

Early Learning and Development Guidelines

Ages 4 to 5 Years



“My hope for young children is that they learn that they can learn—that important people in their lives support them through the process of learning: trying new things, sometimes succeeding right away, other times struggling, feeling disappointed, receiving encouragement, learning from that whole experience, then trying again.”

Paula Steinke, Family Friend & Neighbor Program Manager, Child Care Resources, Seattle

WHAT YOU'LL FIND HERE

First there are some questions for families to reflect on. They offer a springboard for families, caregivers, child care professionals and teachers to talk together about fostering each child's growth and learning.

Next under each area of development, the Guidelines are in two columns. "Children may . . ." provides examples of things that children this age are learning to be, do and know. "Ideas to try with children . . ." offers examples of things families, caregivers, child care professionals, teachers and other caring adults can do to help children learn and develop in healthy ways. Different families may encourage learning and development in different ways.

These Guidelines are a resource. They are not an exhaustive guide to child development, and are not intended to be an assessment tool, a curriculum or a tool to collect data on children.

What families already know about their children

Five questions to reflect on

1. What has your child done that surprised you with a new ability, skill or understanding?
2. How does your child go about trying something new?
3. What does your child really enjoy doing?
4. How does your child respond to new situations or challenges?
5. Who among your family and friends does your child enjoy spending time with? What are some of the things that person does with or teaches your child?

“During the spring, two foster brothers aged 4 and 5 years old came to our center completely nonverbal and with little self-management skills, mostly due to the environment they were removed from. Their only means of communication was screaming, jumping up and down, and waving their arms. Within a few months of working closely with their teachers and being able to interact with peers in a group setting, they were able to successfully communicate their needs to the teaching staff and have made many, many friends. Now they come into the center after school [kindergarten] proud to share their day and sit with staff to do daily homework.”

Brenda Hayes, Family Support Specialist



Note: Child continues the growth and learning from the prior age.

1. About me and my family and culture

↓ Children may ...

Family and culture

- Take pride in own family composition and interest in others'. Understand that families are diverse.
- Recognize and respect similarities and differences between self and other people, such as gender, race, special needs, cultures, languages, communities and family structures.

Self concept

- Describe what he or she likes and is interested in.
- Choose activities to do alone or with others (such as puzzles, painting, etc.).

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Family and culture

- Make sure information about the child's growth, development and social skills is shared between home and school.
- Show a friendly and respectful way of listening and responding to what your child says. Be the model you want the child to be.
- Continue to involve your child in family and cultural traditions, rituals, routines and activities.

Self concept

- Encourage your child in the things he or she tries, and to try new things.
- Invite your child to share thoughts and feelings about accomplishing a new task.

↓ Children may ...

Self management

- Release emotional tensions in the arms or presence of a caring adult. (By this age, the child may have been discouraged from doing so and find it more difficult than before.) Still is able to cry, laugh, tremble, yawn and/or have non-hurtful tantrums. Is relaxed and cooperative afterward.
- Associate emotions with words and facial expressions.
- Express one or two feelings in role playing life experiences. Adopt a variety of roles in pretend play.
- Anticipate consequences of own behavior. With help, consider possibilities and plan effective approaches to problems.
- Begin to enjoy games where the child has to change behavior in response to changing directions.

Learning to learn

- Be curious; interested in trying things out.
- Stay with a task for more than five minutes and attempt to solve problems that arise.
- Use imagination to create a variety of ideas.
- Enjoy pretend play (such as using dolls or stuffed animals, or playing “house” or “explorers”).
- Use play as a way to explore and understand life experiences and roles.
- Recognize when making mistakes and fix these errors during a task.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Self management

- Encourage child to express feelings, when appropriate, through words, artwork and expressive play.
- Say what you expect for your child’s behavior. Provide guidance when behavior goes off-track (hitting, breaking things, etc.). Stop the off-track behavior, connect to the child calmly and allow for emotional upset.
- Give your child opportunities to make safe, healthy choices (such as whether to have water or milk at snack time). Show respect for your child’s choices and efforts to solve problems.
- Encourage your child to talk about problems and ways to solve them. Think together about possible actions and consequences of these actions, then help your child choose an effective approach.

Learning to learn

- Provide extended time to play, away from television.
- Offer interesting objects, toys, games and dolls from different cultures/nations.
- Play question-and-answer games that inspire your child’s curiosity.
- Answer your child’s questions and/or help find answers.
- Teach your child that making mistakes is part of learning.



“Our 3- to 5-year-old students were eating ‘family style’ and passing a basket of chicken nuggets. Mohammed reached for the basket, but the teacher told him he could not eat those nuggets and instead could have cheese. He cried out, ‘Why?!’ The teacher explained the meal was not for him. He watched, then grabbed a nugget from another child’s plate. Of course this created a scene with the students and a power struggle with the teacher.”

“After we found out that our Muslim students could not eat any of the meat items on our menu because they were not prepared in a halal/kosher manner, we held a meeting with the teaching staff and families. Then we found a halal/kosher vendor for all our meat items. Now when we serve chicken nuggets, the basket is passed to each child with no difference made for anyone.”

Angelia K. Maxie, Executive Director,
Tiny Tots Development Center, Seattle

“My four-year-old grandnephew surprised me this Christmas. He opened one gift, then could wait while other family members each opened one. He said, ‘We take turns at school,’ and played until it was his turn again. Last year, at 3, he tore into all his packages at once. What a difference!”

A great aunt



2. Building relationships

↓ Children may ...

Interactions with adults

- Seek emotional support from caregivers.
- Understand that adults may want the child to do something different than he/she wants to do.

Interactions with peers

- Play with children the same age and of different ages.
- Initiate an activity with another child.
- Invite other children to join groups or other activities.
- Make and follow plans for games with other children.

Social behaviors

- Adjust behavior to different settings (such as using an outdoor voice or an indoor voice), sometimes with reminders.
- Be able to think about behavior, being cooperative and nonhurtful. Able to talk about the best ways to do things.
- Cooperate with other children, share and take turns.
- Connect emotions with facial expressions.
- Care about other children when they are hurt or upset. Describe other children's thoughtful behaviors.
- Listen to what other children want and make plans that take these desires into account.
- Wait for a turn without getting angry or grabbing. May lose interest in the object or activity before getting a turn.

Problem solving, conflict resolution

- Ask for help from another child or an adult to solve a problem.
- Make decisions and solve problems with other children, with adult help.
- Observe that others may have ideas or feelings that differ from the child's own.
- Be able to talk about ways to solve a problem or help another child, and keep in mind the personality and preferences of that child.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Interactions with adults

- Invite elders or guests to the home or classroom to share time and talk with your child. Have the child welcome and make them comfortable.

Interactions with peers

- Facilitate play in groups. Modify activities so that all children can join in. Invite older children to read to or play with younger ones.

Social behaviors

- Model fair ways to take turns and share.
- Model respect for diversity.
- Model comforting a child who is hurt or upset.
- Model behavior that encourages social and emotional expression.
- Use gestures and social cues to help the child understand the behavior expected (such as washing hands before eating), and use words to label the action.
- Give your child opportunities for dramatic play (let's pretend), to make up stories with other children and act in different roles.
- Encourage planning before playing in these games. (What will you be? What will you do?)

Problem solving, conflict resolution

- Give life examples, read or tell stories where people/characters share, take turns, cooperate and solve conflicts in a constructive way.
- Model and role play with your child ways to solve conflicts.
- Let your child solve problems when playing with friends, but be nearby to help out if needed.
- During conflicts, encourage your child to talk about what he or she wants and to plan ways to help everyone else get what they want. Encourage thinking of a number of possible solutions before agreeing on one.



“As a parent of three young children, I have discovered that a large part of the joy of parenting is the ability to value and embrace the differences in each of my children. Watching them learn and grow in different ways, displaying different skills, talents and strengths has been a fascinating and amazing journey.”

Lisa Favero

3. Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around

↓ Children may ...

Using the large muscles (gross motor skills)

- Move with purpose from one place to another using the whole body. This might include walking, running, marching, jumping, hopping or climbing. For child in a wheelchair, skills might include steering the chair into different spaces.
- Use both hands to catch. Throw with good aim. Kick an object.
- Show good balance and coordination, such as walking on a wide beam or line.
- Enjoy challenging him- or herself to try new and increasingly difficult activities.

Using the small muscles (fine motor skills)

- Open and close a blunt scissors with one hand, and cut a straight line.
- Show increasing skill with small materials. Screw and unscrew jar lids, and turn door handles. Use zippers, buttons and snaps. String large beads; fold paper; open and close containers.
- Work puzzles of up to 10 pieces.
- Write some letters or numbers.
- Spend time practicing skills that are difficult. Be aware of what he/she finds difficult and try to do it better.

Using the senses (sensorimotor skills)

- Delight in playing with materials of different texture (such as sand, water, fabric) and conditions (wet, dry, warm, cold).

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Using the large muscles (gross motor skills)

- Show your child new skills for full body movement.
- Give your child opportunities for in-place movement, such as bending, twisting, stretching and balancing.
- Play games with your child where you mimic each other's motions. Sing songs that identify parts of the body.
- Provide daily physical activity outdoors. Continue exploring natural places outdoors, such as parks.

Using the small muscles (fine motor skills)

- Give your child things to do with the hands, such as molding play dough or clay, gluing pieces of paper, sticking stickers to paper, tying, buttoning, zipping a zipper, stringing beads, drawing with a crayon, or folding paper for simple origami.
- Have a variety of tools available, such as paint brushes, crayons, markers, pencils, scissors, tape, string, glue, lacing cards, puzzles, boxes with latches, and containers with lids.
- Remind your child that learning new things takes practice. Stay close when your child is trying something hard.

Using the senses (sensorimotor skills)

- Give your child opportunities to learn through all of the senses (such as smelling flowers, feeling different textures of fabric, hearing an alarm clock, etc.) with eyes blindfolded or closed. Ask the child to describe what he/she experienced.
- Have your child taste and compare different fruits and vegetables.

4. Growing up healthy

↓ Children may ...

Daily living skills (personal health and hygiene)

- Participate easily and know what to do in routine activities (such as meal time, bed time).
- Communicate need to rest, drink and eat.
- Stay awake all day except, for some children, during nap time.
- Dress and undress, with only a little help needed.
- Decide, with a few prompts from adults, when to carry out self-help tasks (such as washing hands).
- Wash and dry hands before eating and after toileting, with some adult help.
- Cooperate while caregiver assists with brushing teeth.
- Cover mouth when coughing.

Nutrition and health

- Help prepare healthy snacks.
- Eat a variety of nutritious foods and eat independently. Try healthy foods from different cultures.
- Serve self at family-style meals.
- Know what self-care items are used for (such as comb and toothbrush).

Safety

- Identify trusted adults who can help in dangerous situations.
- Follow safety rules indoors and outdoors.
- Keep a distance from wildlife.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Daily living skills (personal health and hygiene)

- Guide your child in taking care of him- or herself, such as putting on a coat or wiping up spills.
- Show where your child's personal grooming items are.
- Give your child enough time to take care of personal hygiene.
- Make sure your child gets adequate sleep.

Nutrition and health

- Help your child recognize when he or she needs to rest.
- Engage your child in shopping for healthy food, and in making healthy meals and snacks.
- Talk with your child about food choices related to allergies, religion, culture, family choices and health.
- Take your child for regular dental, health, vision and hearing checkups, including immunizations. (See Child Profile <http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/childprofile/default.htm>)
- Limit screen time (television, DVDs, computers, tablets, games) at child care to 30 minutes per week, and at home to two hours per day. Consider following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation not to have a television in the child's bedroom. (See <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;126/5/1012>)

Safety

- Discuss clear rules with your child for safety in the city and/or rural areas, such as holding hands in a crowd, wearing a bike helmet, and always using a safety seat when in the car.
- Give life examples and read stories with themes about safety.
- Use dramatic or role play to practice safety. Practice fire, tsunami, flooding and earthquake drills, as appropriate. Explain how to stay safe around water, matches, firearms, etc.
- Talk with your child about the difference between a pet and a wild animal. Provide safety rules for wild animals, and explain that people need to observe at a distance.
- Provide a safe environment.
- Explain what good and bad touching are. Let the child know it is important to tell a trusted adult if another child or adult is using bad touching.

5. Communicating (literacy)

Note: Communication skills begin before birth. Language is an important part of cultural identity. Language skills begin in the child's home language(s). Tribal children may be learning their tribal language at the same time as a home language. Bilingual and bicultural families may speak more than one language at home.

↓ Children may ...

Speaking and listening (language development)

- Know and use several hundred words in home language. Use new words on own.
- Use words to describe actions (such as “running fast”) and emotions (such as happy, sad, tired and scared).
- Talk in sentences of five or six words.
- Know when it is appropriate to ask questions and whom to ask. Ask questions to get information or clarification.
- Remember and follow directions involving two or three steps, including steps that are not related (such as “Please pick up your toys and put on your shoes”).
- Remember all parts and respond correctly to a request (such as “Bring me the green towel”).
- Tell some details of a recent event in sequence.
- Tell a short make-believe story, with adult help.
- Listen to others and respond in a group discussion for a short period. Remember what was said and gain information through listening.
- State own point of view, and likes and dislikes using words, gestures and/or pictures.
- Join in and make up songs, chants, rhymes and games that play with the sounds of language (such as clapping out the rhythm).
- Sing a song or say a poem from memory.

Reading

- Know some basic rules of grammar (such as correctly using “me” and “I”).
- Understand that alphabet letters are a special kind of picture and that they have names. Begin to identify individual letters of the alphabet (or characters of the home language) in text.
- Understand which symbols are letters and which are numbers.
- Identify three or more letters with their sound at the beginning of a word (such as “day,” “dog” and “David” all begin with “d”).
- Recognize some signs and symbols in the classroom and community (such as a Stop sign), and use them for information.
- Begin to recite some words in familiar books from memory.
- Know that print has meaning.
- Recognize own name in print.
- Begin to understand the order in which a page is read (for example, English is read from left to right and top to bottom).

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Speaking and listening (language development)

- Have a conversation with your child about what the child is doing, listening to and seeing.
- Model respect for the person speaking and for different languages.
- Recognize and explain that some cultures strongly value verbal communication and others place more value on nonverbal communication.
- Use new words in context and explain what they mean.
- When working with a child learning in two languages, use pictures, props and gestures, as needed.
- Play games with your child that require listening and following simple directions that change during the game.
- Do a project with your child that involves following directions in order, such as using a cookbook.
- Use props and role play to encourage your child to participate in group conversations.
- Help your child make up silly songs and chants.
- Teach your child simple words in other languages, such as the words for “hello” and “friend.” Introduce songs, rhymes, chants and finger plays in two or more languages.

Reading

- Read, or tell stories or give life examples to your child every day. Stop partway through and ask, “What just happened?” and “What do you think will happen next?”
- Tell or read stories from diverse cultures.
- Ask your child to point to a real-world object (cereal box, signs) and point out the letters and/or words.
- Sing word songs with your child, leaving out a word or a letter that you replace with a clap. Play letter games, such as picking a letter and pointing to all the objects that begin with that letter.
- Offer pictures or a picture book and ask your child to use them to tell you a story.
- Read alphabet books and solve alphabet puzzles together.
- Take your child to the library, if available. Help find books about the child's interests (such as dogs, trucks, cooking, etc.).

↓ Children may ...

Reading *continued*

- Tell you what is going to happen next in a story. Make up an ending.
- Identify a variety of printed material (such as books, newspapers, magazines, cereal boxes).
- Use actions to show ideas from stories, signs, pictures, etc.
- Retell more complicated, familiar stories from memory.

Writing

- Make marks, scribbles or letter-like shapes and identify them as words. Use pretend writing activities during play.
- Use letter-like symbols to make lists, letters and stories or to label pictures.
- Attempt to copy one or more letters of the alphabet.
- Begin to print or copy own name, and identify at least some of the letters.
- Explore writing letters in different languages.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Reading *continued*

- Help your child make picture books using pictures from magazines or photos of your child, family and friends.
- Introduce your child to a variety of reading materials (such as poetry, folk tales, picture books, magazines).
- Ask your child to tell a story, while you write it out to read back later.

Writing

- Print your child's name on things and help your child try to print it.
- Help your child label his or her drawings.
- Ask your child to draw a story or idea. Then write out the child's description of the drawing to show to him/her.

“Johnny” was the youngest of five children. He, his mother and siblings were abused by the mother’s boyfriend. When Johnny started coming to our program, he wouldn’t speak or look at our staff, but just sit quietly in a corner with his hands in his pockets. If he did play, it was alone or next to other children, never making eye contact. Johnny’s classroom had two male teachers. After the first year, Johnny would smile at the teachers but only speak a word or two. He still didn’t play with very many children. He would make eye contact but quickly look away. After the second year, Johnny started to smile and hug the teachers daily. He would be excited when he came to class to run and play with a couple of friends he’d made. We believe Johnny has able to restore his trust in men by having the teachers as role models in his life.”

Tracy Whitley, Lead Teacher/Daycare Supervisor,
Multicultural Child & Family Hope Center, Tacoma



6. Learning about my world

↓ Children may ...

Knowledge (cognition)

- Ask adults questions to get information (as appropriate in the family's culture).
- Describe likes and interests.
- Apply new information or words to an activity or interaction.
- Build on and adapt to what the child learned before. For example, change the way of stacking blocks after a tower continues to fall.
- Be able to explain what he or she has done and why, including any changes made to his/ her plans.
- Seek to understand cause and effect ("If I do this, why does that happen?").
- Understand the ideas of "same" and "different."
- Recognize objects, places and ideas by symbols (for example, recognize which is the men's room and which is the women's by looking at the stick figure symbols).
- Name more than three colors.
- Group some everyday objects that go together (such as shoe and sock, pencil and paper).
- Predict what comes next in the day when there is a consistent schedule.

Math

- Count to 20 and beyond. Count 10 or more objects accurately.
- Give the next number in the sequence 1 through 10.
- Count out 10 items; may use fingers, body parts or other counters, as used in the child's home culture. Count and group things by number.
- Compare groups of up to 10 objects.
- Find the sum when joining two sets of up to five objects.
- Identify by sight how many are in a small group of objects, up to four.
- Use measuring tools in play (such as a ruler, measuring cups, or parts of the body).
- Match and sort simple shapes (circles, squares, triangles).
- Compare size (such as, "I'm as tall as the yellow bookshelf.") Describe objects using size words (big, small, tall, short).
- Compare two objects using comparison words such as smaller, faster and heavier.
- Order three objects by one characteristic, (such as from smallest to largest).
- Work puzzles with up to 10 pieces.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Knowledge (cognition)

- Use rich vocabulary, describe what you are or the child is doing, seeing, hearing. Mention colors, similarities and differences, etc., in normal conversations.
- Talk with your child about things he or she is learning to do. Be encouraging. Ask your child to tell you how he or she is learning to do something new.
- Show how to do something, then give your child a chance to try it.
- Tell your child when something new is like something he or she already knows how to do.
- Play matching games with your child. Ask the child to find things that are the same and different.
- Play a game with your child to gather and group items that go together, such as shoes and socks, or flowers and vases. Talk about why they go together. Then suggest that your child think of a different way to organize these things.
- Help your child develop problem solving skills. Help your child identify the problem and different possible solutions. Then talk about which solution is the best one. Ask your child to try it and talk about whether it worked. Ask: What else could you try?
- Take time to answer your child's "why" questions. If you don't know the answer, say you don't know and help your child find the answer in a book, from another adult or on the Internet.

Math

- Use number names to say the number of an object ("There are two trees").
- Ask your child to count out things to put on the table for a meal or the items in your grocery cart.
- Talk aloud while doing simple math computations (such as counting the number of snacks for the number of children).
- Help your child apply numbers and counting to daily life (such as measuring ingredients for cooking).
- Have your child compare the size of a small animal (such as a bird) with the size of a part of the child's body (fist, arm, etc.).
- Play games that use position and size words (first, last, big, little, top, bottom).
- Have your child compare two small sets of objects and decide whether one group is more, less or the same as the other.
- Involve your child in ways to mark the change from one activity to another (such as clapping, ringing a bell, singing a particular song).
- Use words like "first," "second," and "finally" when talking about everyday activities. This will help your child learn about the sequence of events.

“One day when I was driving and my 4-year-old granddaughter was with me, she suddenly said, ‘I love you, grandma!’ I replied, ‘And I love you baby, all the way to the sky.’ She replied, ‘I am not a bird, grandma!’ I said, kind of confused, ‘What do you mean you’re not a bird?’ She said, ‘I don’t have a long nose and long arms like a bird.’ ‘Oh,’ I responded, ‘you mean you don’t have a long beak and wings?’ And she said, ‘Ya! I don’t have a long beak and wings, so I’m not a bird to go to the sky!’ ”

Anna Macias



↓ Children may ...

Math continued

- Create own patterns with a variety of materials. Describe what the pattern is.
- Follow simple directions for position (beside, next to, between, etc.)

Science

- Ask questions and identify ways to find answers. Try out these activities and think about what to do next to learn more.
- Predict what will happen in science and nature experiences. Consider whether these predictions were right, and explain why or why not.
- Use tools to explore the environment (a magnifying glass, magnets, sifters, etc.).
- Measure sand or water using a variety of containers.
- Use one sense (such as smell) to experience something and make one or two comments to describe this.
- Investigate the properties of things in nature. Begin to understand what various life forms need in order to grow and live.
- Take responsibility in taking care of living things, such as feeding the fish, watering plants, etc.
- Talk about changes in the weather and seasons, using common words, such as rainy and windy.
- Look at where the sun is in the morning, afternoon, evening and night.
- Take walks outside and gather different types of leaves, name colors he/she sees outdoors.
- Participate (with adult direction) in activities to preserve the environment, such as disposing of litter properly, saving paper and cans to be recycled, etc.

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Math continued

- Count down the days to an event (such as by crossing out days on a calendar) to develop awareness of the calendar.
- Tell your child what year it is now and what it will be next year, and show how they are written.
- Help your child become familiar with a clock face, and the numbers on a clock. Explain how the numbers relate to times of day (morning, lunchtime, afternoon, etc.).

Science

- Ask your child to use his/her senses to make observations outdoors and share those observations.
- Share simple weather predictions with your child (today will be hot, cold, sunny, rainy, etc.).
- Have your child use a magnifying glass to look at leaves, his/her fingers, etc.
- Engage your child in cooking, planting seeds and other activities that show cause and effect. Ask your child to describe what is happening and talk about why.
- Have your child conduct simple experiments (such as which object will sink in a pail of water and which will float).
- Fill cups with water to see how many are needed to fill a larger container, such as a pitcher.
- Have your child match pictures of trees, plants, rocks, flowers, fallen logs, etc., with actual items in nature.
- Give your child opportunities through exploration, looking at pictures, etc., to learn that there are many kinds of plants and animals.
- Help your child gather things in nature (such as leaves, rocks, etc.) and encourage sorting of these objects. Help your child understand rules of collecting natural objects so that removing them does not impact the environment or other living things in a negative way.
- Show your child how to sort items for recycling and explain how this supports a healthy environment and community. Give your child the chance to do other things that promote a sense of contributing, such as planting seeds, or turning off lights when leaving a room.

↓ Children may ...

Social Studies

- Describe family members and understand simple relationships (such as, “Marika is my sister.”)
- Adopt the roles of different family members during dramatic play. Plan what each role does and then enact it.
- Draw own family, as the child understands it.
- Ask questions about similarities and differences in other people (such as language, hair style, clothing).
- Talk about the past and the future, such as what the child did this morning and what his or her family will do this weekend.
- Recognize some people in the community by their jobs (such as grocery store clerk, bus driver, doctor).
- Enjoy taking the roles of different jobs in pretend play.
- Talk about what the child wants to be when he or she grows up.
- Play store or restaurant, with empty food containers, receipts, etc.
- Match objects to their normal locations (for example, a stove in the kitchen, a bed in the bedroom, a tree in the forest).
- Recognize where he or she is when traveling in familiar areas, most of the time.
- Recognize that roads have signs or a name, and houses and apartments usually have numbers to help identify their locations.

Arts

- Show an increasing ability to use art materials safely and with purpose.
- Understand that different art forms (such as dance, music or painting) can be used to tell a story.
- Express self through art and music. Take pride in showing others own creations (“Look at my picture.”)
- Use a variety of materials to create representations of people and things (such as drawing a person showing two to four body parts).
- Show creativity and imagination.
- Hum or move to the rhythm of recorded music.
- Ask to sing a particular song.
- Remember the words to a familiar song.
- Enjoy participating in a variety of music activities, such as listening, singing, finger plays, chants, playing musical instruments, games and performances.
- Enjoy learning songs and dances from other cultures.
- Watch other children dance; try to mimic the movements.
- Express feelings through movement and dancing in various musical tempos and styles.
- Perform simple elements of drama (such as audience, actors).
- Participate in dramatic play activities (such as acting out familiar activities, stories or events from own life).

↓ Ideas to try with children ...

Social Studies

- Read stories about different kinds of families and talk about the child’s own family.
- As you go through a day, talk with your child about all the people you see doing jobs that help others.
- Use group time (such as family dinner or circle time) to discuss the idea of community and how we depend on each other.
- Encourage your child to include many community roles in games. Ask your child to talk before playing about what each role will do and why,
- Communicate with your child about other cultures in the community. When possible, go to community festivals, community centers, cultural exchanges, etc.
- Model treating others with respect (such as including everyone in a game, calling others by their correct name, etc.).
- Give life examples, read or tell stories to your child about the place where you live.

Arts

- Give your child items that build imagination, such as dress-up clothes, cooking utensils, blocks, etc..
- Take your child to see murals or other community artwork. Explore together the patterns, shapes and colors.
- Provide creative art opportunities with a variety of materials.
- Tell stories and ask your child to draw them.
- Dance with your child. Take turns copying each other’s moves. Try doing this in front of a mirror.
- Give opportunities for the child to experience songs, language and dance from the family’s traditions and other cultures.
- Involve your child in a variety of musical activities (such as singing, dancing, using rhythm instruments) from own and other cultures. Introduce your child to cultural and popular dances.
- Help your child use the body to tell a story or express an idea.
- Help your child act out emotions and characters (such as a happy puppy, an upset cook).
- Take your child to see performances of dance and music at local schools or in the community, and to see people creating arts and crafts, if possible.

See also Parent Help 123 on child development and school readiness, <http://www.parenthelp123.org/families/child-development>, and more in the Information Resources section.

DIFFERENCES IN DEVELOPMENT

As a parent, you know your child best.

Every child grows and develops at his or her own pace. It is important to talk with your child's healthcare provider at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next. A developmental screening will help you know if your child is developing similarly with other children the same age. It is important to tell your child's healthcare provider if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay. Please make sure to discuss your concerns if :

By age 5, your child:

- Doesn't show a wide range of emotions
- Shows extreme behavior (unusually fearful, aggressive, shy or sad)
- Is unusually withdrawn and not active
- Is easily distracted, has trouble focusing on one activity for more than 5 minutes
- Doesn't respond to people, or responds only superficially
- Can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Doesn't play a variety of games and activities
- Can't give first and last name
- Doesn't draw pictures
- Doesn't talk about daily activities or experiences
- Doesn't use plurals or past tense properly
- Can't brush teeth, wash and dry hands, or get undressed without help
- Loses skills he or she once had

For more information:

Talk to your child's health care provider about your concerns. You can also call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588. This hotline can tell you about free developmental screening and connect you to your local school district. Your local school district can tell you if your child might be eligible to have an evaluation to determine the need for special education (for ages 3 to 5 years).

The Family Health Hotline can also provide information about immunizations, state-sponsored health insurance and other resources.

You can also find information from the state Department of Early Learning at <http://www.del.wa.gov/development/Default.aspx> or http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/esit/docs/PrescreenChart_English.pdf.

Parent Help 123 offers information on child development and school readiness: <http://www.parenthelp123.org/families/child-development>

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at 1-800-CDC-INFO or at www.cdc.gov/concerned also offers information. Or see CDC's *Milestone Moments* brochure: http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/MilestoneMomentsEng508.pdf

For children who may be eligible for services offered by the local school district (Part B): Family involvement has a positive impact on educational outcomes for all students. To support family involvement in special education, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction provides web visitors with user-friendly information and resources on various special education topics. Visit the website at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/default.aspx> to find information and guidance for families on “What To Do If You Think Your Child Needs Special Education.” Also see the “Differences in Development” section for Age 5 and Kindergarten in these Guidelines for the steps involved in a special education evaluation.

ALIGNMENT OF LEARNING, BIRTH – 3rd GRADE

Young children learn best when new learning builds on what they already know and it relates to their lives. As children grow and learn from birth through 3rd grade, they build essential skills and perceptions of themselves as learners. These skills form the foundation for their success in school and in life. For this reason, there is a growing effort in Washington to align learning from birth through 3rd grade. The goal is to make sure that learning at each level builds on what came before and prepares children to meet new challenges.

What parents, caregivers and teachers can do: School districts and early learning programs and coalitions across the state are exploring ways to align learning from birth through 3rd grade. Parents, caregivers and teachers can learn more by connecting with their local early learning coalitions, or checking with the local school district. Most importantly, parents, caregivers and teachers can build relationships among the adults supporting children’s growth and development. Relationships pave the way for alignment.

Parents can also talk with their child’s caregiver or preschool teacher about connecting with the local elementary school, and with the school about connecting with local early learning programs. Together, schools and early learning programs can align their strategies into a continuum of learning.

Every day, parents can support their children’s ongoing learning by reading to their child.

To learn about local early learning coalitions in Washington, see <http://www.thrivebyfivewa.org/earlylearningcoalitions.html>. For information on early learning and schools, see <http://www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning/default.aspx>.

WASHINGTON KINDERGARTEN INVENTORY OF DEVELOPING SKILLS (WaKIDS)

Children need to be ready for school, but schools and teachers also need to be ready for the children who come to their classrooms. The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, or WaKIDS, is a process that addresses both components of “school readiness” to support children’s smooth transition into the K–12 system.

WaKIDS includes three parts:

- Family connection – The family and kindergarten teacher meet and share information about the child who’ll be entering kindergarten.
- Whole child assessment – The kindergarten teacher observes children during school and uses a checklist to get an idea of where the child is in four areas of development: social/emotional; literacy; cognitive; and physical.
- Collaboration – Child care providers, preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers meet and share information about the children entering kindergarten, and about what and how they teach.

WaKIDS was implemented statewide on a voluntary basis in state-funded full-day kindergarten classrooms in school-year 2011-12. Participants included approximately 12,000 children and 796 teachers in state-funded full-day kindergarten schools and partner schools that provided their own funding.

Beginning in the 2012-13 school year, all state-funded full-day kindergarten schools will use the WaKIDS process. By 2014-15 the process is scheduled to be expanded to include all incoming kindergarteners.

For more information, see <http://www.k12.wa.us/WaKIDS/>
