

# **A Booklet for Kansas Families**

# ***Social Emotional Development***



**Birth to Age 5**

**Based on the Kansas Early Learning Document**



# GREETINGS!

A child's early development builds a foundation for later learning. The purpose of this booklet is to introduce families to some of the skills, called developmental milestones, that children develop and the order in which they happen. A sampling of ideas to help develop these skills is found in the following pages.

Children develop differently, even in the same family. Two children, side by side, will not necessarily have the same skills at the same time.

This booklet has been compiled to provide information on the development of social and emotional skills in young children and is intended for use by Kansas families.

This booklet weaves a common thread of understanding related to what social and emotional development looks like in early childhood.

## Suggested Use of This Booklet:

- As a starting point for conversations about the development of children.
- As a guide for families to help support their child's development through suggested activities.

If you have concerns about the progress of your child, you might talk with your child's doctor, local health department, or you may request a free screening by contacting the following agencies:

For children birth to three years old, contact:

Kansas Department of Health, Infant Toddler Services

(800) 332-6262

For children over three years old, contact:

Kansas State Department of Education

(800) 203-9462

Let us know if we can be of further help!

Sincerely,

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC)  
1-866-711-6711

# Young Infants *by 8 months*

## What to Watch For

1. Young infants smile and show pleasure when others talk to them.
2. Young infants in this age range typically begin to recognize and respond to hearing their own name.
3. Young infants will try to get and hold your attention!  
They want to be held, talked to, played with or cuddled.
4. You may hear your young infant make sounds as you speak, sing or smile.
5. You may see that your child prefers to be held by you.
6. Your infant is able to express comfort by smiling or discomfort by crying.
7. Your child is comforted when held by you or another familiar adult.
8. Your child may cry when separated from you.
9. Right now, learning happens through the senses, (touching, tasting, feeling, seeing, hearing and smelling). For example, mouthing toys to explore texture and taste.
10. Young infants smile and laugh at physical games such as peek-a-boo, and look forward to what might happen next.
11. Your young infant may calm self by sucking thumb, lip or pacifier, looking or turning head away.



# Young Infants *by 8 months*

## How to Help - Try This!

1. Let your infant hear your voice by talking to her about what is happening in the surroundings.
2. Get your young infant's attention by saying his/her name. Young infants learn your voice and your face very quickly!
3. Use a front baby carrier or a baby sling while walking through the store to help your young infant feel secure and close to you. The best place to see your face and the world is from the safety of your arms.
4. Young infants will likely form a pattern of when they want to eat, sleep, and play. Be as flexible as possible to your baby's own unique pattern.
5. Repeat your baby's cooing and other noises. These are first attempts to talk with you!
6. Your infant learns to trust you when you respond quickly to your child's need.
7. Soft books, big plastic blocks and toys that make noise for your young infant, are important for your young infant to see and hold. They are important for learning. Always make sure small parts can't be swallowed!
8. Playing peek-a-boo repeatedly with your young infant builds trust.
9. Use the same rhymes and chants, along with a soft tickle to stimulate your baby and teach anticipation of what's coming next. You are likely to be rewarded with lots of smiles and laughter.

# Older Infants *by 18 months*

## What to Watch For

1. Older infants will refer to themselves as “me,” or say that something is “mine.”
2. Older infants rely on adults for attention and help.
3. Your child may prefer to be with you although other people are around.
4. Older infants enjoy “peek a boo” and “bye-bye” or other simple games at this age.
5. Older infants typically will follow 1-step rules with reminders and help from adults.
6. At this age, children will likely point to themselves and other family members if you say their name.
7. Older infants begin to hold, look at and play with toys or books for longer periods of time.
8. Your older infant may begin to play near another child, and occasionally share toys.



# Older Infants *by 18 months*

## How to Help - Try This!

1. Your older infant might claim ownership of a toy by saying the words, “me,” or “mine.”
2. Continue to hold, talk to and play simple games like rolling a ball back and forth, with your older infant. This will establish that your older infant can depend on you for love and protection.
3. Older infants are learning to calm themselves when they are upset but still need you to help make them feel comfortable and safe. Don't be afraid to hold your older infant gently and provide comfort if your older infant's own efforts are not working.
4. Play simple games repeatedly with your older infant, such as “peek-a-boo,” and “bye-bye.” Your child is learning even though you are out of their sight briefly, you will always be back!
5. As your older infant begins to explore, keep in mind that they are learning to follow rules and learning about what is safe. Gentle reminders from you will be needed as they learn.
6. Names of family members may be some of the new words your older infant learns. Point to a family member, say their name, and then ask baby, “Who is this?” “Is this Daddy?” Then, wait for a response.
7. Give your baby age appropriate toys that babies find interesting. Buckets with handles, large boxes, soft or board, books with fun rhymes that you read again and again, and toys that make noise may be favorites. Remember to keep safety in mind when choosing toys!
8. Take your baby to places where there is the opportunity to play with other children of the same age. Older infants may not play cooperatively with other children at this age, but will probably play beside each other, an important step in every baby's development.

# Toddlers *by 36 months*

## What to Watch For

1. Toddlers may say “you,” “he,” or “she” when talking about other people.
2. Most toddlers will communicate wants and needs, likes and dislikes with 1 or 2 word phrases and sounds.
3. Toddlers tend to be affectionate and like to hug or to hold hands for short amounts of time.
4. If a friend cries or is happy, your toddler may also show the same emotion.



5. A toddler may play with either boys or girls.
6. A toddler may say “no” frequently. This is typical and helps him understand limits and making choices.
7. Changing activities may be stressful for a toddler.
8. Toddlers may understand they belong with and are a member of their family.
9. Toddlers may play games that go back and forth between people such as, saying hello or waving bye-bye.
10. Toddlers may begin to use toys for their intended purpose, for example, using a brush to brush hair.
11. Many toddlers may pretend to be someone very familiar to them while playing, such as mommy or daddy.

# Toddlers *by 36 months*

## How to Help - Try This!

1. Say “you,” “he,” and/or “she” when talking about other people with your toddler.
2. Naming your toddler’s emotion, such as saying, “I see that you’re angry,” will help your toddler understand how to name feelings. This is an important step in learning to identify and control emotions.
3. Toddlers like to cuddle and be held, but not all the time! Your toddler will let you know when the time is right, and when it isn’t. Be patient and follow your toddler’s wishes.
4. Toddlers may imitate the emotions of friends. For example, they may cry if a friend cries, or laugh if a friend laughs. Name the emotion that your toddler is imitating and ask them if they’re upset because their friend is upset.
5. Toddler boys and girls play together. Parks, play dates, story time at the library, and playgroups are all great opportunities for toddlers to make friends!
6. Toddlers typically say “no” frequently. Try using “please” and “thank you!” as often as “no” when correcting behaviors. Offer 2 choices that are appropriate so the child has a part in the decision to be made. For example, you may wash your hands in the kitchen sink or in the bathroom sink.
7. Changing activities can be stressful for toddlers. Make sure to give them plenty of time to adjust to the idea that you’re getting ready to do something else.
8. Tell your toddler the names of family members while pointing to their pictures. This is a great way to remember family members and friends who may not be in his life every day.
9. Toddlers will typically enjoy playing peek-a-boo, waving bye-bye, or other back and forth games.
10. Using a toy for its intended purpose, such as a doll brush for doll hair, or blocks to build is common for toddlers. You may need to demonstrate how to use new toys, but let your toddler use imagination once the demonstration is over!
11. You might also notice that your toddler is now able to use imagination to pretend to be someone else when playing. Dress-up clothes they can put on themselves and are easy to fasten now make great props. For example, hats, shoes, purses, gloves and shirts.

# Young Preschoolers *by 48 months*

## What to Watch For

1. Young preschoolers may take turns using things, sharing, and talking in a small group, with adult help.
2. Your preschooler may now play in groups or with one or two other children.
3. Taking turns in conversation is something young preschoolers may do.
4. Young preschoolers may listen while others are speaking.
5. Young preschoolers may connect their own actions and the reactions of others. For example, taking a toy from a friend without asking makes the friend unhappy.
6. Most young preschoolers can tell you if they are mad, sad or unhappy.
7. Young preschoolers rely on familiar routines during the day and throughout the week.
8. Young preschoolers use their senses to explore, discover and problem-solve. They frequently ask adults “why” questions.
9. Young preschoolers are beginning to take care of their own personal needs, such as washing their hands, toileting, or dressing themselves, with occasional reminders from you.
10. With your help, young preschoolers may accept changes to daily routines more easily.



# Young Preschoolers *by 48 months*

## How to Help - Try This!

1. Provide opportunities for your young preschooler to interact with other children in play situations. You may need to help the young preschooler learn to take turns.
2. Help your young preschooler learn to include others in play by inviting others to play along.
3. Language develops by having conversations with your child. Encourage your older preschooler to tell you all about their day and their friends. Children focus on the present, that is, today.
4. Teach your young preschooler to take turns during conversation by listening while others speak, providing eye contact, and speaking to your preschooler softly and slowly.
5. Help your young preschooler connect actions with the feelings of others. For example, tell your young preschooler, "When you smile at me, I feel happy," or "When you hit me, it hurts me and I feel sad."
6. Teach your child words to describe his feelings. Mad and glad, happy and sad, frustrated and excited, etc.
7. Provide consistent routines for your child. When your young preschooler knows what to expect, conflict can often be avoided.
8. Provide opportunities for your young preschooler to use their 5 senses to explore the world: taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight. Expect them to ask questions that begin with why!
9. Praise the personal hygiene efforts of your young preschooler when hands are washed, or dressing or toileting is accomplished independently even if it is not done completely or thoroughly. Always recognize the efforts of the child.
10. Opportunities for young preschoolers to interact with other children are critical for learning to share toys, and taking turns in conversation. Look for social opportunities for your child to interact with children of a similar age.
11. When change in a daily routine needs to happen, do your best to warn of what's coming and when to expect the change. For example, "Today is Tuesday." We have a doctor's appointment today so we need to leave after we eat our lunch.

# Older Preschoolers *by 60 months*

## What to Watch For

1. Preschoolers may describe themselves, tell their name, whether they're a boy or girl, tall or short, and what they look like.
2. Older preschoolers often encourage their playmates by telling them they've done a good job.
3. Your older preschooler may tell you about interests and name friends.
4. Preschoolers may have friends they prefer, but may play with different children each day.
5. Most children are able to follow rules and simple 2 step directions at this age.
6. Older preschoolers may take turns or share without adult reminders.
7. Most preschoolers can tell you a short story and will expect adults to respond appropriately by acting sad if it's a sad story or happy if it's a happy story.
8. Older preschoolers will usually fill in the words to a familiar story if the person reading waits for the child to finish a sentence or rhyme.
9. Building with blocks or other items and creating with markers, paper and glue, are activities older preschoolers usually enjoy.
10. Older preschoolers use their imaginations to create play situations together, such as playing grocery store or hospital.



# Older Preschoolers *by 60 months*

## How to Help - Try This!

1. Encourage your child's attempts to describe self as a boy or girl, tall or short, light or dark hair, or other personal characteristics.
2. Set an example for your older preschooler to encourage playmates by telling your own preschooler what they have done well.
3. Ask your older preschooler about interests and friends and listen carefully to answers!
4. Provide opportunities for play with other older preschoolers. Structured as well as unstructured settings where children the same age can play gives older preschoolers a chance to learn to make friends.
5. Older preschoolers may be able to follow the rules you set for them. Make sure your older preschooler understands what you mean when you set a rule or give them directions by asking to repeat it back to you. Provide gentle redirection if the rules are broken and encourage positive behavior by noticing and praising a child who is following the rules and directions.
6. Give your older preschooler the opportunity to make choices so it is understood you trust the decisions that they make and expect them to make good choices.
7. Read stories and poetry with rhymes to your older preschooler. Tell stories and listen to the stories of your older preschooler. You will be expected to react, so listen closely!
8. Older preschoolers may want you to read the same stories or rhymes over and over again. Try reading the first few words and wait expectantly for your older preschooler to finish the sentence. They may have the story memorized and can help the telling!
9. Encourage your older preschooler by commenting on hard work, rather than the final product, when doing things like painting, writing, reading, or building block towers.
10. Provide opportunities for older preschoolers to dress up by supplying them with old clothes, toy dishes, costumes, or other objects used to play dress up games. Join in the fun by asking, "Who should I be?" or "What should I do next?"

## Resources

- Gowen, Jean Wixon and Brennan Nebrig. 2002. Enhancing Early Emotional Development: *Guiding Parents of Young Children*. Chicago: Brookes.
- Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health & the Michigan Department of Community Health. 2004. *Baby Stages: A Parent's and Caregiver's Guide to the Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Toddlers*.
- Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health. 2006. *Preschool Stages: A Parent's and Professional's Guide to Social and Emotional Development in the Preschool Years*.
- Parlakian, Rebecca. (2003). Before the ABC's: Promoting school readiness in infants and toddlers. Zero to Three Center for Program Excellence.
- PBS Home Programs. 2009. I'm Glad I'm Me: Developing Self-Esteem in Young Children.  
<http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/parents/glad.html>
- Smith, Charles. 1988. 100 Ways for a parent to say, "Very Good." Kansas State University Extension Office.
- Zero to Three. School Readiness: Birth to 3.  
[http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter\\_par\\_sri#stepone](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_par_sri#stepone)
- Zero to Three. Social Emotional Development.  
[http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=key\\_social](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=key_social)
- Bright Futures at Georgetown University. Bright Futures Developmental Tools for Families and Providers.  
<http://www.brightfutures.org/tools/index.html> - tools
- Bright Futures at Georgetown University. Family Tip Sheets.  
<http://www.brightfutures.org/TipSheets/>

## Resources

Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. Parent Training Modules and Family Tools.  
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/familytools.html>

Children's Home Society of California. (2009).  
[http://www.chsca.org/pdf/mrf\\_non\\_ca\\_eng.pdf](http://www.chsca.org/pdf/mrf_non_ca_eng.pdf)

Family Education Network. (2009).  
<http://life.familyeducation.com/baby/toddler/34411.html?detoured=1>

Kansas Association for Infant Mental Health. (2009). Parent FAQ.  
<http://www.kaimh.org/faq.htm>

Kansas State University Research and Extension Office.  
<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/>

Kansas Strengthening Families.  
<http://www.ksfplan.org/>

Smith, M. Oh Baby: A "What to Expect and When To Worry" guide for Parents and Care Givers of Children from Birth to 18 Months.  
[http://www.kpirc.org/uploads/Oh\\_Baby.pdf](http://www.kpirc.org/uploads/Oh_Baby.pdf)

Smith, M. Toddling, Tantrums, and Tall Tales! A "What to Expect and When To Worry" guide for Parents and Care Givers of Children from 2 To 5.  
<http://www.kpirc.org/uploads/Toddling.pdf>

Social Skills and Academic Achievement.  
<http://www.nichcy.org/Research/EvidenceForEducation/Pages/SocialSkillsIntro.aspx>

Talaris Institute. (2009). Five ways a child grows: A timeline for typical development.  
<http://www.talaris.org/timeline.htm>

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children: Recommended Practices Handouts, (TACESI).  
<http://www.challengingbehavior.org/do/resources/handouts.htm>



For additional copies of this booklet please contact:

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