Ages and Stages: Infants and Toddlers
Why Learn About Developmental Stages?

• To become the best parents we can.
• It makes a child’s life easier and happier.
• To have appropriate expectations for children.
• So children can feel good about their capabilities.
Developmental Stages

There are four things we know about child development:

- The brain of young children is still developing.
- Each stage has certain tasks that must be accomplished to move on to the next stage.
Developmental Stages

• The expectations we have for children determines whether childhood will be a nurturing experience.
• Children are unique and each child has individual capabilities.
Primary Areas of Development: Physical Development

- As children get older they get bigger.
- Their gross motor and fine motor skills increase.
Primary Areas of Development: Intellectual Development

- Children learn more the older they get.
- Stimulation is necessary to help children’s brains develop.
- Without stimulation, intellectual abilities may lag behind or fail to develop.
Primary Areas of Development: Language Development

• As children grow older, their communication skills increase.
• Their ability to use words, phrases, and sentences helps them gain mastery of their environment.
Primary Areas of Development: Social/Emotional Development

• The way we treat children and the care they receive affect the way they mature.
• The ability for children to use their physical, intellectual, and language skills depends on how well children develop socially and emotionally.
Developmental Stage: Infancy

- For years, psychologists thought that babies were incompetent.
- Today we know this is untrue.
- Very young infants can begin to make sense of their new environment.
- Infant’s skills increase rapidly during the 1st year.
Developmental Stage: Infancy

- Physical Development
  - The major part of the infant’s first year is devoted to survival.
  - The infant is completely helpless at birth and is totally dependent upon the parents for help.
  - Being fed, held, touched, looked at, and talked to have significant impact on the growth of the child.
What Can Babies Do?
Physical Development

0-6 months

• Automatic reflexes such as hand-to-mouth.
• Focus on objects 8-15 inches away.
• Make cooing, crying, and grunting sounds.
• Will lift head when on stomach.
• Suck fingers.
• May be pulled slowly by hands to a sitting position.
• May be starting to teethe.

7-12 months

• Sit up without support for a short time.
• Begin to crawl by pulling self forward.
• Can pull self up to stand.
• Feed self pieces of food with hands.
• Start practicing walking but continues crawling.
• Begin a tottering walk with legs wide apart.
• Sit independently on hard surface.
Developmental Stage: Infancy

• Intellectual Development
  • Physical and intellectual development are closely related to one another.
  • The child learns about the world through exploration of objects, by moving around, and through interactions with the parents.
  • The behavior of infants during the first year helps them understand, adapt, and interact effectively with their world.
What Can Babies Do?

Intellectual Development

0-6 months

• Cries to have needs met.
• Recognizes familiar voices or faces.
• Responds to strangers by crying or staring.
• Follows moving objects with eyes.
• Likes repetition of simple acts like opening and closing hands.
• Baby still cries but also laughs out loud.

7-12 months

• Can imitate sounds; watches your mouth with interest when talking.
• Child repeats an act to observe change in the environment.
• Responds to and imitates facial expressions of others.
• Child uses responses to solve problems and to achieve some goal.
Developmental Stage: Infancy

• Language Development
  • Language develops slowly during the first year of life.
  • An adult’s vocabulary is largely determined by the speech they heard in the first three years of life.
  • The first two years are the most important.
  • Parents who talk and respond to their babies help facilitate language development.
What Can Babies Do?

Language Development

0-12 months

- Respond to speech by looking at speaker.
- Make crying and non crying sounds.
- Babble by repeating some vowel and consonant sounds.
- Attempt to imitate sounds.
- Begin to understand simple words or phrases such as “No, Come, Bring.”
Developmental Stage: Infancy

• Social and Emotional Development
  • The infant struggles with learning to trust or mistrust himself and others in his environment.
  • The degree to which a child develops trust depends on the quality of care the child receives.
Developmental Stage: Infancy

- The child whose needs are met develops a belief that the world is a safe place, and that people are dependable and helpful.
- When children who do not have their needs met, they develop mistrust.
What Can Babies Do?

Social/Emotional Development

0-6 months

• Likes high-pitched voices and will usually quiet down when they hear them.
• Smiles spontaneously.
• Loves to be played with and likes to be picked up.
• Responds differently to strangers than to familiar persons.
• May give joyful kicks and gurgle and laugh to engage parent in play.

7-12 months

• May become attached to a particular toy.
• Beginning to learn to be independent. May go away from you, but will quickly return.
• Will express frustration for failure to master a task.
• Loves an audience and will repeat any behavior that gets attention.
• Tantrums may occur.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

• Life with toddlers is rarely dull. Their new abilities make them both exciting and frustrating for parents.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

- **Physical Development**
  - Although growth in the second and third years is slower than infancy, it still occurs at a rapid pace.
What Can Toddlers Do?
Gross Motor Skills

12-24 months
• Can usually walk backward.
• Loves to carry things, especially big things.
• Likes to push or pull toys
• Loves to throw things.
• Seats self in child’s chair.
• Moves to music.

25-36 months
• Runs, jumps, climbs.
• Stands on chair, walks upstairs, crawls downstairs backward.
• Kicks at ball, loves pounding, tugging, lugging, and dumping.
• Climbs small ladder.
• Walks on tiptoes.
• Stands on one foot with aid.
What Can A Toddler Do?

Fine Motor Skills

12-24 months
• Combines use of several objects.
• Begins to use spoon to eat; can drink from a cup.
• Turns several pages at a time.
• Make a straight stroke with pencil or crayons instead of just a scribble.
• Turn a door knob.
• Build a tower of many blocks.

25-36 months
• Turns single pages.
• Drinks from a cup without help.
• Removes shoes, pants, socks, sweater, unzips large zipper.
• Snips with scissors.
• Holds crayons with thumb and fingers instead of fists.
• Paints with wrist action.
• Uses one hand consistently in most activities.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

- **Intellectual Development**
  - Increased exploration leads to activities that expand the child’s understanding of the world.
  - Toddlers begin to understand that each object has an individual use.
  - Such understanding leads to exploration of these objects and how they work.
  - Toddlers at this stage have been referred to as “little scientists.”
What Can A Toddler Do?

Intellectual Development

12-24 months
- Curious about textures.
- Imitates the actions and words of adults.
- Attracted to water and to toilets and enjoy playing in the bathroom.
- Recognizes difference between the concept of you and me.
- Has limited attention span; accomplishes primary learning through exploration of the environment.

25-36 months
- Responds to simple directions such as, “Give me the block,” or “Get your shoes.”
- Recognizes self in mirror; can talk briefly about what he is doing.
- Has limited sense of time; vaguely knows idea of past and future and knows such terms as “yesterday” and “tonight,” although they may be used incorrectly.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

- **Language Development**
  - Babies begin to produce a few basic words at about one year of life.
  - By 24 months, most children are speaking phrases and have a wide range of words.
  - A two year old has a vocabulary of perhaps 50 words, which increases to about 900 words by the time the child is three.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

- Many factors contribute to the development of language in a child:
  - A strong, emotional relationship with the parents.
  - The amount and quality of time spent together.
  - The amount of talking, asking questions, and responding to what the child says.
What Can Toddlers Do?
Language Development
12-36 months

• Says first meaningful words.
• Uses single word plus a gesture.
• Refers to self by name; uses “my” or “mine” to indicate possession.
• Likes to talk to self; replaces baby talk with sentences; likes to repeat words.
• Joins words together in two-word phrases.
• Asks “what” and “where” questions.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

- **Social/Emotional Development**
  - Parents of toddlers have an challenging job.
  - The child continues to be dependent, but at the same time is developing into an independent person.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

• The second and third years of a child’s life focus on the emergence of autonomy.
• This autonomy is built upon the child’s new motor and mental abilities. The child takes pride in his new accomplishments and wants to do everything himself.
• It is important during this stage to allow the child to express autonomy.
What Can Toddlers Do?
Language Development

12-36 months

- Toddler likes to say the word “no” to express autonomy.
- Toddler wants to do things by himself, such as eat or dress.
- Begins to show interest in using the toilet like adults.
- Likes to play near other children even though they may not play together.
- Likes to play dress-up to imitate parent’s behavior.
- May want to hold a favorite toy or blanket or suck thumb to comfort self.
- May have an imaginary friend.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

Special Problems

• **Separation From Parents**
  - Crying at separation is normal.
  - Throwing temper tantrums at separation is a sign of possible problems.
  - Children feel fear that can turn into panic during actual separation.
  - Feelings of security need to be developed, and assurances that the parent will not abandon the child need to be expressed.
Developmental Stage: Toddler
Special Problems

- Sometimes children are comforted by having a picture of the parent or an item belonging to the parent to hold until the parent returns.
- Some children may comfort themselves with a favorite blanket, toy, or their thumb.
- Never threaten to leave a child as a form of discipline.
- Be sure to say goodbye to your child before you leave.
- Do not “sneak out” to avoid upsetting the child. This only makes the child fearful.
Developmental Stage: Toddler Special Problems

• **Assertiveness**
  • As the toddler becomes independent, the child will become more assertive.
  • “No” becomes a common word. “I want,” “I need,” and “More” are other phrases and words frequently expressed in the toddler years.
Developmental Stage: Toddler Special Problems

- Toddlers may feel frustrated and angry when he or she cannot accomplish a goal.
- When parents set limits, toddlers may express their anger by yelling, crying, having a temper tantrum, holding their breath, or throwing objects.
How To Handle Challenging Behaviors

• Ignore undesirable behavior that is harmless.
• Praise desirable behavior.
• Use time-out or loss of a privilege for undesirable behavior that cannot be ignored.

• As children become more capable and competent at achieving their goals, the tantrums will decrease.
Developmental Stage: Toddler

• Parents need to help a child explore and grow during this stage.
  • Provide a safe environment for the child to explore.
  • Provide a creative environment for the child to explore.
  • Be involved in the child's exploration.