

Learning Portfolio



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MATHEMATICS

- M 1** Number Sense
- M 2** Spatial Awareness
- M 3** Shapes
- M 4** Measurement
- M 5** Patterns
- M 6** Classification



SCIENCE

- SCI 1** Investigation & Inquiry
- SCI 2** Natural & Earth Science
- SCI 3** Physical Science
- SCI 4** Technology



SOCIAL STUDIES

- SS 1** Culture & Community
- SS 2** Civics & Economics
- SS 3** Geography
- SS 4** History & Sense of Time



CREATIVE ARTS

- CA 1** Music
- CA 2** Dance & Movement
- CA 3** Visual Arts
- CA 4** Drama



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL

- SED 1** Self-Awareness
- SED 2** Self-Regulation
- SED 3** Social Relationships
- SED 4** Problem-Solving



APPROACHES TO LEARNING

- ATL 1** Attention & Persistence
- ATL 2** Flexibility & Play



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- PD 1** Gross Motor
- PD 2** Fine Motor
- PD 3** Safety
- PD 4** Personal Care
- PD 5** Nutrition



LANGUAGE & LITERACY

- LLD 1** Listening
- LLD 2** Communication
- LLD 3** Phonological Awareness
- LLD 4** Alphabetic Knowledge
- LLD 5** Concepts of Print
- LLD 6** Reading Comprehension
- LLD 7** Writing

1, 1.5, 2 & 3-inch Binder Spines



Learning Portfolio



Learning Portfolio



Learning Portfolio



Learning Portfolio



1/3 Tab Inserts

Welcome
Assessed Activities
Thematic Studies
Social & Emotional
Approaches to Learning
Language & Literature
Physical Development
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
Creative Arts

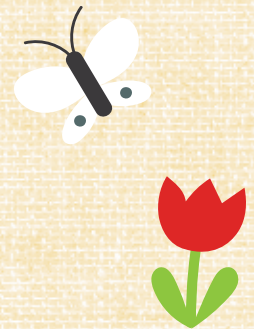
1/5 Tab Inserts

Welcome
Assessed Activities
Thematic Studies
Social & Emotional
Approaches to Learning
Language & Literature
Physical Development
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
Creative Arts



Welcome to Your Child's Learning Portfolio

Your child's learning story is unique and brilliant.



This portfolio includes work samples created by your child as they participated in many activities and projects throughout the year. Please enjoy looking at your child's creative expression of their ideas and growth of knowledge.

The Experience Early Learning 36 skills are organized under 8 domains (or categories) of learning. These include:



Individual children develop at a unique pace.

There are 8 benchmarks for each skill. All children develop at their own rate and age is not always an indicator of skill level. Development is dynamic. Children may develop more quickly in one domain than in another. Most importantly as you look through this portfolio, see your child's potential and support and celebrate their unique strengths. Set goals for continuous growth.

Infant Birth – 18-months Benchmark 1-2		Toddlers 18-months – 3-years Benchmarks 2 - 3		Preschool 3 – 5-years Benchmarks 3 - 5		School-Age 5 - 8 years Benchmarks 6 - 8	
Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8

See your Developmental Continuum of Skills for benchmarks for each domain and skill.

The chart is titled "Developmental Continuum of Skills" and is organized by age group: Infant, Toddler, Preschool, and Primary. It lists 36 skills across four domains: Social & Emotional, Approaches to Learning, Language & Literacy, and Creative Arts. Each skill is associated with a specific skill code (e.g., SED 1.1, ATL 1.1) and a detailed description of the skill's components and developmental progression. The chart is divided into 8 benchmarks for each skill, corresponding to the benchmarks in the table above.

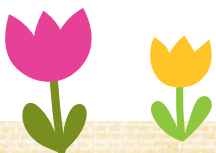
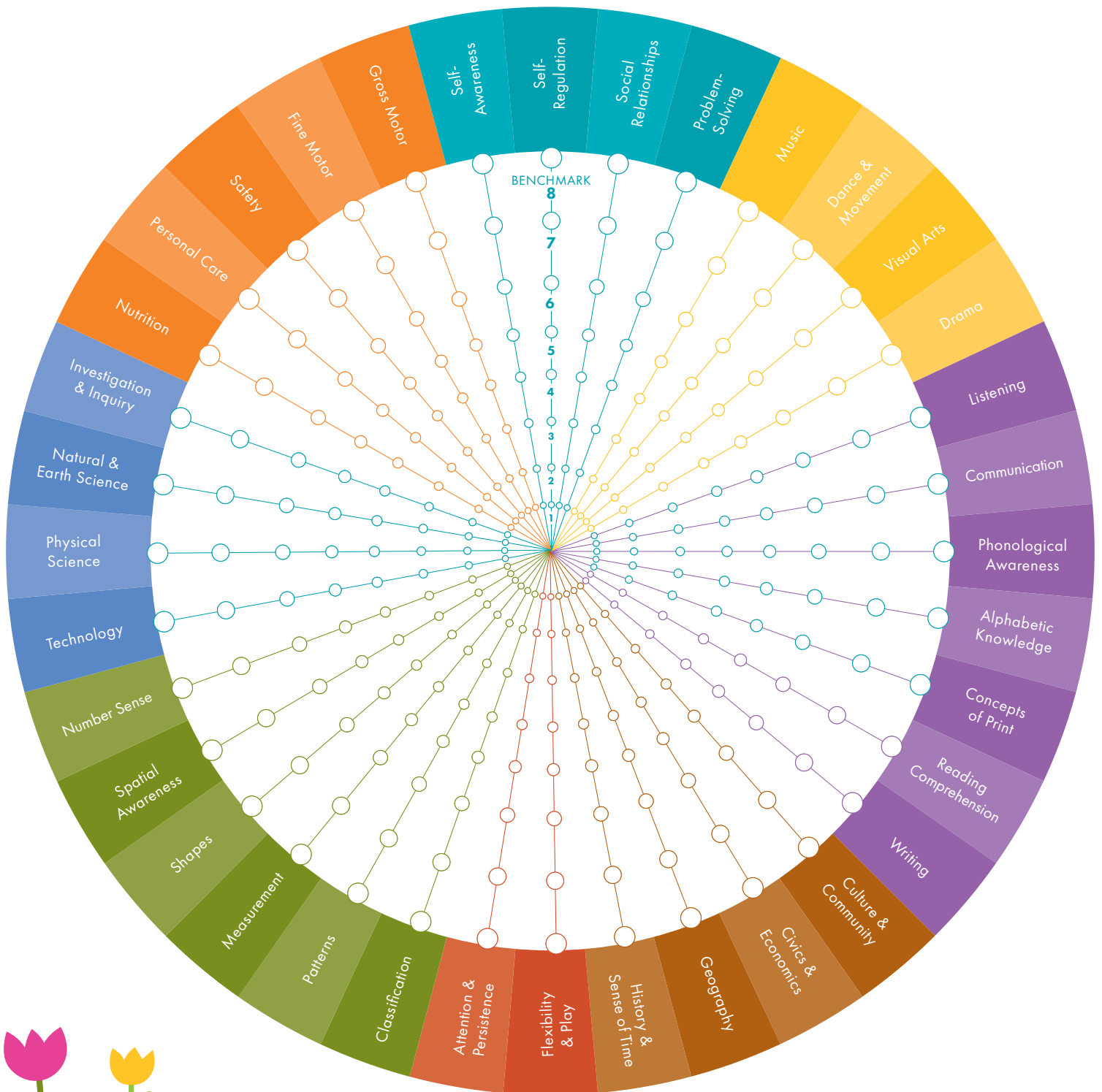
Your Child's Knowledge Web

This graph shows a holistic overview of your child's development during the school year.

First Assessment: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___

Second: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___

Third: ___/___/___ to ___/___/___



Assessment Planning Guides

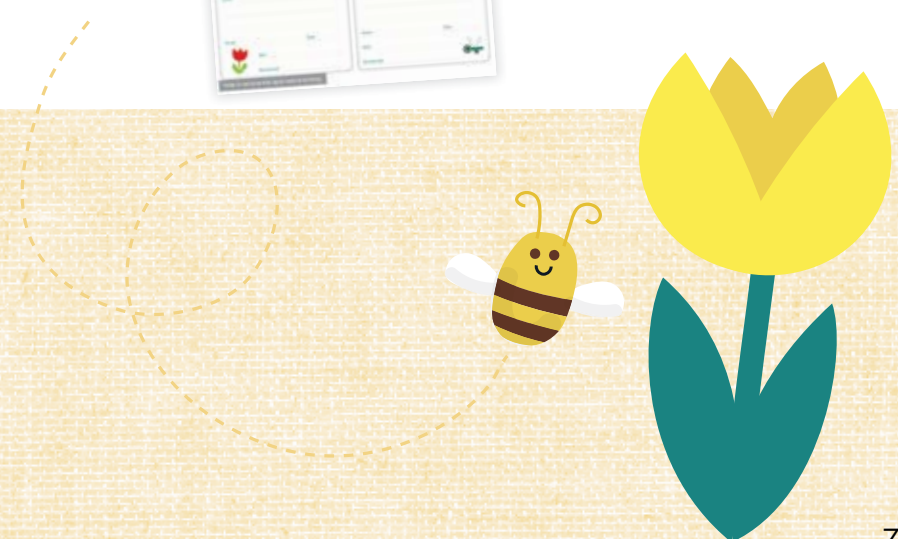
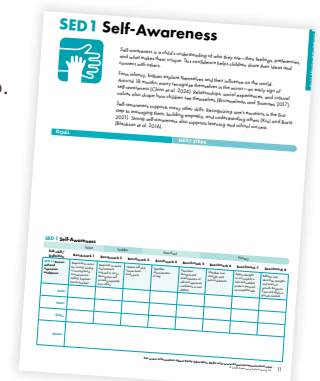
Your child's teacher has observed and documented your child's learning every day. They follow an Assessment Planning Guide which features focus skills within a designated learning game of the day.

To learn more about the featured skills and why they are important for your child's development, read the skill definitions and summaries on the Skill Pages in this portfolio.

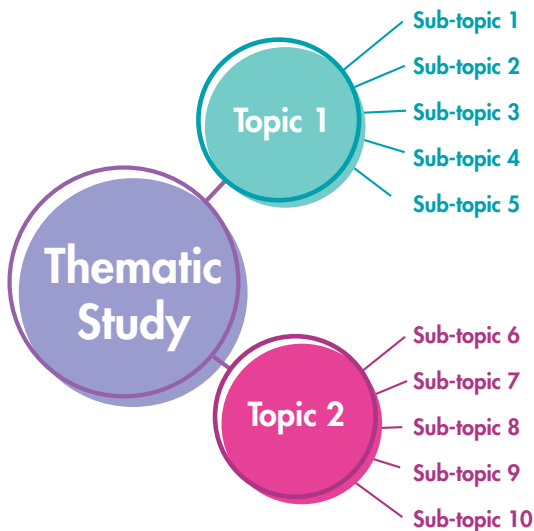
After playing the game with your child, consider how your observations compare and contrast to the teacher's observations. Communicate with your teacher about your experience playing these games at home and set learning goals for your child together.

Activity Stickers* can be attached to the back of daily art projects to identify the child, the skills that were assessed while they created their art piece and record other notes from their teacher.

The **Photo Keepsake*** can include a photo of the activity and observations from the child's teacher for the skills that were practiced during the activity.



Thematic Studies



Themes help children construct knowledge and build connections through real experiences.

Each month, your child explores a new thematic study through music, art, dramatic play and STEAM projects.

With Experience Curriculum, all ages investigate the same monthly thematic study, but in age-appropriate and meaningful ways. Over the next three years, your child will explore a broad range of themes and gain a comprehensive understanding of our community, nature and diverse world. The thematic studies that your child explored this year are checked off below.



Me and My Community

- Art & Architecture
- Camping
- Community Helpers
- Fables & Folktales
- Families & Pets
- Friends & Feelings
- Health & Fitness
- Homes & Habitats
- Human Body
- Nursery Rhymes
- Sights & Sounds
- Superheroes
- Transportation



My Natural Environment

- Baby Animals
- Bees & Butterflies
- Birds
- Bugs & Crawly Things
- EcoVenture
- Farming
- Fossils, Rocks & Dinosaurs
- Gardening
- Orchards & Harvest
- Science Lab
- Water
- Weather & Seasons



My World of Diversity

- Animals Around the World
- Arctic Tundra/Mountains
- Desert
- Grasslands (Safari)
- Islands
- Oceans
- Ponds
- Rainforest
- Space & Sky
- Woodlands
- World Passport



Social & Emotional Development



From birth, children build trust and security through warm, caring relationships. These early bonds help them manage feelings, form friendships and explore the world with confidence (Mahoney et al. 2021).

Children who feel safe and supported are more likely to do well in school, build healthy relationships and thrive later in life (Immordino-Yang et al. 2018; Greenberg 2025; Hosokawa et al. 2024; Jones et al. 2015).

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes four Social & Emotional Development skills and 12 sub-skills.

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes 4 Social & Emotional Development skills:

SED 1 Self-Awareness

Recognizes self and expresses confidence, communicating needs and preferences, completing tasks independently and identifying emotions.

SED 2 Self-Regulation

Manages feelings and behavior, as well as following routines and transitions.

SED 3 Social Relationships

Builds social relationships with adults and peers, participates cooperatively in groups and identifies and respects the emotions of others.

SED 4 Problem-Solving

Approaches challenges effectively, solves problems and makes responsible decisions.

SED 1 Self-Awareness



Self-awareness is a child’s understanding of who they are—their feelings, preferences and what makes them unique. This confidence helps children share their ideas and connect with others.

From infancy, babies explore themselves and their influence on the world. Around 18 months, many recognize themselves in the mirror—an early sign of self-awareness (Chinn et al. 2024). Relationships, social experiences and cultural values also shape how children see themselves (Brummelman and Thomaes 2017).

Self-awareness supports many other skills. Recognizing one’s emotions is the first step to managing them, building empathy and understanding others (Krol and Bartz 2021). Strong self-awareness also supports learning and school success (Blankson et al. 2016).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SED 1 Self-Awareness

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool			Primary		
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SED 1a Knows self and expresses confidence	Responds to name by cooing, smiling or turning head toward person talking. Explores hands and feet.	Responds to name and interacts with self in mirror. Recognizes self as being separate from others.	Names self and names basic body parts.	Identifies characteristics of self.	Describes thoughts and characteristics of self and expresses confidence in own abilities.	Identifies own strengths and personal talents.	Apply strengths to accomplish a task and exhibits pride in personal accomplishments.	Reflects and describes strengths and areas of growth. Begins to have and apply a growth mindset.
Date:								
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SED 1 Self-Awareness (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SED 1b Expresses needs and preferences	Vocalizes or moves to express needs.	Seeks out or responds to favorite or preferred toys, objects or people.	Expresses likes and dislikes.	When given two to three options, chooses their most desired option.	Describes and compares preferences of self and others.	Expresses and advocates for one's needs or personal preferences.	Understands others might have different needs and preferences than self.	Expresses and advocates ways for self and others to both participate according to unique preferences and to attain differing wants.
Date:								
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Notes:								
SED 1c Completes tasks independently	Reaches for a familiar object or toy.	Attempts to do a familiar task or explore objects independently.	Completes familiar tasks or activities independently. May still need adult support on occasion.	Expresses interest in planning or trying new or complex tasks and activities with help.	Takes risks and pushes self to accomplish new tasks independently.	Revisits a familiar task or activity with a different approach.	Revisits and plans a familiar task and describes ways to improve results.	Predicts how self and others might be able to perform in a task and describes and plans what is needed to improve.
Date:								
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SED 1d Identifies emotions	Makes facial expressions or vocalizations to express engagement, contentment, stress or discomfort.	Shows a range of emotions with facial expressions and gestures.	Recognizes and names a few personal feelings.	Identifies and describes personal feelings.	Recognizes that feelings can change.	Identifies complex feelings and recognizes that they can have more than one feeling at the same time.	Identifies past, current and future feelings and explains when they might experience different feelings.	Anticipates an emotional response that may result from a given situation.
Date:								
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SED 2 Self-Regulation



Self-regulation is a big step in your child’s growth. It means learning how to manage emotions, behaviors and their body, especially when faced with challenges. For little ones, this can look like calming down after getting upset, handling frustration or waiting patiently for a turn. Even very early signs matter, like a baby soothing themselves by sucking on their hand or a toddler taking a deep breath before joining back in play.

These moments may seem small, but they are building blocks for an important life skill. When children learn to cope with frustration or discomfort, even when their needs aren’t met right away, they are developing strong self-regulation skills. Warm, loving and responsive relationships with caregivers make a big difference in helping children build these abilities (Rosanbalm and Murray 2017).

As children grow, self-regulation becomes an essential milestone. Without it, children may find friendships harder to manage, experience more tantrums or feel more strain in their relationship with parents. On the other hand, children who are learning to self-regulate often show readiness for learning, stronger problem-solving skills and the ability to stick with a task, even if it takes time. These skills help them succeed both in school and in relationships (Rosanbalm and Murray 2017).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SED 2 Self-Regulation

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SED 2a Manages feelings and behavior	Calms with support from caregiver.	Seeks out a familiar adult, item or behavior to provide comfort when upset or in a new situation.	Begins to use strategies to regulate emotions or behavior with support from familiar adult.	Uses a variety of strategies to regulate emotions or behavior. May still need adult prompting on occasion.	Independently chooses and uses a variety of strategies to regulate emotions or behavior.	Describes and demonstrates appropriate responses to different emotions and behaviors.	Describes strategies to calm oneself in new or stressful situations.	Applies strategies for managing own emotions and behaviors.
Date:								
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Date:								
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SED 2 Self-Regulation (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SED 2b Follows routines and transitions	Reacts to changes in tone of voice or expression.	Participates in familiar routines and transitions with support.	Recognizes a familiar activity or routine and redirects to a new activity with support.	Anticipates what comes next within a daily routine. Recognizes when the typical routine is not followed and identifies the change.	Follows daily routines. With support, negotiates ways to handle new routines or transitions.	Transitions from one activity to the next and helps others through the transition.	Describes strategies to adjust and calm oneself in new or stressful situations.	Adapts to new situations or routines quickly and with minimal stress.
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SED 3 Social Relationships



Social relationship skills are all about how children connect and interact with others. These skills show up in everyday moments, whether your child is playing with one friend, sharing in a group or showing kindness to someone else. You'll see these skills in action when children cooperate, show care or respond thoughtfully to the needs of others.

These important abilities start in a child's very first relationships with caregivers. When parents and caregivers respond warmly to a baby's cries, smiles or other signals, children learn trust and security. That bond becomes the foundation for how they connect with others later on, supporting both their emotional growth and ability to manage feelings. As children watch and learn from those around them, they begin comparing their own thoughts and feelings with others, a big step toward social competence (Baker 2024).

Children who experience positive, responsive early relationships often go on to build healthier friendships, show stronger thinking skills and even do better in school (Baker 2024). As they grow, children look for shared experiences with their peers, playing games, noticing similarities and differences and creating emotional connections. Building these positive relationships with both adults and peers lays the groundwork for success in learning and life.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SED 3 Social Relationships

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool					
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SED 3a Develops relationships with adults	Recognizes, interacts with and responds to primary caregivers.	Stays close to and interacts with familiar adults for comfort and support.	Engages in interactions with new adults, but returns to the primary caregivers for comfort and support.	Engages in positive back-and-forth interactions with new or familiar adults.	Initiates interactions and uses prosocial behavior skills in back-and-forth exchanges with adults.	Identifies trusted adults in the community and describes when to seek help.	Describes characteristics of trusted adults and seeks help when needed.	Describes how trusted adults can provide support in various settings and how to build positive relationships.
Date:								
Date:								
Date:								
Notes:								

SED 3 Social Relationships (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SED 3b Develops relationships with peers	Notifies, responds to and looks at peers.	Engages in simple interactions with peers.	Shows interest in interacting with peers and may demonstrate preference for specific peers.	Engages in interactions with peers and has preferred friends that they play with consistently.	Demonstrates connection with others and identifies similar interests as friends.	Describes personal friendships and meaningful relationships.	Describes characteristics of positive friendships and how to build positive relationships.	Describes different types of relationships. Takes care of self, others and considers the needs of others.
Date:								
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Notes:								
SED 3c Participates cooperatively in groups	Engages in simple social interactions, such as games like peek-a-boo.	Mimics actions of others.	Joins a group and participates in an activity when asked.	With support from an adult, initiates play with peers and uses prosocial behavior skills such as sharing, waiting and taking turns.	Initiates play with peers and uses prosocial behavior skills such as sharing, waiting and taking turns. May still need adult prompting on occasion.	Identifies roles of self and others during group tasks or activities. Offers to help others.	Fulfills personal roles and responsibilities when working in a group.	Begins to use active listening and inclusion of other's ideas to support collaboration in a group setting.
Date:								
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SED 3d Identifies and respects emotions of others	Adjusts behavior according to emotional or facial response of a familiar person.	Explores different facial expressions, such as in pictures.	Recognizes the emotions of others and demonstrates concern for others.	Explains how and why someone may be feeling a certain emotion.	Identifies complex feelings of others and responds accordingly.	Explains how self and others may feel similar or different in a variety of situations and explains why.	Seeks to understand and support others' feelings.	Demonstrates respect for others who have differing feelings and needs. Shows empathy to others.
Date:								
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SED4 Problem-Solving



Problem-solving is a key skill that helps children recognize a challenge, think about different ways to handle it and choose the best solution. It is an important part of being socially and emotionally ready to learn and grow (Hardy et al. 2024).

Children build problem-solving skills naturally through play and everyday interactions. They also strengthen these abilities when given open-ended tasks that allow them to experiment and explore. Supportive environments that encourage children to try, make mistakes and try again help them grow into confident problem-solvers. Over time, children move from simple trial-and-error approaches to more thoughtful strategies that include understanding the feelings and perspectives of others.

Strong problem-solving abilities support children’s social skills and prepare them to face academic challenges as they move through school (Walker et al. 2013). Because problem-solving is closely connected to executive function, it also supports resilience later in life (Rungsattatharm et al. 2025).

When problem-solving happens in a social setting, such as working with friends to complete a task or resolve a conflict, children practice perspective-taking, learn how to negotiate and discover how to create solutions that work for everyone. These skills not only help in the classroom, but also build the foundation for positive relationships.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SED 4 Problem-Solving

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SED 4a Solves problems	Uses simple repeated actions or movements to solve a problem.	Explores how things work using repeated trial and error to solve a problem.	Recognizes a problem and asks for adult help to solve the problem.	Suggests and explores possible solutions to a problem with support from an adult.	Uses previous knowledge to determine which solution to try first when solving a problem.	Eliminates possible solutions to a problem by thinking through their potential results and consequences.	Explains the sequence of their problem solving strategy.	Solves problems by connecting personal experiences to possible solutions.
Date:								
Date:								
Date:								
Notes:								



SED 4 Problem-Solving (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SED 4b Responsible Decision-Making	Begins to recognize choices, such as reaching for a toy when multiple options are available.	Responds to simple guidance on safe and kind choices.	Identifies basic consequences of actions, such as "If I throw my toy, it might break".	With adult support, lists choices or solutions before making a decision.	Makes independent choices based on rules and fairness.	Considers others' feelings when making decisions.	Evaluates possible solutions and their consequences before acting.	Demonstrates responsible decision-making by applying past experiences to new situations.
Date:								
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Approaches to Learning



Approaches to Learning describes how young children engage with new experiences and learning tasks. Key traits include curiosity, initiative, persistence, attention and flexible thinking. These learning behaviors support every area of development and are strong predictors of school readiness and long-term academic success (Shah et al. 2018; Leonard et al. 2017). For example, early curiosity is linked with stronger reading and math achievement in kindergarten, while persistence with goals predicts better academic outcomes later on.

From birth to age 8, children show rapid growth in how they approach learning. Infants and toddlers explore their world with curiosity but need adult support to stay focused and engaged. By preschool, children show more initiative, longer attention spans, persistence when faced with mild frustration and early flexible thinking during play and guided exploration.

These traits prepare children for school, where curiosity becomes more focused, persistence more self-directed and cognitive flexibility more developed. Supporting these behaviors early helps children learn more efficiently and feel confident as they take on new challenges.

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes two Approaches to Learning skills with four sub-skills.

ATL 1 Attention & Persistence

Develops the ability to focus, manage distractions and persists through challenges.

ATL 2 Flexibility and Play

Demonstrates adaptability, creative thinking and problem-solving through varied and imaginative play.

ATL 1 Attention & Persistence



From infancy through early childhood, attention and persistence are key skills for learning. Infants begin to sustain attention during shared play with caregivers, and this back-and-forth engagement helps lengthen their focus over time (Yu and Smith 2016). As toddlers grow, they begin sticking with tasks for longer periods, especially when adults model persistence. In one study, infants who watched an adult keep trying at a task were more likely to persist themselves (Leonard et al. 2017).

By preschool, children can remain engaged in activities for extended periods and begin managing distractions and frustrations more effectively. Research shows that preschoolers who demonstrate high levels of persistence and attention are more likely to make gains in literacy and math (Shah et al. 2018).

Staying focused, working through challenges and returning to unfinished tasks are all important indicators of school readiness. Supporting children as they practice persistence not only prepares them for future learning, but also builds confidence in their ability to overcome difficulties.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

ATL 1 Attention & Persistence

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
ATL 1 a Attends	Focuses for a short time on a person, sound or thing.	Attends to what others are looking at or pointing to.	Focuses on an engaging activity for a short period of time with adult reminders.	Focuses on an engaging activity for a short period of time independently.	Sustains focus for at least five minutes, even if there are distractions.	Sustains focus for at least ten minutes, even if there are distractions.	Sustains focus for at least thirty minutes, even if there are distractions.	Sustains focus for forty-five minutes, even if there are distractions.
Date:								
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ATL 1 Attention & Persistence (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
ATL 1b Persists	Engages in a continued interaction or activity with a familiar object or adult.	Repeats actions to gain a result.	Asserts a desire to start or end a preferred activity. Asks for help as needed.	Practices or repeats an activity until successful. Expresses delight over a successful project.	Begins to persist on a challenging activity with teacher support.	Persists on a challenging activity independently.	With adult support, plans steps to pursue a challenging activity or idea and implements it with persistence.	Plans steps to pursue an idea and implements it with persistence independently.
Date:								
Date:								
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ATL 2 Flexibility & Play



Flexibility and play describe a child’s ability to adapt, try new approaches and explore creatively. During early childhood, cognitive flexibility grows quickly. Toddlers begin shifting attention between activities, and by preschool, children can adjust to changes in rules or tasks (Blakey et al. 2016).

This flexibility supports problem-solving and cooperation, especially during pretend play when children negotiate roles, change storylines and experiment with materials. Play itself encourages flexible thinking and creative exploration. Children who engage in varied, open-ended play often develop stronger executive function and are more capable of adjusting their strategies when initial efforts do not succeed (Zelazo 2015).

These adaptive behaviors help children handle both social and academic challenges. When adults provide opportunities for imaginative and open-ended play, children strengthen their ability to think flexibly, explore new ideas and approach challenges with confidence.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

ATL 2 Flexibility & Play

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
ATL 2a Shows flexibility	Shifts attention from one person or thing to another.	Shifts attention from one task to another with prompting and adult support.	With adult support, demonstrates ability to shift ideas, plans or imagination while working on a simple task or activity.	With adult support, demonstrates ability to shift ideas, plans or imagination while participating in complex tasks or role-play scenarios.	Demonstrates ability to shift ideas, plans or imagination while participating in simple tasks or role-play scenarios independently.	Demonstrates ability to shift ideas, plans or imagination while completing complex tasks or games independently.	Imagines new ways to approach a task or discover information when obstacles are present.	Demonstrates ability to fluently shift approaches within complex tasks independently.
Date:								
Date:								
Date:								
Notes:								

ATL 2 Flexibility & Play (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
ATL 2b Engages in play	Explores and manipulates materials.	Entertains and plays by themselves without adult or child involvement.	Watches others play and plays side by side with another person.	Joins a group and participates in group play. May have different purposes of play.	Engages in cooperative play by sharing, taking turns and offering to help others. Identifies roles of self and others during tasks and play.	Engages in social play and creates goals and scenarios that involve creative problem-solving.	With adult support, plays games or activities with complex rules.	Plays games or activities with others that have complex rules. May create own rules to games.
Date:								
Date:								
Date:								
Notes:								





Physical Development



Physical development is a vital part of your child’s overall health and well-being. It includes both large body movements, like walking, climbing and jumping, as well as smaller, more precise skills, such as drawing, stacking blocks or holding a spoon. Healthy motor development depends on good nutrition, daily physical activity and personal care routines. Children naturally learn through movement and play, and these experiences are essential for both growth and learning.

Regular physical activity supports children’s physical health, but it also strengthens their emotional, social and cognitive development. Early childhood is especially important, as this is a time when both physical fitness and brain development grow rapidly (Westfall et al. 2018; Wick et al. 2021). Active play helps build lifelong health, boosts self-confidence, deepens bonds with caregivers and helps prevent many future health issues.

Everyday movement experiences, from crawling and walking to running and playing, also shape a child’s brain. These activities help create neural pathways that support sensory processing, focus and problem-solving skills. Research shows that regular movement in early childhood promotes brain flexibility, memory and ongoing learning (Pascual-Leone et al. 2005; Lenroot et al. 2009; Chaddock et al. 2012). Physical activity also helps children build confidence and encourages positive interactions with others.

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes five physical development skills with six sub-skills.

PD 1 Gross Motor

Builds strength, coordination and balance of large muscles.

PD 2 Fine Motor

Builds strength and coordination of small movements.

PD 3 Safety

Understands and demonstrates safe practices.

PD 4 Personal Care

Implements self-care routines, such as rest, toileting, handwashing, exercise and dressing, as well as understanding bodily functions.

PD 5 Nutrition

Understands and follows healthy nutrition routines.

PD 1 Gross Motor



Gross motor skills are the large movements children make with their bodies, such as sitting, crawling, walking and running. These abilities are essential for independence and follow a predictable sequence, though each child develops at their own pace (Cleveland Clinic 2023). For example, most infants lift their heads around two months, roll over by six months and sit without support at about nine months (CDC 2024). These milestones set the stage for more advanced movements, like crawling and walking.

Toddlers ages one to three show rapid progress as they begin walking on their own, climbing stairs, kicking balls and running with more coordination. Research shows that motor development depends not only on biology, but also on practice and play opportunities (Hospodar et al. 2021). Children who have active play environments often build stronger balance and coordination.

By preschool, children add hopping, skipping, throwing and catching to their play. These skills strengthen their bodies, support brain development and build attention and learning abilities (American Academy of Pediatrics 2021). Safe play spaces, outdoor activity and caregiver support play an important role. Early motor experiences also shape later physical activity and long-term health (Jones et al. 2020).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

PD 1 Gross Motor

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
PD 1 Builds strength, coordination and balance of large muscles	Rolls, crawls, sits independently and pulls self into a standing position. Kicks or grabs from a seated or lying position.	Walks and climbs. Carries, drags, kicks and tosses objects.	Runs. Balances on a wide beam. Throws objects in an intended direction. Catches objects against body.	Balances and hops on one foot. Throws both overhand and underhand. Catches or kicks moving objects.	Hops from one foot to the other. Begins to skip. Coordinates multiple movements in simple sequences.	Changes direction and speed of movement.	Balances on a variety of objects. Kicks or strikes moving objects with aim and accuracy. Leaps. Stops at a boundary.	Uses conditioning methods to strengthen muscles and increase endurance. Coordinates multiple complex movements in continuous play.
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PD 2 Fine Motor



Fine motor skills use the small muscles in the hands and fingers to help children do everyday tasks, such as grasping toys, feeding themselves, drawing and eventually writing. These skills begin in infancy and become more refined through the preschool years, laying the foundation for independence and school readiness. For example, infants as young as two to four months begin reaching for objects and bringing their hands to their mouth (CDC 2024a).

Around age one, children typically develop the pincer grasp, holding small objects between thumb and finger. This skill is key for self-feeding, like picking up snacks or holding a spoon. Daily activities, such as block building, turning pages or scribbling with crayons strengthen fine motor coordination (Horm et al. 2016).

By preschool, children begin cutting with scissors, drawing shapes, stringing beads and writing letters. These tasks support school readiness, personal care and creativity. Play-based learning, such as working with blocks or playdough, builds hand strength, coordination and problem-solving (American Academy of Pediatrics 2021).

Both home and classroom environments shape fine motor growth. Offering children age-appropriate materials, such as crayons, puzzles, scissors or manipulative toys supports readiness for kindergarten activities like writing and math (Cameron et al. 2012).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

PD 2 Fine Motor

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
PD 2 Builds strength and coordination of small movements	Reaches for objects in sight and uses hands or feet to make contact with an object.	Purposefully grasps objects with finger and thumb. Uses hands to accomplish tasks, such as feeding self.	Opens, closes, stacks, twists and pulls objects with one or both hands.	Uses hands and fingers to manipulate objects, such as stringing large beads or snipping with scissors.	Manipulates objects through tasks like buttoning, zipping, buckling, lacing and following a straight line when cutting and copying drawings.	Manipulates objects through tasks like following an outline with scissors, tying shoes and dressing self.	Threads small beads. Stacks small objects. Uses scissors to cut more challenging materials, such as fabric or cardstock.	Manipulates objects of all sizes with speed and accuracy.
Date:								
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PD 3 Safety



As children grow and become more mobile, learning safety skills becomes an important part of development. Each new milestone, from crawling to running across the playground, brings excitement along with new risks. Infants who begin reaching, crawling, and walking need close supervision as parents and caregivers become more aware of potential hazards. Preventing injuries is an essential part of healthy development (American Academy of Pediatrics 2021).

Toddlers climb, run, and explore with increasing independence, which raises the chance of bumps and falls. At this stage, children can begin to learn simple safety rules, such as not touching hot surfaces or waiting for help. Research shows toddlers who learn basic rules are less likely to engage in risky behavior, though supervision remains critical as they build self-control (Morrongiello and Dawber 2004).

By preschool, children are stronger and more adventurous. This is an ideal time to introduce structured safety habits such as looking both ways before crossing the street or wearing a helmet when riding a bike. Modeling and practicing safety rules reduces the risk of injury (CDC 2023). Safe environments that allow supervised climbing and exploring support both physical growth and the ability to assess risks over time (Brussoni et al. 2012).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

PD 3 Safety

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
PD 3 Demonstrates safe practices	Reacts to unexpected noises, lights or sights.	Responds to possible dangers in environment and avoids them when prompted.	Follows simple safety rules and avoids danger.	Follows safety rules and helps others follow rules. Identifies dangerous situations and seeks help.	Describes reasons for safety rules and reminds others to follow them.	Applies general safety rules to a variety of everyday situations with little prompting.	Identifies emergency situations and how to behave accordingly. Describes how to get help.	Takes appropriate initiative in dangerous and emergency situations.
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PD 4 Personal Care



Personal care skills, sometimes called self-help skills, are an important part of a child’s physical development. These include feeding, dressing, brushing teeth and other daily routines that support independence. Infants begin laying the foundation through small actions, such as holding a bottle, reaching for a spoon or bringing their hands to their mouth. While they still depend on caregivers, these early movements build muscles and coordination for later independence (CDC 2024b).

Toddlers become eager to do things on their own. They may start feeding themselves with a spoon, removing shoes or hats and helping with dressing. Encouraging these efforts supports coordination while also boosting confidence.

By preschool, children can manage many personal care routines with supervision. They can wash their hands, brush teeth and dress more independently while learning basic hygiene habits (American Academy of Pediatrics 2021 a). Offering praise, step-by-step guidance and child-sized tools encourages success. Children who regularly practice self-care not only grow more confident but also develop the independence needed for kindergarten and beyond (La Paro, Williamson, and Hatfield 2014).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

PD 4 Personal Care

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
PD 4a Implements self-care routines including rest, toileting, handwashing, exercise and dressing	Cries or moves body when physical needs are not met.	Begins to participate in self-care activities and recognizes the difference between dirty and clean.	With help, participates in self-care routines.	Recognizes personal needs and how to get them met and implements with adult support.	Meets most personal and hygiene needs when prompted by an adult.	Maintains personal needs and proper hygiene with occasional reminders.	Independently maintains personal and hygiene needs.	Explains how to manage health and role of exercise and rest in self and others.
Date:								
Date:								
Date:								
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PD 4 Personal Care (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
PD 4b Understands bodily functions	Explores body parts, such as hands and feet.	Points to body parts when prompted.	Identifies basic body parts.	Describes the function of basic body parts. Can locate body pain.	Explains how germs spread and describes simple strategies for preventing the spread.	When feeling sick, describes symptoms. Describes some contagious diseases.	Identifies basic organs.	Describes the functions of basic organs.
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PD 5 Nutrition



Good nutrition is essential for a child’s physical development. Nutritious foods build strong bones, support a healthy weight and fuel brain growth, which strengthens learning, memory and concentration. Establishing healthy eating habits from infancy through the preschool years has lasting benefits. Early patterns reduce the risk of health problems such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease. By offering nutritious meals early in life, families support overall well-being and long-term quality of life (Kozioł-Kozakowska 2023).

Fruits and vegetables are especially important because they provide vitamins, minerals and fiber that support growth and strengthen the immune system. Since early food experiences shape lifelong eating habits, introducing a wide variety of foods, including fruits and vegetables in many colors and textures, is key (CDC 2025).

When children are exposed to healthy foods at an early age, they are more likely to enjoy them as they grow. These experiences build a positive relationship with food, laying the foundation for healthier choices and stronger development in the years ahead.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

PD 5 Nutrition

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
PD 5 Follows healthy nutrition routines	Cries when hungry.	Communicates the need to eat and feeds self some finger foods.	Begins to identify familiar foods, anticipates the need to eat and feeds self with spoon or other utensil.	Identifies food and serves a portion into a bowl or plate and feeds self.	Identifies food groups, sorts food and identifies food that is nutritious	Describes how nutritious food helps the body grow and develop and helps to prepare food.	Describes what happens after the consumption of food.	Prepares simple food for self.
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Language & Literacy Development



Language and literacy development is a child's ability to communicate and connect with others through listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are central to learning, relationships and school success. Development begins even before birth and grows rapidly in the first years of life. Early experiences in language-rich environments strongly influence how children learn to talk, understand and later read (Kuhl 2011; Werker and Hensch 2015).

Oral language skills, such as vocabulary and storytelling, are among the best predictors of later academic achievement, especially in reading and writing (Hjetland et al. 2020; Rohloff et al. 2024). The Science of Reading shows that reading is not automatic but must be taught step by step. Important foundations include phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and writing (Wright et al. 2022). Structured and intentional strategies, paired with playful, developmentally appropriate activities, are the most effective (Wolff and Gustafsson 2022; Roberts 2021; Morrow and Rand 2021).

Children build communication through daily interactions with caregivers. Gestures, sounds and words reflect their desire to connect and lay the groundwork for speaking and understanding (Donnellan et al. 2019; Yang et al. 2021).

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes seven skills and 15 sub-skills.

LLD 1 Listening

Understands and interprets language (both words and gestures). Acts in response to language and verbal cues.

LLD 2 Communication

Uses verbal and nonverbal communication to express ideas with increasingly complex vocabulary and sentences.

LLD 3 Phonological Awareness

Recognizes rhymes, hears large units of sound like syllables and discerns smaller units of sound, such as phonemes.

LLD 4 Alphabetic Knowledge

Identifies letters and symbols in print and understands that letters represent sounds.

LLD 5 Concepts of Print

Uses print concepts and explores books and other text.

LLD 6 Reading Comprehension

Responds to stories and narratives, as well as retelling, asking and answering questions about the content.

LLD 7 Writing

Demonstrates emergent writing to represent meaning.

LLD 1 Listening



Listening comprehension is a child’s ability to hear, understand and act on spoken language. It is different from simply hearing because it requires children to pay attention and process what is said. Strong listening skills are closely tied to later reading comprehension and overall academic success (Hogan et al. 2014; Lervåg et al. 2018; Liu 2020).

Listening is the first language skill children develop and forms the foundation for speaking and learning. Infants begin building language by hearing the voices around them, and children with undetected hearing loss may miss important input, leading to delays in communication (Tomblin et al. 2015).

Listening comprehension is part of receptive language, which includes understanding words for familiar people and objects, and following directions such as “come here” or “give the toy to Mommy.” These early skills prepare children to understand more complex directions as they grow.

In school, listening comprehension becomes especially important. Teachers give instructions throughout the day, and research shows that following directions is one of the most common challenges children face when starting kindergarten (Goodson and Layzer 2009; Curby et al. 2010). Supporting listening early helps children feel more confident and ready to learn.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

LLD 1 Listening

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 1a Understands and interprets language	Turns head toward the person speaking.	Shows understanding of a variety of single familiar words, such as by pointing at named objects, people or body parts.	Shows understanding of a wide variety of phrases and sentences.	Listens, then responds appropriately.	Listens and understands inferred requests.	Shows understanding of a series of complex statements that explain how or why.	Shows understanding about key details from information or stories shared verbally.	Listens to gather new information and demonstrates understanding.
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LLD 1 Listening (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 1b Follows directions	Responds to speaking in the environment and imitates actions.	With prompts and gestures, follows a one-step direction.	Follows related two-step directions given verbally.	Follows unrelated two-step directions given verbally.	With prompting, follows multi-step directions given verbally.	Follows multi-step directions given verbally.	Remembers and follows previous rules or directions given verbally.	Responds to verbal statements that have implied directions or requests.
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LLD 2 Communication



Communication is a child’s ability to use spoken or signed language to share thoughts, ideas and feelings. Early exposure to rich caregiver speech is one of the strongest predictors of later language growth (Swanson et al. 2019). Strong communication skills also support independence and emotional well-being. Children who can clearly express their needs often show better self-control, while those with limited vocabulary may experience more frustration and tantrums (Morgan et al. 2015; Manning et al. 2019).

Communication skills are directly tied to school readiness and later academic success. Early skills such as making sounds, understanding grammar and building vocabulary form the foundation for literacy and learning (Morgan et al. 2015). Vocabulary includes both receptive language, or the words a child understands, and expressive language, the words a child uses. These grow through meaningful interaction and daily exposure to language-rich environments.

Expressive language includes both verbal and pre-verbal skills. Babies cry to signal hunger, wave “bye-bye” or point to share attention. Over time, these gestures turn into words and sentences that help children share more complex ideas. Strong expressive language builds confidence, supports relationships and lays the groundwork for long-term learning.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

LLD 2 Communication

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 2a Uses language to express information and ask/answer questions	Uses vocalizations and gestures to communicate.	Uses a few words, signs or word-like sounds to communicate.	Communicates needs, desires and ideas or asks simple questions.	Uses descriptions and observations to communicate information and answer questions, or asks more complex questions.	Talks about activities or tells stories. Answers “who,” “what,” “when,” “why” and “how” questions.	Explains personal thoughts about familiar people, places and events.	Discusses ideas and feelings about a wide range of age-appropriate topics.	Uses expression, tone and pacing to reinforce the meaning of what they are communicating.
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LLD 2 Communication (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 2b Uses conversational skills	Responds with babbles or sounds with prompting.	Responds to one exchange, but is not on topic.	Responds on topic for one exchange.	Stays on topic for two to three exchanges.	Engages in conversations through multiple exchanges.	Initiates conversation with adults and peers.	Demonstrate understanding of conversation norms, such as listening, taking turns talking, distance between talkers and body orientation.	Asks for clarification about information or topics that occur during a conversation.
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Notes:								
LLD 2c Uses sentence structure	Mimics single sounds.	Communicates using one- to two-word sentences.	Communicates using two- to four-word sentences.	Communicates in sentences. May not always follow grammatical rules.	Communicates in simple, complete sentences.	Uses question words in speech. Speaks audibly. Makes nouns plural by adding /s/. Uses common prepositions.	Uses many types of sentences, including simple and compound. Uses verb tense to express past, present and future.	Uses common irregular plural nouns and conjugated verbs.
Date:								
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LLD 2d Uses and expands vocabulary	Uses sounds and gestures to communicate.	Repeats words heard frequently in environment.	Identifies familiar people, places and objects. Asks what a specific person or object is called.	Describes familiar people, places and objects. Seeks additional words for new ways to describe.	Includes new and technical words in everyday conversations. Asks what unfamiliar words mean.	Uses new or technical words learned in conversations or through reading. Compares words and their meanings.	Identifies words whose meaning are similar. Determines the meaning of unknown words from context or root word.	Explains the difference between closely related words. Uses multiple strategies to determine and learn the meaning of unfamiliar words.
Date:								
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LLD 3 Phonological Awareness



Phonological awareness is a child’s ability to hear and play with the sounds of spoken language. It includes noticing rhymes, clapping out syllables and recognizing when words start with the same sound (International Literacy Association 2020). A key part of this skill is phonemic awareness, which means identifying and working with the smallest units of sound in words. For example, children may learn to hear the /b/ in “ball” or blend the sounds /c/-/a/-/t/ to say “cat.”

These early sound skills are an important foundation for learning to read. Research shows that children who are able to detect and manipulate sounds have a much easier time learning to spell and read words later in school (Snowling et al. 2021; Landerl et al. 2022). Purposeful, playful practice in preschool and kindergarten strengthens these abilities (Porta and Ramirez 2019; Rice et al. 2022).

Children usually begin by hearing larger patterns, like rhymes and syllables, before moving to individual sounds. Songs, nursery rhymes, chants and playful word games give children natural ways to practice. Activities like clapping to syllables, noticing rhyming words or playing sound games help children “tune in” to language and build skills for reading success.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

LLD 3 Phonological Awareness

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 3a Rhyme	Listens to and moves to rhyming songs.	Repeats the last word in familiar rhymes when prompted.	Suggests a missing rhyming word within a poem or song.	Identifies when two words rhyme.	Produces rhyming words when given a word.	Rhymes with real and nonsensical words.	Independently identifies and repeats rhyming word pairs from a poem or song.	Creates an original rhyming song or poem.
Date:								
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LLD 3 Phonological Awareness (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 3b Hears Large Units of Sound	Babbles and vocalizes using sound, volume and inflection.	Repeats words or short sentences.	Shows awareness of separate words in spoken language.	Blends large units of sound, such as compound words, syllables or onset-rime.	Segments large units of sound, such as compound words, syllables or onset-rime.	Deletes large units of sound.	Substitutes large units of sound.	Manipulates, blends, substitutes and deletes large units of sound.
Date:								
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LLD 3c Hears Small Units of Sound	Coos and makes sounds such as "oo" and "ah."	Imitates or repeats sounds and tones.	Engages in word and sound play through songs and games.	Identifies and produces words that have the same beginning sound.	Identifies the end sound of a word and blends two-phoneme words.	Identifies medial sound of a word and blends CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words.	Segments phonemes in words.	Substitutes and deletes phonemes in words.
Date:								
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LLD 4 Alphabetic Knowledge



Alphabetic knowledge is a child’s understanding of letter names and the sounds they represent. It is a key skill for early literacy and one of the strongest predictors of later reading success (Roberts et al. 2018; Castles et al. 2018). This knowledge includes recognizing letter names and connecting them to their sounds. For example, the letter name “B” begins with the /b/ sound, which helps children remember the relationship (Treiman et al. 2020).

Research shows that teaching letter names and sounds together is more effective than teaching them separately (Roberts et al. 2019). Children benefit from explicit phonics instruction that directly connects letters with their sounds. Strategies such as using letter cards, games and short practice sessions strengthen these skills while keeping learning playful and engaging (Roberts 2021).

Understanding that letters are symbols for sounds also develops symbolic thinking. Preschoolers who recognize that written words represent spoken language are taking important steps toward reading (Treiman et al. 2016). Letter-sound knowledge works together with phonemic awareness to support decoding, spelling and reading fluency. Gaining this insight is a critical step in becoming a confident reader (Castles et al. 2018).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

LLD 4 Alphabetic Knowledge

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 4 Identifies letters, makes letter-sound connections and decodes words	Explores books and toys with letters and related images.	Participates in letter songs and activities.	Recognizes the first letter and letter sound in their name.	Identifies five to ten upper- and lowercase letters and letter sounds.	Identifies eleven to twenty upper- and lowercase letters and letter sounds.	Identifies all upper- and lowercase letters and letter sounds.	Decodes words with long and short vowel sounds, digraphs and blends with increasing automaticity.	Applies phonics strategies and word analysis skills to decode words, such as irregular high-frequency and unfamiliar words with increasing automaticity.
Date:								
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LLD 5 Concepts of Print



Concepts of print describe a child’s understanding of how written language works. This includes knowing how to hold a book, recognize letters and words, understand that we read from left to right and top to bottom and realize that print carries meaning. Children usually develop these skills through everyday literacy experiences, especially shared reading with caregivers or teachers (Han and Neuharth-Pritchett 2015).

During shared reading, children benefit when adults point out features of the book, such as the title, cover or words on the page. Modeling behaviors like tracking text with a finger or talking about story elements helps children connect spoken and written language. These simple strategies, called print-referencing practices, are powerful tools for building early literacy (Han and Neuharth-Pritchett 2015).

As children’s print awareness grows, they begin to understand that writing represents spoken language and carries meaning (Snowling and Hulme 2005). This awareness is a critical step in preparing them for future reading and writing success.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

LLD 5 Concepts of Print

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 5 Uses print concepts and explores books and other text	Opens and closes books, looks at them and points to pictures.	Recognizes if pictures are right-side up. Turns pages from the front to the back of the book.	Distinguishes between pictures and words. Identifies the front and back cover.	Distinguishes between letters and words. Indicates where to start reading on a page.	Identifies some punctuation and recognizes spaces between words.	Recognizes common types of text, such as poems, storybooks or fact books. Names author and illustrator. Identifies punctuation.	Explains the difference between books that tell stories and those that give information.	Identifies and uses text features to find information in texts.
Date:								
Date:								
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LLD 6 Reading Comprehension



Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and make meaning from stories and text. It begins developing long before children can read on their own. From infancy through preschool, children build comprehension through listening to stories, having conversations and participating in shared reading (Petscher et al. 2018).

Early signs of comprehension include retelling stories, asking and answering questions and making personal connections to what they hear (Cartwright and Guajardo 2015; Cao and Kim 2021). When children retell a story in their own words, they show understanding of key details and structure. Asking and answering questions during story time encourages them to think, predict and explain ideas. Approaches like dialogic reading, where adults actively engage children in discussion, are especially effective (Pillinger and Vardy 2022).

Strong oral language is the foundation for comprehension. Vocabulary, grammar and listening skills all contribute to a child’s ability to understand stories (Jago et al. 2025; Tompkins et al. 2013). Shared reading introduces new words and complex ideas, while open-ended questions help children connect stories to their own experiences (Blewitt and Langan 2016; Noble et al. 2019).

These early experiences not only strengthen comprehension but also build lasting skills for school and lifelong learning.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

LLD 6 Reading Comprehension

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 6a Responds to text	Interacts by reaching for or patting when a book is read.	Chooses and holds a book and looks intently at each page.	Talks about pictures and ideas in familiar stories.	Anticipates what comes next in familiar stories. Expresses likes or dislikes within the story.	Relates to the characters or events of the story and shares a similar experience or object from their own life.	With support, compares similarities between two texts.	Makes many text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-real-world connections. Compares similarities and differences between texts.	Evaluates texts based on content, personal experiences and knowledge of the world. Compares the main points of two texts.
Date:								
Date:								
Date:								
Notes:								

LLD 6 Reading Comprehension (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 6b Retells, asks and answers questions about a text or story	Looks at and listens to books read aloud by an adult.	With prompting, answers "where" questions by pointing to pictures and repeating words from familiar stories.	Identifies the characters and setting in a story.	Retells portions of a story using pictures, gestures or props.	With prompting, answers simple questions about the characters, setting and events in a story and retells a story.	Asks and answers questions about the characters, setting and events in a story and retells the events of a story in sequence.	Makes inferences about character goals or causal connections in a story, and retells stories in sequence using more details.	Summarizes texts and their messages. Describes the points of view of various characters.
Date:								
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Notes:								



LLD 7 Writing



Emergent writing describes children’s earliest attempts to share ideas through marks, scribbles, drawings and letter-like shapes. This process begins in infancy and continues through preschool as children learn that writing represents spoken language (Rowe 2018).

Children typically move through stages: first scribbles and drawings, then letter-like forms, name writing and eventually invented spelling. These stages reflect three areas of knowledge: understanding that print carries meaning, learning how to form letters and words and creating original messages (Puranik and Lonigan 2014).

Name writing is often the first word children master and is strongly linked to early literacy skills such as phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge (Puranik and Lonigan 2012). Invented spelling, where children use letters to show the sounds in words, is another milestone. For example, writing “KAK” for “cake” shows early phonological and alphabetic growth. Invented spelling not only marks development but also supports reading and spelling (Sénéchal et al. 2023).

Educators help foster writing by providing varied materials, regular opportunities and encouragement for all forms of early writing. Research shows that positive reinforcement, even for scribbles and invented spelling, helps children engage more and build confidence (Gerde et al. 2012).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

LLD 7 Writing

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
LLD 7a Emergent Writing	With adult support, makes a mark with a writing tool or other material.	Makes random marks or draws with writing tools.	Marks or scribbles. Begins to make letter-like forms.	Writes letter-like forms or mock letters and letter strings from left to right.	Writes first name and some letters. Begins to use inventive spelling. Letters may be out of order or backward.	Writes first and last name and upper- and lowercase letters appropriately. Writes short phrases with more accuracy.	Writes simple sentences. Begins to use conventional spelling.	Writes simple and compound sentences. Uses punctuation. Checks and corrects spelling.
Date:								
Date:								
Date:								
Notes:								



LLD 7 Writing (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary					
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8	Benchmark 8
LLD 7b Uses writing to represent meaning	Explores various tools used to write.	Makes handprints or fingerprints with adults.	Scribbles or draws marks as a representation of an object or person.	Uses a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to explain who or what something represents.	Uses a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to record an event or idea.	Draws and writes to express ideas or share an opinion.	Writes to give information about a topic, including some facts. Provides a concluding statement.	Writes ideas or groups information in logical order. Uses descriptive words in writing.	
Date:									
Date:									
Date:									
Notes:									





Mathematics



Mathematics is a key part of early childhood learning and supports long-term academic success. Early math skills include counting, number sense, spatial awareness, recognizing patterns, sorting, comparing and measuring. Research shows that strong early math reasoning is linked not only to later achievement in math, but also in other subjects (Onoshakpokaiye 2023; Baroody et al. 2009).

From birth through age six, children build math understanding through play and daily experiences. They naturally notice differences in size, shape and quantity, which form the foundation for problem-solving and critical thinking (Björklund et al. 2020; Bowman et al. 2001). Play is especially powerful for developing these skills. Activities such as block building, sorting and exploring shapes strengthen reasoning and spatial awareness (Sarama and Clements 2009). Caregivers and teachers also play an important role by introducing math language and guiding children's discoveries (Bowman et al. 2001).

Math and literacy learning often go hand in hand. Shared reading, storytelling and "math talk" during daily routines support both number sense and language growth (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council 2015; National Research Council 2009).

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes six math skills with twelve sub-skills.

M 1 Number Sense

Develops number sense by understanding concepts of number and quantity through counting, one-to-one correspondence, quantities and comparisons.

M 2 Spatial Awareness

Explores spatial awareness by understanding how objects move in space and determining their location.

M 3 Shapes

Identifies shapes and their characteristics

M 4 Measurement

Measures and estimates quantities, and compares and orders objects based on various attributes.

M 5 Patterns

Copies, Creates and Extends Patterns

M 6 Classification

Organizes data through classification by sorting objects and graphing for visual representation and analysis.

M 1 Number Sense



Number sense is a child’s ability to understand and work with numbers and quantities. It includes recognizing numerals, counting, matching one number to one object and beginning simple operations (Clements and Sarama 2009). Number sense develops in stages. Toddlers often start with rote counting or pointing out numerals, while preschoolers begin to understand quantity, cardinality and using numbers to solve problems.

Strong number sense in the early years is one of the best predictors of later math success. For example, preschool skills like counting and understanding “how many” are linked to stronger math performance in fifth grade (Watts et al. 2014; Nguyen et al. 2016). On the other hand, children who begin kindergarten with gaps in number sense, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, may continue to struggle without targeted support (Jordan et al. 2022).

Children practice number sense in everyday moments, such as counting snacks, comparing who has more or solving small problems during play. Playful, intentional instruction is especially effective. Research shows that early gains in number sense help build a foundation for later arithmetic, problem-solving and reasoning (Raghubar and Barnes 2017).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

M 1 Number Sense

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
M 1 a Verbally counts numbers	Listens to counting songs and chants.	Says or sings random numbers, may be out of order.	Verbally counts to five.	Verbally counts to ten.	Verbally counts to twenty.	Verbally counts to 100 by ones and tens. Counts forward from a given number.	Verbally counts in sequence to 120 from a given number.	Verbally counts by fives, tens and hundreds to 1000.
Date:								
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M 1 Number Sense (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
M 1b Identifies and writes numerals	Sees numbers in everyday context.	Begins to identify numbers. Identifies the numeral 1.	Identifies numerals up to five.	Identifies numerals up to ten and understands the numeral reflects the quantity of objects. Writes numerals up to five.	Identifies numerals up to twenty and understands the numeral reflects the quantity of objects. Writes numerals up to ten.	Identifies numerals up to fifty. Writes numerals up to twenty.	Identifies numerals to 100 and understands place value for two- to three-digit numbers.	Identifies and writes numerals to 1000. Understands place value for three- to four-digit numbers.
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M 1c Counting one-to-one, and composing and decomposing numbers	Points to objects.	Uses one-to-one correspondence to match objects or pictures.	Points to one object at a time while counting up to five.	Counts up to ten objects and indicates that the last number counted tells how many objects were counted.	Count up to twenty objects and indicates that the last number counted tells how many objects were counted.	Understands that a whole number is greater than its parts and can identify the number combinations that add up to five with prompting.	Identifies the number combinations that add up to five.	Decomposes numbers less than or equal to ten in more than one way.
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M 1d Number Quantities and Comparison	Looks for an object that is taken out of sight.	Recognizes amounts up to two without counting.	Recognizes amounts up to three without counting.	Recognizes amounts up to five without counting. Creates and counts groups of up to five objects and identifies which group has more, less or if they are equal.	Creates and counts groups of up to five objects and recognizes which group has more, even if the objects in the larger group are smaller.	Creates and counts groups of up to ten objects and identifies which group has more, less or if they are equal.	Uses the concept of a number line to compare which numbers are closer to each other.	Uses place value to compare numbers.
Date:								
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M 1 Number Sense (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary					
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8	
M 1e Addition and Subtraction	Watches an adult add or take away toys.	Adds to and removes objects from a group as prompted.	Adds and subtracts by adding or removing objects and demonstrating understanding of the total up to three.	Adds and subtracts by adding to or removing objects and recounting to find the total up to five.	Adds and subtracts by adding to or removing objects and recounting to find the total up to ten.	Adds and subtracts by counting on or counting up to for totals up to ten.	Uses addition and subtraction strategies to solve problems with totals up to twenty.	Solves for the unknown in one- and two-step addition or subtraction word problems. Explains problem-solving strategies.	
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M 2 Spatial Awareness



Spatial awareness is a child’s understanding of space, size and the position of objects in relation to each other and to their own body. It allows children to locate objects, navigate their environment and understand how things fit together. These skills include flipping, rotating and mentally transforming objects, which are important for problem-solving and later school success (Seefeldt and Galper 2008; Fox et al. 2025).

From birth, babies show an early sense of spatial awareness by tracking movement and recognizing faces (Platas 2017). As children grow, play and exploration strengthen these skills. Activities like building with blocks, solving puzzles and playing guessing games give children hands-on experiences that build both motor coordination and the ability to imagine how objects move or change (Schindler 2002).

Language also supports spatial development. As vocabulary expands, children begin to use words like “on,” “under,” “over” and “behind” to describe where objects are. This spatial language helps them express ideas, follow directions and communicate clearly. Research shows that children who practice using spatial words build stronger math reasoning and verbal skills, especially for tasks that require multi-step directions (Murata and Tan 2009; Temple et al. 2020).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

M 2 Spatial Awareness

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
M 2a Understands how objects move in space	Tries to put one object inside another.	Purposely manipulates objects, such as turning or spinning them, to discover how things move or fit into a space.	Recognizes objects that are upside-down and turns them right-side up. Puts together three pieces to create a whole object.	Moves objects to assemble a whole, such as simple puzzles with prompting.	Moves objects to assemble a whole, such as simple puzzles. May take several attempts to determine the correct orientation.	Identifies and corrects the orientation of familiar objects and symbols. Assembles a puzzle without using a guide.	Creates complex pictures or objects by putting together or taking apart shapes.	Determines when shapes have been slid, turned or flipped and describes the translation.
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M 2 Spatial Awareness (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
M 2b Determines object location	Participates as caregiver raises arms or legs and says up/down.	Follows simple positional directions such as on/off, over/under and up/down.	Finds or places objects next to, between, in front of or behind self.	When prompted, places objects next to, between, in front of or behind objects not related to self.	Explains the location of an object in relation to another object.	Makes simple maps or models to represent the location of objects.	Gives and follows positional instructions to find objects.	Uses representations, coordinates systems and maps to identify locations of objects or places.
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M 3 Shapes



A child’s understanding of shapes involves recognizing, naming, comparing and creating common two- and three-dimensional forms like circles, squares, triangles, cubes and cylinders. Shape knowledge is a foundation for geometry learning and also builds spatial reasoning and cognitive development.

Geometry in early childhood includes more than naming shapes. Children also begin to notice and describe their features, such as the number of sides or corners (Clements 2019). Using math vocabulary to describe shapes and objects in their environment strengthens both language and reasoning (Ginsburg 1989). This awareness of shapes and spatial relationships is strongly linked to later success in geometry and mathematics (Hindman et al. 2010).

As children grow, they also begin to see how shapes can be broken into parts and reassembled into new forms. This part-whole thinking supports both geometry and number sense, as children learn that whole numbers can also be divided into parts (Bobis 2008).

Geometry is considered a fundamental skill for young children. Hands-on experiences, such as building, drawing and sorting shapes, make learning meaningful and engaging. Toddlers and preschoolers often start by identifying familiar shapes in everyday objects, laying a strong foundation for future math learning (Aslan et al. 2024; NCTM 2006).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

M 3 Shapes

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
M 3 Identifies shapes and their characteristics	Manipulates objects that are a variety of shapes.	Matches two identical shapes.	Identifies one to three two-dimensional shapes.	Identifies four to six two-dimensional shapes.	Identifies sides and angles or “corners” of shapes and uses materials to construct a shape when given a target shape to view.	Compares shapes by describing the attributes, such as the number and length of the sides and the number of angles or “corners” and recognizes shapes regardless of orientation.	Describes objects in the environment as two- and three-dimensional shapes. Identifies one to four three-dimensional shapes.	Separates a shape into halves, thirds and fourths.
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M 4 Measurement



Measurement is an early math concept that helps children describe and compare the world around them. It includes estimating, ordering objects (seriation) and using standard or nonstandard tools to explore attributes such as length, size, weight, volume and time (Erikson Institute’s Early Math Collaborative 2014). These experiences give children an understanding of “how much” and support problem-solving and abstract reasoning (VanDerHeyden et al. 2011).

Children develop measurement concepts in stages. They start with simple comparisons, such as noticing which toy is bigger, then use informal tools like blocks or string, and later learn to measure with standard units (Szilágyi et al. 2013). Everyday activities, like comparing food portions or pouring water into cups, provide natural opportunities for this learning. Play also brings measurement into social contexts, such as “She had it longer” or “I want the bigger cookie.”

Seriation, or putting objects in order by size or another feature, strengthens sequencing and prepares children for arithmetic (Ginsburg 1987). Together with estimation, these skills connect hands-on experiences to more formal math. Research shows that early measurement skills are strong predictors of later success in advanced mathematics (VanDerHeyden et al. 2011; Seefeldt and Galper 2008).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

M 4 Measurement

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
M 4a Measures and Estimates	Recognizes when to use whole hand or just two fingers to pick up an object.	Explores size and weight of objects in relation to self.	Determines which object is bigger when given two to three objects.	Identifies that things can be measured and uses nonstandard measurement tools. Uses measurement vocabulary such as weight, length or volume.	Compares the length, weight and capacity of two objects to determine which is bigger or if they are the same and uses measurement vocabulary.	Makes logical estimates and uses measurement tools to check estimation.	Explains which measurement tool makes the best sense for the object being measured. Tells time in hours and half-hours.	Tells time. Estimates length in inches, feet, centimeters or meters. Measures an object using a variety of measurement standards.
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M 4 Measurement (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary					
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8	Benchmark 8
M 4b Compares and Orders	Picks up and puts down objects.	Places objects in a row in any order.	Compares and orders two to three objects. Identifies the first object.	Compares and orders up to five objects. Describes order using words like first, second and third.	Compares and orders up to ten objects. Describes order using words like first to tenth.	Orders objects by one feature, then reorders using a different feature. Orders events in time.	Compares objects by using a measuring tool, then orders.	Compares and explains how much longer one object is than another using standard units of measurement.	
Date:									
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M 5 Patterns



Patterns are sequences that repeat in predictable ways and appear everywhere in children’s lives. They can be seen in colors, shapes, sounds, daily routines and natural events like sunrise and sunset (Rittle-Johnson et al. 2015; Hindman et al. 2010). Exploring patterns helps children recognize order and predict what comes next, which lays a foundation for algebraic thinking and problem-solving.

In early childhood education, children practice identifying, copying and extending simple patterns, such as AB or AABB. These activities support the development of math skills, and research shows that early pattern recognition is linked to stronger number knowledge in later grades (NCTM 2006; Zippert et al. 2020).

Working with patterns also supports memory. Even before children use language, they can remember and replicate familiar sequences (Rovee-Collier 1999). Providing opportunities to notice and play with patterns gives children structure, helps them make sense of their environment and strengthens both math and cognitive growth.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

M 5 Patterns

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
M 5 Copies, Creates, and Extends Patterns	Plays predictable activities with caregivers, such as pat-a-cake and peekaboo.	Notices things that repeat in the environment.	Fills in the missing piece of an AB pattern.	Copies, creates and extends AB patterns.	Fills in the missing piece of complex patterns, such as ABC or AABB.	Copies, creates and extends complex patterns, such as ABC or AABB.	Identifies the smallest unit of a pattern, such as AAB as the smallest unit of the pattern AABAABAAB.	Develops and explains own formula for creating a variety of patterns.
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M 6 Classification



Classification is one of the first ways children make sense of their world. It involves noticing shared features among objects and grouping them, such as putting red blocks together or separating animals from vehicles. These early efforts at organizing build logical reasoning and analytical thinking (Alessandroni and Rodríguez 2020).

In early learning, classification often begins with simple matching, like finding items that are the same in one way. As children grow, they learn to sort objects by more than one feature at a time, such as color and shape. This ability to focus on multiple characteristics lays the groundwork for higher-level thinking (Sousa 2008). Teachers and caregivers can support growth by offering matching and sorting activities that encourage children to notice similarities and differences.

Children also begin cross-classification, understanding that an object can belong to more than one group. For example, a blue triangle belongs with “blue things” and also with “triangles.” This flexible thinking strengthens reasoning and supports later learning in math, science and reading (Nguyen and Murphy 2019; Nguyen and Gelman 2021). By providing opportunities to classify and reclassify, adults help children develop deeper problem-solving skills for school and beyond.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

M 6 Classification

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
M 6 Sorts and graphs	Notifies when two objects are similar in some way.	Creates groups of objects by common characteristics but may be mixed or inconsistent.	Sorts objects by one feature.	After sorting objects by one feature, sorts again by a different feature	Sorts objects by more than one feature and explains why.	Gathers, sorts and categorizes objects or data into two categories and counts how many are in each.	Gathers, represents and answers questions about objects or data in three categories.	Gathers, represents and answers questions about objects or data in four categories.
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Science



Science skills include a child’s ability to ask questions, make predictions and evaluate observations. These skills support children’s exploration of the world and help them understand concepts such as weather, habitats and technology.

Science in early childhood is about nurturing curiosity, encouraging safe exploration and fostering wonder. Children begin to think like scientists when they observe closely, ask questions and test ideas, even before they can explain them in words. Hands-on exploration allows them to discover how things work and build confidence in their ability to learn.

Introducing science early provides many benefits. It strengthens problem-solving, reasoning and communication skills while also supporting overall cognitive development (Stone 2024). Early science experiences help children develop positive attitudes toward learning and build confidence in exploring new ideas, which can foster greater interest in science later on (Head Start ECLKC 2024). Researchers emphasize that inquiry-based, hands-on experiences are especially effective in supporting young learners (National Science Teachers Association 2014).

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes four science skills with seven sub-skills.

SCI 1 Investigation & Inquiry

Observes, describes and records observations, asks questions and makes predictions.

SCI 2 Natural & Earth Science

Understands living and nonliving things and their characteristics and demonstrates knowledge of Earth’s environment.

SCI 3 Physical Science

Explores forces and motion, and examines the physical properties of materials.

SCI 4 Technology

Uses tools and technology to perform tasks

SCI 1 Investigation & Inquiry



Young children are naturally curious and eager to explore. They learn about the world by observing, experimenting and discovering how things work (National Science Teachers Association 2014). Researchers note that “the desire to question, hypothesize, explore and investigate is part of their very being” (Bosse et al. 2009, 10).

In early childhood education, scientific inquiry means children actively explore their environment. They ask questions, try things out and watch what happens. For example, they may wonder why a ball rolls, pour water to see how it moves or collect leaves to compare their shapes. These simple experiences form the building blocks of scientific thinking.

The National Science Teachers Association (2014) highlights that engaging in science and engineering practices during the early years not only fosters curiosity and enjoyment, but also lays the groundwork for future learning. By encouraging inquiry through hands-on exploration, adults can support children’s natural wonder while preparing them for science learning in school and beyond.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SCI 1 Investigation & Inquiry

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SCI 1a Asks questions and makes predictions	Looks for a person or toy that has moved out of sight.	Asks simple questions about a familiar environment through words or gestures.	Begins to understand how things are connected and asks more complex questions about a familiar environment.	When given a question, guesses a possible answer or outcome.	Asks questions about a familiar environment or scientific phenomenon and makes predictions about the outcome.	Predicts multiple outcomes to a question or situation and explains personal reasoning.	Uses prior knowledge and gathered information to make predictions about a scientific phenomenon. Makes hypotheses about scientific phenomena with teacher support.	Asks questions and makes hypotheses about scientific phenomena or hypothetical problems. Conducts an experiment multiple times.
Date:								
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Date:								
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SCI 1 Investigation & Inquiry (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SCI 1b Observes, describes and records	Uses senses to explore environment.	Demonstrates curiosity about objects by touching and manipulating them. Begins to understand cause and effect.	Begins to observe, describe and record a simple scientific phenomenon with teacher support.	Observes and uses prior knowledge to describe and record a scientific phenomenon with teacher prompting.	Observes, describes and records a scientific phenomenon.	Gathers information or experiments to prove/disprove a prediction.	Records findings in charts or diagrams and explains one's problem-solving strategy.	Records and discusses observations and evaluates information to explain a phenomenon or prove/disprove a hypothesis.
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SCI 2 Natural & Earth Science



Life science helps children understand the needs and characteristics of living things. It includes recognizing the difference between living and nonliving, classifying organisms and noticing patterns in the natural world. Young children often explore these concepts through play, guided by their own curiosity. Research shows that even very young children can make sense of the world in thoughtful ways when learning is tied to concrete, hands-on experiences (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine 2022).

Through activities like watering plants, observing animals or comparing objects, children begin to reason scientifically. They may notice that bigger objects are heavier or that plants need water to grow. These explorations also support executive function skills, such as focus, memory and self-regulation. For example, following steps in a science activity or taking turns during group experiments builds important cognitive habits (Schachter and Jo 2018; Fayed et al. 2020, as cited in NASEM 2022).

Most importantly, early experiences with life science nurture a lasting curiosity. High-quality science activities not only strengthen problem-solving, but also build the foundation for later achievement and long-term interest in science (Raven and Wenner 2023).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SCI 2 Natural & Earth Science

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SCI 2a Understands living and nonliving things	Explores immediate environment using senses.	Plays with natural materials and reacts to animals or plants in the immediate environment.	Identifies familiar natural materials, animals or plants and groups them by common characteristics.	Demonstrates an understanding that all living things have needs. Identifies if an object can grow, eat or move.	Describes the characteristics of living things, sorts objects by living and nonliving and explains why.	Describes how living things obtain what they need to survive. Groups living things by complex features.	Describes how a living thing's features and surroundings help it survive.	Describes threats that living things must overcome to survive. Explains the relationships between a variety of species.
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SCI 2 Natural & Earth Science (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SCI 2b Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment	Reacts to weather changes in immediate environment.	Points to and notices natural elements, such as clouds, rain and wind.	Recognizes day and night. Notices changes in temperature and weather.	Identifies the climate and weather in the immediate environment and describes ways to care for the natural world.	Identifies current season and explains how weather affects personal life.	Explains that different places have disparate kinds of weather and climates.	Explains weather patterns and the basic properties and role of the sun, moon and earth.	Describes how the sun and movements of the earth affect climate.
Date:								
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SCI 3 Physical Science



Physical science in early childhood focuses on how children explore forces, motion and materials through play and hands-on experiences. From infancy, children build an understanding of the physical world by manipulating objects, watching movement and using their senses. These explorations support later learning in physics and chemistry by encouraging vocabulary, curiosity and scientific reasoning.

Research shows that even infants expect certain rules, such as knowing that objects fall when unsupported or that solid objects block others. When these expectations are challenged, children use the surprise to learn more (Stahl and Feigenson 2015). Toddlers and preschoolers test cause and effect through play, pushing toys, rolling balls or exploring gravity, friction and magnetism (Solis et al. 2017). They may use simple rules, like thinking heavier objects fall faster, but also show growing awareness of how force changes motion (Harris et al. 2018).

Children also explore materials. Infants notice differences between solids and liquids, while toddlers squeeze and sort by texture or weight. By preschool, children use words like “soft,” “cold” or “sticky” and begin identifying solids, liquids and changes such as melting (Imura et al. 2015; Christodoulakis and Adbo 2024).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SCI 3 Physical Science

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SCI 3a Explores forces and motion	Kicks feet or shakes arms to make other objects move.	Uses body to push or pull toys.	Explores motion by moving, rolling, blowing on or dropping a toy.	Explains how vehicles, animals or people move.	Experiments with and explores invisible forces, such as ramps and magnets.	Experiments and compares the movements of various objects and materials on a variety of surfaces.	Recognizes that gravity makes unsupported objects fall. Identifies objects that are attracted to magnets.	Explains how force is used to change the direction of moving objects.
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Date:								
Notes:								

SCI 3 Physical Science (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SCI 3b Explores the physical properties of materials	Uses senses to explore objects in an immediate environment.	Reacts to changes in texture, temperature, smell, sound or sight.	Begins to name colors.	Describes basic physical properties of objects, such as textures and colors.	Manipulates matter and observes any physical changes that may occur.	Classifies and sorts materials by a variety of physical properties.	Identifies materials that are solid, liquid and gas.	Describe how materials change between different states of matter.
Date:								
Date:								
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SCI 4 Technology



From infancy, children explore objects and gradually discover how to use tools to reach goals. Research shows that even before age two, toddlers can use simple tools, like a stick, to reach an object. Around 18 months they usually succeed with adult guidance, and by about 30 months many can solve simple tool-use problems on their own. Infants who often combine objects during play also show stronger problem-solving skills later (Rat-Fischer et al. 2024).

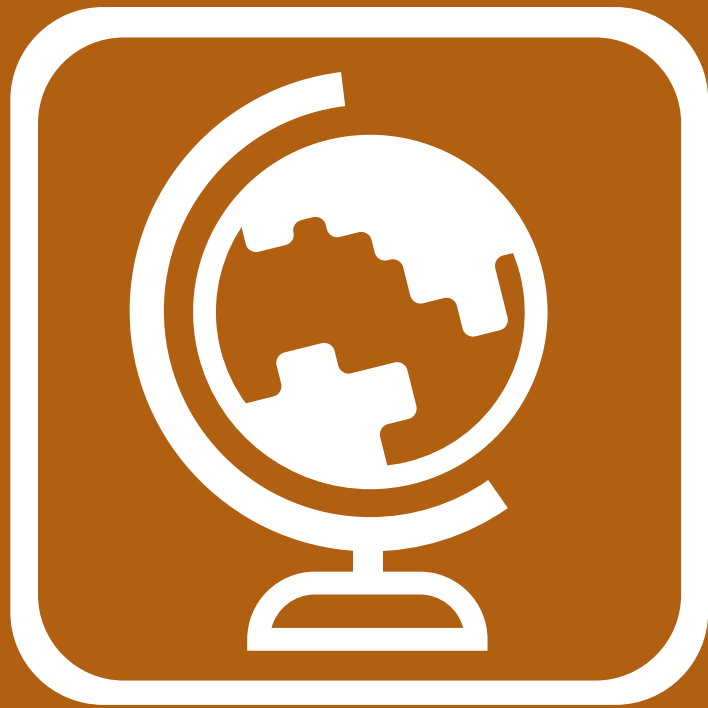
Young children learn tool use through observation and imitation. Preschoolers quickly copy an adult’s use of a tool and can choose the right one for a task, though inventing new tools is more difficult. This gap between using tools and creating them narrows with age and experience (Colbourne et al. 2024).

Children today also explore with digital tools. Studies show that preschoolers can transfer problem-solving strategies from tablets to real-world puzzles (Tarasuik et al. 2017). Interactive technology that is developmentally appropriate can support skills like spatial awareness and reasoning (Clemente-Suárez et al. 2024). However, guided and active use is best, since passive screen time is linked to weaker outcomes (Swider-Cios et al. 2023).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SCI 3 Physical Science

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SCI 4 Uses tools and technology to perform tasks	Explores simple toys.	Begins to use simple toys purposefully.	Explores movable parts on toys.	Explores simple tools or interacts with simple types of technology.	Experiments with tools or technology to solve problems or accomplish tasks.	Uses familiar tools or technology to produce a desired result or solve a specific problem.	Experiments with familiar and unfamiliar tools or technology to achieve a variety of results.	Identifies which tools can best help save time, solve a problem or increase enjoyment.
Date:								
Date:								
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Social Studies



Social studies in early childhood helps children understand the world and their place in it, building on their natural curiosity and everyday observations (NAEYC 2024). Research shows that children’s perceptions of themselves, others and the environment begin forming long before they can speak (Iruka et al. 2021).

Through building community, children learn how people are connected and why shared spaces and responsibilities matter (Vilotti and Berson 2019). Neighborhood experiences, such as visiting parks, noticing different types of buildings or meeting community helpers, make learning meaningful. Opportunities for teamwork and collaborative play also teach children how to share, negotiate and work toward common goals. Even simple routines, like meals or nap times, help children understand the concepts of time and history.

In early childhood, social studies is taught through play, hands-on exploration and interactive activities. These experiences encourage children to construct knowledge actively, while also developing leadership, empathy and inclusion. By learning the value of community and group contributions, young children begin laying the foundation for responsible and engaged citizenship in the future.

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes four social studies skills with eight sub-skills.

SS 1 Culture & Community

Explores communities, families, culture and traditions.

SS 2 Civics & Economics

Follows familiar rules and routines and explores concepts of money and economics.

SS 3 Geography

Identifies types of places and interacts with maps.

SS 4 History & Sense of Time

Develops a sense of time.

SS 1 Culture & Community



Exploring family, community, culture, traditions and diversity helps children build a sense of belonging and understand their role in the world. Through play, they explore social rules, community roles and cultural norms in safe and meaningful ways. As children recognize how they contribute to their community, their self-worth and ability to cooperate grow (NAEYC 2022; Kaiser and Raminsky 2020).

Inclusive environments are especially important. When classrooms value every child and celebrate differences, children feel safe, respected and connected (Swinder Boutte 2010). Friendships with peers from diverse backgrounds foster empathy, broaden perspectives and create a sense of belonging (ChildCare Education Institute 2024). These experiences build both confidence and resilience.

By intentionally nurturing respect for different cultures and traditions, children develop empathy, mutual respect and an early sense of global citizenship. This not only strengthens relationships, but also sparks creativity and problem-solving. Early exposure to diverse perspectives prepares children to navigate the world with greater understanding and sensitivity, laying the foundation for respectful and inclusive communities.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

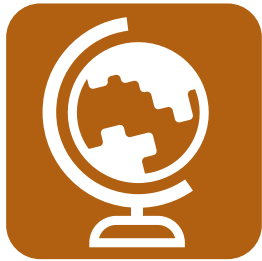
SS 1 Culture & Community

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SS 1 a Identifies community and family roles	Responds to and recognizes primary caregivers.	Recognizes the difference between a familiar and unfamiliar person.	Identifies familiar people and pets.	Describes family members and their relationship to self. Identifies and role-plays familiar community helpers.	Identifies roles of self and others and describes the job each may do.	Compares roles, rules and responsibilities between different groups.	Describes how roles and responsibilities or families and groups change over time.	Identifies features of different communities and how these features impact roles and responsibilities.
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SS 1 Culture & Community

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SS 1b Explores and respects cultures and traditions	Listens to stories or music related to cultures and traditions.	Participates in activities related to cultures or traditions.	Recognizes familiar symbols or artifacts of traditions or customs.	Describes the routines, familiar stories, traditions, foods or celebrations of own family or community.	Explains the meaning and importance of their own traditions or customs. Begins to learn, ask questions and respect other cultures.	Explains the meaning and importance of traditions or customs of other people.	Compares diverse cultures or traditions.	Names influential people or events that have impacted familiar cultures and traditions.
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SS 1c Respects diversity	Sees diverse features of people in books, toys or media.	Explores people and their features, either in person or in pictures.	Identifies similarities and differences between self and others.	Respectfully participates in activities with others different than self.	Shows interest in learning about and interacting with peers who look, learn, believe or move differently.	Explains and celebrates how individuals, families or cultures differ.	Demonstrates an understanding that some people have different needs or beliefs than self and seeks to support them accordingly.	Demonstrates respect for people who look different and have differing abilities or traditions.
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SS 2 Civics & Economics



Young children begin developing civic and economic skills through play and daily interactions. By analyzing situations, making choices and solving problems, they strengthen early critical thinking (Halverson et al. 2024). Working together during play teaches cooperation, negotiation and achieving shared goals. Simple exchanges, like trading toys, introduce children to basic economic concepts and the importance of ownership and respecting others' belongings.

Rules and routines, such as taking turns or following classroom expectations, help children understand governance and social norms. These lessons are often learned through observation and imitation (Borg 2017). Group decision-making, such as voting on a game, lays early foundations for democracy (Illinois Early Learning Project 2023). Role-playing activities, like serving as a classroom leader, give children the chance to practice civic skills in meaningful ways (Halverson et al. 2024).

Through these experiences, children learn responsibility, empathy and the value of shared spaces. Early exposure to civics and economics helps them see themselves as members of a community and prepares them for active participation in society as they grow.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SS 2 Civics & Economics

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SS 2a Follows rules, limits and expectations	Attends to others in immediate environment.	Participates in communal activities.	Recognizes and attends to adults to hear rules, routines and expectations.	Follows familiar rules and routines and helps make group decisions. Expresses feelings about fairness.	Applies familiar rules and suggests new rules in a variety of situations.	Discusses the purposes of rules, laws and civic leaders. Participates in voting to make decisions.	Identifies individual rights. Determines if rules support the common good.	Describes different levels of government, such as local, state and national. Makes democratic decisions.
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SS 2 Civics & Economics (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SS 2b Understands concepts of money and economics	Reaches for desired objects.	Expresses a desire for an object or action. Expresses ownership such as by saying me or mine.	Expresses choice and recognizes interests and desires may be different from others. Explores the concepts of trade.	Asks before taking an object that doesn't belong to them and offers an object to others to get what they want. Explores the concept of money.	Explores the use of trade of both goods and money to receive/buy objects or services.	Exchanges money, goods or services for other goods or services. Identifies value of differing coins.	Describes how and why we save, earn and spend money.	Explains how and why people work together in trade to get what they need and want. Explains why some items are more expensive or valuable.
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SS 3 Geography



Geography in early childhood helps children understand their surroundings and their place within them. Young learners use their five senses to explore, which builds awareness of their environment and supports both belonging and school readiness (Epstein 2014).

Educators and caregivers can nurture this awareness by encouraging children to notice and talk about changes around them, such as shifts in the weather or new items in a classroom. These discussions help children build observation skills and recognize patterns in nature.

Navigating familiar spaces, like a classroom or neighborhood, also develops spatial awareness and “mental maps” of the world. Activities that highlight community landmarks, such as parks, libraries or bridges, strengthen this understanding (Catling 2006; NAEYC; Brillante and Mankiw 2015).

Hands-on exploration is the heart of early geography. By interacting with their environment, using their senses and asking questions, children form meaningful connections to the world around them. These early experiences foster curiosity, confidence and the skills they need for future learning.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SS 3 Geography

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SS 3a Identifies types of places	Responds to changes in the immediate environment.	Recognizes familiar places.	Identifies a variety of familiar places in own community.	Identifies different types of water bodies, streets, buildings or landmarks in own community.	Explains the purpose for different types of structures, such as bridges and buildings. Asks questions about landmarks.	Compares the geographic features of one’s community to another community.	Identifies and describes various types of landforms and natural resources.	Explains how the physical features and characteristics of an environment affect how people live.
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SS 3 Geography (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SS 3b Interacts with maps	Navigates within a familiar environment.	Finds ways to move around obstacles in a familiar environment.	Follows a path.	Recognizes symbols or landmarks.	Identifies what is represented on a map and draws pictures of current location.	Recreates a map of something they cannot immediately see.	Locates familiar places on maps. Uses cardinal directions to follow and give directions.	Uses a variety of maps to gather information.
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SS 4 History & Sense of Time



History in early childhood is about understanding events that happened in the past and connecting them to present experiences. Celebrations like birthdays or holidays help children recognize the sequence of events and build an early sense of time. Using words like “yesterday,” “today” and “tomorrow” further develops their time vocabulary.

Children develop time awareness through rhythm, repetition and sequences, such as daily schedules or recurring events (Fardi 2022). Storytelling and visual aids, like picture cards or simple timelines, make history concrete and relatable. Activities that involve sequencing or retelling events help children understand that experiences have a beginning, middle and end.

By linking past events to their own lives, children build a foundation for historical thinking while strengthening memory, language and social understanding.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

SS 4 History & Sense of Time

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
SS 4 Develops sense of time	Focuses on interactions with others for a short time.	Indicates the beginning or ending of an event	Describes events as they happen. Uses words such as “first” and “then.”	Recalls information and events from the past. Recognizes sequence of events to establish a sense of order and time.	Uses language of time to describe familiar sequences of events.	Retells historical, fictional or past events or stories.	Compares and contrasts current and historical conditions of familiar environments.	Describes relationships between past events and current conditions. Explains why it is important to understand historical events.
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Creative Arts



Creative arts activities foster children’s cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth, building a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Through music, dance, movement, visual arts and drama, children express themselves, explore their world and develop essential skills in engaging and playful ways (Mills 2014).

Research shows that arts education strengthens cognitive abilities, including problem-solving and critical thinking (Eisner 2002). Creative expression also supports communication, imagination and self-awareness. When children experiment with art materials, act out roles or explore movement, they learn to solve problems creatively and use symbols to understand their environment (Pulver 2018).

Exposure to the arts develops confidence and encourages children to take risks in expressing themselves. It provides opportunities for them to practice new ideas, collaborate with others and build resilience. Without such opportunities, children may miss important experiences that support creativity and skill development. Integrating the arts into daily learning creates a holistic approach that nurtures curiosity and helps children grow into well-rounded individuals (Barton 2015).

The Experience Developmental Continuum of Skills includes four creative arts (CA) skills with nine sub-skills.

CA 1 Music

Expresses through music and develops rhythm and tone.

CA 2 Dance & Movement

Expresses through dance and develops movement techniques.

CA 3 Visual Arts

Expresses through 2D and 3D visual art. Develops artistic techniques.

CA 4 Drama

Participates in dramatic and symbolic play. Uses props to represent other objects or ideas.

CA 1 Music



Music development is a child’s exploration of sound, rhythm and tone. Singing, rhymes, instrument play and movement activities help children express themselves creatively while also strengthening memory, attention and pattern recognition. Research shows that music can boost spatial reasoning, language skills and overall cognitive development (Schellenberg 2004).

Music also supports social and emotional growth. Group experiences like singing or drumming together encourage cooperation, turn-taking and positive social behaviors. Music promotes well-being by allowing children to express feelings and connect with others in joyful ways (Ruokonen et al. 2023).

Through playful activities such as clapping to a beat, imitating sounds or experimenting with instruments, children gain a foundational understanding of rhythm and tone. These experiences enhance auditory perception, motor coordination and appreciation for music. Exposure to diverse rhythms and melodies fosters creativity while supporting language development, problem-solving and reasoning skills.

Early engagement in music creates lasting benefits. Studies show that musical participation not only improves vocabulary and communication, but also strengthens attention, memory and emotional expression—skills that support learning across many areas and remain valuable into adulthood (Ruokonen et al. 2023).

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

CA 1 Music

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
CA 1a Expresses through music	Makes sounds to communicate feelings.	Repeats words in familiar songs and attempts to sing.	Expresses likes and dislikes of familiar songs. Explores shaking, pounding or tapping various instruments.	Uses voice, common objects or instruments to create music. Identifies self as a musician.	Uses voice or instruments to express feelings or to mimic sound effects.	Communicates ideas by creating rhythm or melody.	Interprets and compares many types of music.	Experiments and performs self-written music or rhythmic patterns.
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CA 1 Music (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary					
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8	
CA 1b Develops rhythm	Responds to rhythm.	Responds to changes in rhythm.	Claps to beat. May not always be consistent.	Claps along to simple rhythm patterns.	Repeats simple rhythm patterns.	Creates simple rhythm patterns.	Maintains a steady beat. Recognizes strong/weak beats. Begins to read rhythm notation.	Maintains rhythm in various meter groupings.	
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CA 1c Develops tone	Responds to sounds.	Responds to changes in sound, volume or melody.	Understands the difference between singing and speaking voices.	Controls voice to mimic the melodic direction.	Hears the change of musical phrases in a song. Sings along to familiar songs.	Controls pitch when singing a familiar song.	Matches vocal pitch in a limited range.	Participates in call-and-response and two-part rounds.	
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CA 2 Dance & Movement



Dance and movement activities help children build coordination, balance and body awareness. Through movement, they express themselves, develop rhythm and timing and strengthen both fine and gross motor skills. Research shows that dance also supports creativity, cultural understanding and self-esteem, while improving spatial awareness and reducing stress (Theodotou 2025).

Beyond physical growth, dance offers important emotional and social benefits. It can boost confidence, body image and self-awareness, while lowering anxiety and aggression. Group dance experiences encourage social connection, cooperation and joy, helping children feel like part of a community.

Because dance is adaptable, it can be tailored to meet the needs of all children, including those with emotional or developmental challenges. Programs that emphasize creative movement and self-expression promote both physical health and emotional well-being (Tao et al. 2022).

Dance is a natural form of expression for young children. When given opportunities to move freely and creatively, they not only strengthen bodies, but also discover new ways to share feelings, connect with others and build confidence in themselves.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

CA 2 Dance & Movement

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
CA 2a Expresses through dance	Uses body language to express feelings.	Uses purposeful gestures and body language to communicate.	Moves in own way to music and rhythm.	Demonstrates different levels of energy in dance, such as gentle versus explosive or small versus large movements.	Demonstrates the difference between spontaneous and planned movement. Creates movements based on own ideas.	Expresses ideas, feelings and stories through creative movement.	Coordinates movements of self and others to create a cohesive dance or idea.	Describes how dances and movements express certain ideas or feelings.
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CA 2 Dance & Movement (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
CA 2b Develops movement techniques	Moves body in a variety of ways.	Moves body purposely such as by swaying or bouncing to music.	Follows the movements of others. Explores personal space and direction.	Demonstrates multiple ways to move body parts. Moves to the beat.	Follows a leader to perform a simple movement pattern.	Recalls a simple movement pattern and performs it individually or in a group.	Recalls and dances a sequence of two or three movement patterns. Identifies the beginning, middle and end of a dance.	Creates simple movement sequences.
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CA 3 Visual Arts



Visual arts, such as drawing, painting and sculpting, give children opportunities to explore creativity while building fine motor skills. These activities spark imagination, problem-solving and decision-making. Classrooms that value art encourage expression, communication and self-confidence, which support children’s social development through cooperation and experimentation (Vasilaki 2024).

Art also strengthens perception and helps children better understand their world. Throughout history, art has been an important form of communication. For young children, creating art engages the senses, builds brain connections and provides a meaningful way to share creativity, emotions and cultural identity (Tyler and Likova 2012; de Lautour 2020).

In addition to fostering expression, visual arts promote critical thinking. As children make artistic choices, they actively process and interpret information from many sources. The act of creating also offers an outlet for self-discovery and emotional growth. Whether through finger painting, using clay or experimenting with colors, art gives children a powerful way to explore who they are and how they connect to the world.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

CA 3 Visual Arts

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
CA 3a Expresses through 2D and 3D visual art	Expresses emotions while exploring materials.	Scribbles, colors or paints intentionally on paper.	Explores a variety of artistic tools and media.	Makes choices throughout the artistic process.	Plans, designs and seeks materials to make a creation.	Creates art to represent an idea or object. Explains how it was made.	Creates art to express ideas, thoughts and feelings.	Creates art and explains why and how they chose specific materials and techniques.
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CA 3 Visual Arts (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary					
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8	Benchmark 8
CA 3b Develops visual art techniques	Explores materials using gross motor movements and senses.	Uses hands and feet to explore a variety of media.	Uses materials to create shapes or symbols.	Chooses an object or art tool to use with a given medium for a desired effect.	Uses artistic tools and media to create intentional designs or images.	Demonstrates a variety of techniques using a given tool or medium.	Uses various tools and techniques to achieve desired artistic results.	Compares artistic techniques and creations of many artists.	
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CA 4 Drama



Drama and imaginative play give children the chance to step into different roles, explore emotions and practice social skills. By pretending to be characters or acting out scenarios, children develop language and communication as they learn to express their thoughts and ideas clearly. Dramatic play also fosters empathy by allowing children to consider the perspectives, feelings and behaviors of others.

This kind of play often includes role-playing, symbolic use of objects and changing storylines over time. Research shows that dramatic play supports self-regulation, as children practice managing emotions and following rules within a pretend context (Khomais et al. 2019).

Playing with peers adds another important layer. Dramatic play encourages negotiation, cooperation and problem-solving, helping children navigate group interactions (Ambrosio 2023). Pretend play provides a safe space to try out social behaviors, build friendships and strengthen confidence (Jaggy et al. 2023).

By offering opportunities for dramatic play, adults support children’s imagination and social development. These experiences prepare children to engage with others more thoughtfully while building creativity and resilience that benefit them throughout life.

GOAL	NEXT STEPS

CA 4 Drama

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
CA 4a Participates in dramatic and symbolic play	Imitates simple movements and facial expressions.	Mimics observed behaviors and words.	Uses words, actions and props to pretend.	Plays a role in group dramatic play.	Assigns roles and plays out unscripted scenes in dramatic play.	With cues, performs a simple pre-planned drama.	Describes how a character may feel in a given situation, then integrates that emotion into performance.	Rehearses, memorizes and performs a short play.
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CA 4 Drama (cont.)

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	Primary				
Sub-skill / Definition	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3	Benchmark 4	Benchmark 5	Benchmark 6	Benchmark 7	Benchmark 8
CA 4b Uses and creates props to represent other objects or ideas	Responds to props or puppets.	Mimics the use of familiar objects.	Uses realistic toys as replacements for real objects. Distinguishes between real and pretend.	Uses an object as a replacement for a realistic prop or real object.	Uses a combination of real and imaginary props or characters to play out a scene.	Uses a combination of real and imaginary props or characters to play out multiple scenes or events.	With adult support, plans a story and creates costumes, settings or props to create a mood or environment.	Plans a story and creates costumes, settings or props to create a mood or environment.
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