourage your child's physical development:

- ★ Collect safe toys and equipment to help your child develop large muscles. Some examples are hula hoops, bean bags, tricycle, large beach balls and a child-sized basketball hoop.
- ★ Give your child the space and freedom to use large muscles, both indoors and outdoors. You can set up empty water bottles like bowling pins, and let your child use a soft ball to "bowl." Invite your child to toss rolled up socks into a basket or a masking tape circle on the floor.
- ★ Join your child in active play. You can play catch with your child, or set up a simple obstacle course.
- ★ Give your child opportunities to cut with scissors while you watch. Your child can cut pictures from magazines or shapes for a matching game.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What to look for

Your child...

- ✓ Can say if he or she is a boy or girl
- ✓ Can tell first and last name and names of parents
- ✓ Can say how old he or she is
- ✓ Takes care of own needs, such as toileting, washing hands and dressing
- ✓ Adjusts to new situations without parent being there

To encourage your child's social and emotional development:

- ★ Create with your child an "All About Me and My Family" book. Staple or tie a few sheets of paper together to make the book. Involve your child in adding personal information, such as first and last name, parents' names, child's gender, age, address, likes and dislikes. Your child can make a cover and decorate the book.
- ★ Support and celebrate your child's independence. Give lots of praise for things that your child has learned to do on his or her own, such as brushing teeth, washing hands, putting on shoes, zipping jacket, riding a tricycle, and buttoning shirt.
- ★ Help your child be prepared for going to kindergarten. With your child, pretend to go to school and practice how you will say goodbye. Visit the new school to meet the kindergarten teacher and explore the classroom and building together.

