

Module 3: How Children Grow and Learn

Section B: Ages and Stages Birth through 12

Introduction

As early care and education practitioners it is important to understand young children's development. The Ages and Stages section will provide you with an overview of specific skills, abilities, characteristics, and traits associated with growth of children between birth and 12 years of age. As you become more familiar with your assigned age group, your Center Director will provide you with more specific information on curriculum and activities related to the center's educational philosophy.

Learning Objectives

After completing this section you will be able to:

- Name the 5 domains (areas) of children's growth and development.
- Identify 10 developmental characteristics of the children in your classroom.
- Explain the reasons for knowing the ages and stages of children in your classroom.

Guiding Your Learning

Before you begin the section, create a list of developmental characteristics that you think the children in your assigned classroom will possess. At the end of the section compare your list with the ages and stages chart for the age group of children in your new classroom.

NOTE: The information contained in these sections are partial summaries of the DHS Child Care Licensing Regulations, are not intended to replace or provide an official interpretation of the Arizona Administrative Code and Arizona Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities.

Summary of Key Arizona Child Care Licensing Regulations

ARTICLE 5 FACILITY PROGRAM AND EQUIPMENT

R9-5-501 General Child Care Program, Equipment, and Health and Safety Standards

5. Prepares and posts a dated lesson plan in each indoor activity area for each calendar week, which is maintained on facility premises for 12 months after the lesson plan date and provides opportunities for each child to:
- a. Gain a positive self-concept
 - b. Develop and practice social skills
 - c. Think, reason, question, and experiment
 - d. Acquire language skills
 - e. Develop physical coordination skills
 - f. Participate in structured large muscle physical activity
 - g. Develop habits that meet health, safety, and nutritional needs
 - h. Express creativity
 - i. Learn to respect cultural diversity of children and staff
 - j. Learn self-help skills
 - k. Develop a sense of responsibility and independence

Developmental Domains

The developmental domains used to describe children's growth are:

1. **Gross/Physical development** is divided into two categories. Gross (large) motor refers to children's development of the large groups of muscles used to sit, stand, walk, run, jump, throw a ball and maintain balance, exhibit coordination and numerous other skills required for movement. Small/Fine motor development refers to children's development of small muscles used to hold and manipulate bottles, eating utensils, blocks or legos, scissors, and drawing utensils. It also refers to the ability to put on and take off own clothing, write, and engage in numerous activities requiring the use of the hands and fingers.
2. **Language development** refers to children's ability to use expressive language through speech, use body language and gestures and communicate wants and needs. Receptive language refers to children's ability to listen to others and to understand what others are saying.
3. **Cognitive development** refers to children's thinking skills that include learning, understanding, problem-solving, reasoning, and remembering.
4. **Social/Emotional development** refers to children's abilities to interact with others, develop relationships with family, friends, and teachers, engage in cooperative interactions with others, and respond to the feelings of others. It also relates to how children feel about themselves and the way they fit into the world.

The following charts provide an overview of typical development in the 4 developmental domains for the different ages. Not all children's growth will follow the same developmental path. Individual children may develop skills at a more rapid or a more gradual rate and abilities will be different in each of the developmental domains. It is not unusual to have children at various stages of development in one classroom, even if the children are the same chronological age. As an early childhood educator an awareness of the developmental ages and stages is important in understanding the abilities of children and forming reasonable expectations of children's behavior and skills. Your role as an early childhood educator is to observe the child and plan activities and interactions based on their current level of development while facilitating the child's learning to the next developmental stage. To get a better understanding of the children in your classroom, you should not only become familiar with the developmental stages for that age but for the ages immediately preceding and following that age group.

Infants Birth-6 Months

(CDC Learn the Signs: Act Early)

Social Emotional	Language	Cognitive	Physical
<p>Begins to smile at people</p> <p>Can briefly calm himself (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand)</p> <p>Tries to look at adult</p> <p>Smiles spontaneously, especially at people</p> <p>Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops</p> <p>Copies some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning</p>	<p>Coos, makes gurgling sounds</p> <p>Turns head toward sounds</p> <p>Begins to babble</p> <p>Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears</p> <p>Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired</p>	<p>Pays attention to faces</p> <p>Begins to follow things with eyes and recognize people at a distance</p> <p>Begins to act bored (cries, fussy) if activity doesn't let you know if she is happy or sad</p> <p>Responds to affection</p> <p>Reaches for toy with one hand</p> <p>Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it</p> <p>Follows moving things with eyes from side to side</p> <p>Watches faces closely</p> <p>Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance change</p>	<p>Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy</p> <p>Makes smoother movements with arms and legs</p> <p>Holds head steady, unsupported</p> <p>Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface</p> <p>May be able to roll over from tummy to back</p> <p>Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys</p> <p>Brings hands to mouth</p> <p>When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows</p>

Infants 6 months-12 months

(CDC Learn the Signs: Act Early)

Social Emotional	Language	Cognitive	Physical
<p>Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger</p> <p>Likes to play with others, especially parents</p> <p>Responds to other people's emotions and often seems happy</p> <p>Likes to look at self in a mirror</p> <p>May be afraid of strangers</p> <p>May be clingy with familiar adults</p> <p>Has favorite toys</p>	<p>Responds to sounds by making sounds</p> <p>Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah," "eh," "oh") and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds</p> <p>Responds to own name</p> <p>Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure</p> <p>Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m," "b")</p> <p>Understands "no"</p> <p>Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa"</p> <p>Copies sounds and gestures of others</p> <p>Uses fingers to point at things</p>	<p>Looks around at things nearby</p> <p>Brings things to mouth</p> <p>Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach</p> <p>Begins to pass things from one hand to the other</p> <p>Watches the path of something as it falls</p> <p>Looks for things he sees you hide</p> <p>Plays peek-a-boo</p> <p>Puts things in her mouth</p> <p>Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other</p> <p>Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger</p>	<p>Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)</p> <p>Begins to sit without support</p> <p>When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce</p> <p>Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward</p> <p>Stands, holding on</p> <p>Can get into sitting position</p> <p>Sits without support</p> <p>Pulls to stand</p> <p>Crawls</p>

12 MONTHS

(CDC Learn the Signs: Act Early)

Social Emotional	Language	Cognitive	Physical
<p>Is shy or nervous with strangers</p> <p>Cries when mom or dad leaves</p> <p>Has favorite things and people</p> <p>Shows fear in some situations</p> <p>Hands you a book when he wants to hear a story</p> <p>Repeats sounds or actions to get attention</p> <p>Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing</p> <p>Plays games such as “peek-a-boo” and “pat-a-cake”</p>	<p>Responds to simple spoken requests</p> <p>Uses simple gestures, like shaking head “no” or waving “bye-bye”</p> <p>Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)</p> <p>Says “mama” and “dada” and exclamations like “uh-oh!”</p> <p>Tries to say words you say</p>	<p>Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing</p> <p>Finds hidden things easily</p> <p>Looks at the right picture or thing when it’s named</p> <p>Copies gestures</p> <p>Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair</p> <p>Bangs two things together</p> <p>Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container</p> <p>Lets things go without help</p> <p>Pokes with index (pointer) finger</p> <p>Follows simple directions like “pick up the toy”</p>	<p>Gets to a sitting position without help</p> <p>Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture (“cruising”)</p> <p>May take a few steps without holding on</p> <p>May stand alone</p>

18 Months

(CDC Learn the Signs: Act Early)

Social Emotional	Language	Cognitive	Physical
<p>Likes to hand things to others as play</p> <p>May have temper tantrums</p> <p>May be afraid of strangers</p> <p>Shows affection to familiar people</p> <p>Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll</p> <p>May cling to caregivers in new situations</p> <p>Points to show others something interesting</p> <p>Explores alone but with parent close by</p>	<p>Says several single words</p> <p>Says and shakes head “no”</p> <p>Points to show someone what he wants</p>	<p>Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon</p> <p>Points to get the attention of others</p> <p>Shows interest in a doll or stuffed animal by pretending to feed</p> <p>Points to one body part</p> <p>Scribbles on his own</p> <p>Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say “sit down”</p>	<p>Walks alone</p> <p>May walk up steps and run</p> <p>Pulls toys while walking</p> <p>Can help undress herself</p> <p>Drinks from a cup</p> <p>Eats with a spoon</p>

2 YEARS

(CDC Learn the Signs: Act Early)

Social Emotional	Language	Cognitive	Physical
<p>Copies others, especially adults and older children</p> <p>Gets excited when with other children</p> <p>Shows more and more independence</p> <p>Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)</p> <p>Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games</p>	<p>Points to things or pictures when they are named</p> <p>Knows names of familiar people and body parts</p> <p>Says sentences with 2 to 4 words</p> <p>Follows simple instructions</p> <p>Repeats words overheard in conversation</p> <p>Points to things in a book</p>	<p>Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers</p> <p>Begins to sort shapes and colors</p> <p>Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books</p> <p>Plays simple make-believe games</p> <p>Builds towers of 4 or more blocks</p> <p>Might use one hand more than the other</p> <p>Follows two-step instructions such as "Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet."</p> <p>Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog</p>	<p>Stands on tiptoe</p> <p>Kicks a ball</p> <p>Begins to run</p> <p>Climbs onto and down from furniture without help</p> <p>Walks up and down stairs holding on</p> <p>Throws ball overhand</p> <p>Makes or copies straight lines and circles</p>

3 YEARS

(CDC Learn the Signs: Act Early)

Social Emotional	Language	Cognitive	Physical
<p>Copies adults and friends</p> <p>Shows affection for friends without prompting</p> <p>Takes turns in games</p> <p>Shows concern for crying friend</p> <p>Understands the idea of “mine” and “his” or “hers”</p> <p>Shows a wide range of emotions</p> <p>Separates easily from mom and dad</p> <p>May get upset with major changes in routine</p> <p>Dresses and undresses self</p>	<p>Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps</p> <p>Can name most familiar things</p> <p>Understands words like “in,” “on,” and “under”</p> <p>Says first name, age, and sex</p> <p>Names a friend</p> <p>Says words like “I,” “me,” “we,” and “you” and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)</p> <p>Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time</p> <p>Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences</p>	<p>Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts</p> <p>Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people</p> <p>Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces</p> <p>Understands what “two” means</p> <p>Copies a circle with pencil or crayon</p> <p>Turns book pages one at a time</p> <p>Builds towers of more than 6 blocks</p> <p>Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle</p>	<p>Climbs well</p> <p>Runs easily</p> <p>Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike)</p> <p>Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step</p>

4 YEARS

(CDC Learn the Signs: Act Early)

Social Emotional	Language	Cognitive	Physical
<p>Enjoys doing new things</p> <p>Plays “Mom” and “Dad”</p> <p>Is more and more creative with make-believe play</p> <p>Would rather play with other children than by himself</p> <p>Cooperates with other children</p> <p>Often can’t tell what’s real and what’s make-believe</p> <p>Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in</p>	<p>Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using “he” and “she”</p> <p>Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” or the “Wheels on the Bus”</p> <p>Tells stories</p> <p>Can say first and last name</p>	<p>Names some colors and some numbers</p> <p>Understands the idea of counting</p> <p>Starts to understand time</p> <p>Remembers parts of a story</p> <p>Understands the idea of “same” and “different”</p> <p>Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts</p> <p>Uses scissors</p> <p>Starts to copy some capital letters</p> <p>Plays board or card games</p> <p>Tells you what she thinks is going to happen next in a book</p>	<p>Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds</p> <p>Catches a bounced ball most of the time</p> <p>Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food</p>

5 YEARS

(CDC Learn the Signs: Act Early)

Social Emotional	Language	Cognitive	Physical
<p>Wants to please friends</p> <p>Wants to be like friends</p> <p>More likely to agree with rules</p> <p>Likes to sing, dance, and act</p> <p>Shows concern and sympathy for others</p> <p>Is aware of gender</p> <p>Can tell what's real and what's make-believe</p> <p>Shows more independence (for example, may visit a next-door neighbor by himself [adult supervision is still needed])</p> <p>Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative</p>	<p>Speaks very clearly</p> <p>Tells a simple story using full sentences</p> <p>Uses future tense; for example, "Grandma will be here."</p> <p>Says name and address</p>	<p>Counts 10 or more things</p> <p>Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts</p> <p>Can print some letters or numbers</p> <p>Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes</p> <p>Knows about things used every day, like money and food</p>	<p>Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer</p> <p>Hops; may be able to skip</p> <p>Can do a somersault</p> <p>Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife</p> <p>Can use the toilet on her own</p> <p>Swings and climbs</p>

Early School-Agers 6-8 Years of Age

Gross Motor Development	Fine Motor	Social-Emotional Development	Language Development	Cognitive Development
Throws and catches balls with ease and accuracy	Cuts and uses art materials skillfully	Develops friendship skills and expands relationships	Uses language as a communication tool	Independent thinkers
Participates in active games with rules	Writing skills improve	Demonstrates emerging interpersonal skills	Speech should be completely understandable and socially useful.	Can remember variables such as who can run the fastest
		Begin to develop a sense of failure		
		Can be tattle-tales		
Can complete sequence of motor activities for gymnastics, karate, shooting baskets	Copy designs	Self-centered and outgoing. May be bossy, stubborn, or fearful, and impatient.	Demonstrates the ability to tell a connected story about a picture and see the relationships	Able to develop strategies to solve math problems
Physical activities such as bike riding, swimming, etc.		Do not like criticism and failure and are ashamed of mistakes, fears, and tears		
		Enjoy board games but does not like to lose		Develops interests in books, records, and musical instruments
		Very possessive of belongings		
Improved reaction time to balls that are thrown	Can use tools and utensils correctly with supervision	Learns to accept individual differences and shows tolerance	Develop understanding of time and days of the week	Concrete thinking
Slow but steady growth	Enjoy cooking, drawing, painting	Reads and invents stories illustrating emotional responses and changes in characters	Ability to read and write improves.	Accurate perception of events
		Want adults to like them		Understands taking turns
Developed good sense of balance		Play well in groups but need time to play alone	Developing collections of interesting things that are organized and classified	Rational and logical thought and decision making
Enjoy participating in physical activities and tricks		Prefer playmates of the same sex		Longer attention span
Enjoy rough and tumble play that can sometimes go too far		Perceptions of "good" and "bad" are based on what parents and teachers approve or disapprove of	Likes to have conversations with adults	
Like to work on projects but need adult supervision and direction		Beginning to develop a moral sense about right and wrong		
		Are more willing to give up than to fail or receive criticism		

Middle Childhood 9-12 Years of Age

Gross Motor Development	Fine Motor	Social-Emotional Development	Language Development	Cognitive Development
Very active	Ability to print or write	<p>Begins to see parents and authority figures as imperfect human beings</p> <p>May belittle or defy adult authority. Back talk and rebellion are other reactions,</p>	More interested in reading fiction, magazines, or how-to project books	Capable of understanding concept without hands-on experiences
Engages in: Skate boards Roller skates Bicycles	Engage in more cooperative games and projects	Rituals, rules, secret codes, and made-up languages are common	May develop special interests or hobbies	Daydreams and thinks about their life in the future
Increased interest in competitive sports	Fine motor/hand dexterity increases	Enjoys being part of structured groups	Become interested in future careers	Enjoys games that involve strategy such as chess, Monopoly
Girls may be as much as 2 years ahead of boys in physical growth		Still needs time for relaxation and play		Able to focus attention and search for information
Increases in body strength	Small muscle development enables the child to play musical instruments, build more easily.	Children are nurturing and commanding with younger children but follow and depend on older children.		Can create a plan to reach a goal
Coordination improves		Children define themselves by their appearance, possessions, and activities.		

Applying Your Knowledge

How does the information presented in this section affect your work with young children?

Understanding children's development, growth and progress gives early childhood teachers information on:

- Guiding interactions with young children
- Planning the child care environment
- Developing a daily schedule of routines and activities
- Responding to the individual needs of each child

Check Your Understanding

After you have reviewed the characteristics of the different age groups answer the following questions.

- ✓ Can you think of examples of specific behaviors or interactions listed on the Ages and Stages Charts that apply to the children in your classroom or center?
- ✓ Why do people who work with young children need to be aware of the stages of children's development?
- ✓ What are some ways that you can apply this information in your work with children?
- ✓ Observe a child in your classroom. Name 5 developmental characteristics that you observed in the child's interactions and activities.
- ✓ Talk with your Center Director about what you have learned and questions you may have.

Resources

Resource for charts:

Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/milestones-5yr.html>

Scholastic Developmental Charts http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/ect/behavior_development/dev_charts.htm

Ages and Stages of School Age Children, University of Illinois Extension Retrieved from <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/babysitting/age-school.html>

Module 3-Section B Worksheet

After you have reviewed the characteristics of the different age groups answer the following questions.

Can you think of examples of specific behaviors or interactions listed on the Ages and Stages Charts that apply to the children in your classroom or center?

Why do people who work with young children need to be aware of the stages of children’s development?

What are some ways that you can apply this information in your work with children?

Observe a child in your classroom. Name 5 developmental characteristics that you observed in the child’s interactions and activities.

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| 1. | _____ | 4. | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | 5. | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | | _____ |
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