

# FLORIDA EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL STANDARDS: *Birth to Five*



Form OEL-SR 30 (August 2012)  
Rule 6M-4.700, Florida Administrative Code

The Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards were created by using multiple resources, of which, one was the Alaska Guidelines. It is important to note that Alaska Guidelines were adapted from the Washington State Guidelines and were revised by Alaskans to meet the unique concerns of children their State. We wish to acknowledge the work of Alaska and Washington State. Specifically, for Washington State, we want to thank the WA State Department of Early Learning, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Core Interagency Team and Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan and her team at Columbia University for providing the basis for the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines which greatly influenced Florida's guidelines.

Florida's Office of Early Learning (OEL) and the Department of Education/Office of Early Learning (DOE) worked collaboratively to develop one set of standards for Florida's four-year-olds participating in either the School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program. The revised four-year-old standards, adopted by the State Board of Education and promulgated into rule by OEL will continue to provide guidance for early learning programs. When Four-Year-Olds Standards are referenced, see the "Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011), <http://www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/feldsfyo.pdf>," which is incorporated by reference into rule 6A-1.099823, F.A.C., and which is hereby incorporated by reference into this rule and which may be obtained from Florida's Office of Early Learning at the following address: 250 Marriott Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, (866) 357-3239, TTY/Florida Relay 711, and at the Internet website: <http://www.floridaearlylearning>.

## INTRODUCTION

The first five years of life is a period of rapid development for young children. Recent research supports that every child is born with well-developed senses and reflexes. Beginning at birth, young infants are able to form relationships with adults, develop trust, and explore the world. With adequate nutrition, an appropriate environment, and nurturing by responsive adults, young children become actively engaged in exploration and in learning about their environments. Each child's special temperament and family context ensure that, while development will follow a somewhat predictable sequence, the child's development will be unique.

Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards is a comprehensive document containing age-appropriate information and reflections about how young children explore, create, and think. The Standards are grounded in Florida's conviction that children's early experiences are directly related to later success in school, in the workforce, and in life. The information in this document is offered to parents, caregivers, and teachers so that their interactions with young children in the home, and in School Readiness, Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK), and other early care and education programs can build upon children's emerging talents and strengths in appropriate and enriching ways.

In 2007, Florida's Office of Early Learning created a Steering Committee to provide guidance for a comprehensive set of Standards that would provide a developmentally appropriate educational path for Florida's children from birth through age four. This document addresses five developmental domains. For each developmental domain the Office has identified Standards which reflect the expectations regarding a child's age appropriate progress. In addition, the Office has provided Guiding Principles for each developmental domain, including descriptions, information, and definitions designed to provide guidance related to each Standard.

## HOW TO USE THE STANDARDS

Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards are organized into five domains, or areas of development. These domains include the following: Physical Development; Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Communication; Cognitive Development and General Knowledge. Each domain is divided into sub-domains that focus on specific areas. The Standards themselves are found within those sub-domains.

The Standards can be used in multiple ways by a variety of audiences. This includes the following:

- The Standards can help adults understand what children may be able to do, and what to expect as they develop. While the Standards are not designed to be a screening or an assessment tool, they can serve to help adults understand the typical order of development during the early years.
- The Standards can guide parents, caregivers, and teachers as they plan intentional and appropriate experiences for young children, based on an understanding of each child's developmental accomplishments and anticipated next steps.
- The Standards can be a useful tool for enriching the experiences of young children with special needs. These children tend to develop less or more rapidly, or even out of sequence in the various domains. Understanding and planning for these children can help all who participate in early care and education programs.
- The Standards create a common language for parents, caregivers, and teachers. A hallmark of sound, early experiences is that the adults who care about young children work together to ensure a seamless and enriching early experience - one that is based on nurturing relationships and active exploration of a changing world. Having a shared language for communication increases the probability that these adult partnerships will be successful.

## GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards are based on knowledge provided by some of the nation's leading child care experts. This document incorporates principles that represent our collective knowledge about child development and best practices, including the following:

***The first five years is a period of rapid growth and development.***

Development begins prenatally and continues throughout life. During the first three years of development, a child's brain connections become increasingly complex, and interference with those connections could have long-term effects on development. Children's increasing physical prowess facilitates learning across all domains. The capacity to form and maintain productive and nurturing relationships with other people supports the development of cognitive and language skills.

***Nurturing and responsive relationships are the foundation of health, growth, and development.***

Young children depend on the unconditional love, support, and guidance of those adults who care for them in order to maximize new learning opportunities. The most important relationship in a young child's life is the one between that child and her/his parents. Other significant adults must work in partnership with parents to ensure a seamless and supportive environment.

***Consistency and continuity of experiences promotes development.***

Young children thrive when there are common threads across the settings in which they develop. Their confidence in trying new skills and finding unique information is more apt to occur when they can more accurately predict their environments, and have a sense of trust in the adults that care for them.

***Developmental milestones occur in a somewhat predictable order, but each child develops at a unique pace.***

Development occurs in all five domains, but not necessarily at the same pace. Growth in one domain can affect growth in other domains. Development is shaped by many factors, including genetics, the early environment, individual temperament and cultural background.

***Children learn in many ways and in multiple settings.***

Learning occurs in all parts of the child's world – at home, in early childhood settings, and in communities. Young children learn from their daily routines, and from both planned and unplanned activities. They learn from adults and from other children. This learning is enhanced when adults actively guide and expand young children's play through exploration, encouragement, imitation, and repetition. Limited overt direction from adults may be necessary as well.

***Adults can provide intentional and appropriate experiences that enhance children's learning.***

Significant adults in a child's life can support and enrich development by ensuring that basic health and safety needs are met. Providing a supportive and joyous environment can encourage a young child to love exploration and problem-solving, and to try out new skills and take risks. The quality and quantity of a child's early experiences can impact that child's later success in school, in the workforce, and in life.

# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



## Guiding Principles

During their first five years, young children undergo more rapid and dramatic changes in their physical development than at any other time in their lives. Changes in body proportion, coordination, and strength occur, as does increasingly complex brain development. Children develop remarkable physical, motor, and sensory capacities that enhance exploration and mastery of the environment.

Physical development impacts other developmental areas. Research and experience suggest that planned physical activities and exposure to a wide array of experiences are keys to the physical development of young children. Increased body control enables young children to become active partners in managing their own health, safety, and physical fitness. Because many health-related behaviors (e.g., eating preferences, exercise patterns) are developed in childhood, it is vital that the adults who care for young children consciously promote physical development.

There are four components to young children's physical development.

**Gross motor development** refers to the use, refinement, and coordination of the body's large muscles.

**Fine motor development** focuses on the use, refinement, and coordination of the small muscles.

**Self-help** refers to the child's capacity to accomplish health and self-care routines independently and interdependently with significant adults.

**Health** includes physical, dental, auditory, and visual development as well as the nutritional, mental health, and wellness needs of young children.

Throughout their early years, children demonstrate increasingly complex capacities that enable them to create their own learning experiences. As they master new and more complicated tasks, children's self-confidence increases. Parents, caregivers, and teachers can provide safe and supportive exploration, excitement about new accomplishments, and respect for individual differences.



# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



## Standards

### Birth to 8 Months

#### A. Gross Motor Development

1. Shows characteristics of appropriate health and development
2. Demonstrates beginning signs of balance, control, and coordination

#### B. Fine Motor Development

1. Demonstrates visual abilities that support healthy growth and development
2. Demonstrates beginning signs of strength, control, and eye-hand coordination

#### C. Self-Help

1. Demonstrates beginning participation in self-care
2. Participates in basic health and safety routines

#### D. Health

1. Shows characteristics of good nutritional health
2. Exhibits auditory abilities that support healthy growth and development
3. Shows characteristics of good oral health
4. Shows basic physical needs are met

## 8 to 18 Months

### A. Gross Motor Development

1. Shows characteristics of appropriate health and development
2. Demonstrates increased balance, control, and coordination

### B. Fine Motor Development

1. Demonstrates visual abilities that support healthy growth and development
2. Demonstrates increased strength, control, and eye-hand coordination

### C. Self-Help

1. Demonstrates increased participation in self-care
2. Participates in basic health and safety routines

### D. Health

1. Shows characteristics of good nutritional health
2. Exhibits auditory abilities to support healthy growth and development
3. Shows characteristics of good oral health
4. Shows basic physical needs are met

## 18 to 24 Months

### A. Gross Motor Development

1. Shows characteristics of appropriate health and development
2. Demonstrates improved signs of balance, control and coordination

### B. Fine Motor Development

1. Demonstrates visual abilities to support healthy growth and development
2. Demonstrates improved strength, control, and eye-hand coordination

### C. Self-Help

1. Demonstrates participation in self-care
2. Participates in basic health and safety routines

## 18 to 24 Months (continued)

### D. Health

1. Shows characteristics of good nutritional health
2. Exhibits auditory abilities to support healthy growth and development
3. Shows characteristics of good oral health
4. Shows basic physical needs are met

## 2-Year-Olds

### A. Gross Motor Development

1. Shows characteristics of appropriate health and development
2. Demonstrates advancing balance, control, and coordination

### B. Fine Motor Development

1. Develops visual abilities to support healthy growth and development
2. Demonstrates advancing strength, control, and eye-hand coordination

### C. Self-Help

1. Demonstrates advancing participation in self-care
2. Participates in basic health and safety routines

### D. Health

1. Exhibits auditory abilities to support healthy growth and development
2. Shows characteristics of good oral health
3. Shows basic physical needs are met

## 3-Year-Olds

### A. Gross Motor Development

1. Show characteristics of appropriate health and development
2. Demonstrates increasing control of large muscles
3. Demonstrates increasing coordination of large muscles

## 3-Year-Olds (continued)

### B. Fine Motor Development

1. Demonstrates increasing control of small muscles
2. Shows improving eye-hand coordination
3. Uses various drawing and art tools with developing coordination

### C. Self-Help

1. Actively participates in self-care
2. Actively takes part in basic health and safety routines

### D. Health

1. Exhibits auditory abilities to support healthy growth and development
2. Shows characteristics of good oral health
3. Shows physical needs are met

## 4-Year-Olds

For Four-Year-Old Standards related to physical development see the “Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011), <http://www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/feldsfyo.pdf>,” which is incorporated by reference into rule 6A-1.099823, F.A.C., and which is hereby incorporated by reference into this rule and which may be obtained from Florida’s Office of Early Learning at the following address: 250 Marriott Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, (866) 357-3239, TTY/Florida Relay 711, and at the Internet website: <http://www.floridaearlylearning>.

# APPROACHES TO LEARNING



## Guiding Principles

As young children gain knowledge and skills across the domains of Cognition and General Knowledge; Language, Communication and Early Reading and Writing; Physical Development; and Social and Emotional Development, they also develop specific strategies that help direct that learning. The Approaches to Learning domain includes three strategies that are shared by both infants and young toddlers to support development, and a fourth strategy that supports toddler development. Careful planning and arrangement of children's environments and interactions provide opportunities for young children to use all four strategies.

The first strategy that children use to approach learning situations is ***eagerness and curiosity***. This strategy is reflected in the desire of infants and toddlers to engage with objects and people in their immediate environments. As development proceeds, those interactions expand to include interest in the challenges of a larger and more novel world.

Encountering setbacks and obstacles is a normal part of children's development. ***Persistence***, or the capacity to continue working on tasks that appear difficult or unsolvable, is necessary for a full exploration of the world. A young child's first approach in a new learning situation may not result in success, and other strategies may be necessary.

***Creativity and inventiveness*** is a strategy that requires flexibility and imagination. Using familiar materials in new ways is an example of this strategy. Systematically trying out old solutions to solve new problems, followed by experimenting with new solutions, is another example.

Parents, caregivers, and teachers need to be aware of these three learning strategies as they facilitate the development of young children. As with all domains, children will demonstrate individual differences in the rates by which each strategy emerges and develops. The degree to which children successfully employ these strategies is dependent on the quality and quantity of interactions with supportive adults who encourage expansion of previously successful strategies and support use of new strategies.

# APPROACHES TO LEARNING



## Standards

### Birth to 8 Months

#### A. Eagerness and Curiosity

1. Shows awareness of and interest in the environment

#### B. Persistence

1. Attends to sights, sounds and people for brief and increasing periods of time and tries to produce interesting and pleasurable outcomes

#### C. Creativity and Inventiveness

1. Notices and shows interest and excitement with familiar objects, people, and events

### 8 Months to 18 Months

#### A. Eagerness and Curiosity

1. Shows eagerness and curiosity as a learner

#### B. Persistence

1. Pays attention briefly and persists in repetitive tasks

#### C. Creativity and Inventiveness

1. Approaches and explores new experiences in familiar settings

## 18 to 24 Months

### A. Eagerness and Curiosity

1. Shows eagerness and curiosity as a learner

### B. Persistence

1. Pays attention for longer periods of time and persists at preferred activities

### C. Creativity and Inventiveness

1. Explores the various new properties and uses for familiar objects and experiences

## 2-Year-Olds

### A. Eagerness and Curiosity

1. Shows eagerness and curiosity as a learner

### B. Persistence

1. Spends more time engaging in child-initiated activities and seeks or accepts help when encountering a problem

### C. Creativity and Inventiveness

1. Explores the environment with purpose and flexibility

## 3-Year-Olds

### A. Eagerness and Curiosity

1. Shows curiosity and is eager to learn new things and have new experiences

### B. Persistence

1. Sustains attention for brief periods and finds help when needed

### C. Creativity and Inventiveness

1. Approaches daily activities with creativity and inventiveness

### D. Planning and Reflection

1. Shows initial signs of planning and learning from their experiences



## 4-Year-Olds

For Four-Year-Old Standards related to approaches to learning see the “Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011), <http://www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/feldsfyo.pdf>,” which is incorporated by reference into rule 6A-1.099823, F.A.C., and which is hereby incorporated by reference into this rule and which may be obtained from Florida’s Office of Early Learning at the following address: 250 Marriott Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, (866) 357-3239, TTY/Florida Relay 711, and at the Internet website: <http://www.floridaearlylearning>.

# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## Guiding Principles

Humans are social, interacting with others on many levels throughout their lives. Young children’s early relationships with parents and other caregivers become the framework for their future social and emotional development. Moreover, children construct knowledge about the world through their social exchanges, signifying the importance of social and emotional development to all other areas of development. For these reasons, early attachments are extremely important to children’s overall health, development, and learning.

Infants and toddlers have developmental capacities that support their social interactions. Their relationships are influenced by their temperaments and by the cultural context in which these interactions occur. Cultural groups may have differing expectations for children’s rate of development, and caregivers and teachers must be aware of and sensitive to these differences when working with families. For example, different cultural groups have different standards for how emotions are expressed and managed, making the task of emotional regulation particularly challenging for infants and toddlers who must manage expectations and responses between different cultural environments.

Young infants are very dependent on their parents, caregivers, and teachers to meet their physiological and emotional needs. When care is sensitive and responsive, infants learn that their world is safe and that they can trust others to meet their needs.

Nonresponsive and insensitive care creates a sense that people and the environment are not consistent or trustworthy. Without this basic trust, infants and toddlers find it hard to take risks or to develop a positive sense of self. With sensitive caregiving, infants can move into toddlerhood ready to use their increasing motor, language, and cognitive skills with confidence.

Toddlers acquire strategies for adapting their emotions within a variety of settings and with a limited number of people. Because they still have limited verbal skills, toddlers often express their feelings through actions. Emotions, from laughter to angry outbursts, can help toddlers develop new understandings about others' feelings and motives. Their successful emotional development is linked to their relationships with parents, caregivers, and teachers and the adults' knowledge and capacity to respond to toddlers' individual and temperamental differences.

As children grow, their ability to establish relationships with peers and with additional adults influences how they view themselves and the world. Positive and adaptive social behaviors result from interacting with others who have different characteristics and backgrounds. With the help of supportive adults, preschool children expand their capacities to recognize and express their own feelings, and to understand and respond to the emotions of others. For children with special needs, social and emotional development provides a foundation for programs in other areas of development. With nurturing and knowledgeable parents, caregivers, and teachers, tremendous strides are possible.

There are three primary components of social and emotional development in young children.

***Trust and emotional security*** includes how children feel about themselves as well as how safe they feel in their environments and relationships with others. The confidence a child develops through positive relationships with parents, caregivers, and teachers provides a foundation for the development of prosocial behaviors during the preschool years. For young children, there should be a focus on those skills that enable them to engage positively with others, develop better understandings of themselves and others, and express and interpret emotions.

***Self-regulation*** is the second component and involves the ability to manage ones' own needs and emotions. Over time, young children move from reliance on others to

competence. They accomplish tasks that include everything from learning and adjusting to the day-night rhythm of their family, to signaling their needs to responsive adults, to managing powerful emotions. These growing abilities to regulate behaviors are strongly influenced by culture, by children's relationships with others, and by the growing maturity and integration of several areas of the brain.

The third component of social and emotional development is ***self-concept***. From warm and responsive reciprocal relationships, young children develop a sense of themselves as increasingly competent and confident. With support from their parents, caregivers, and teachers and safe and challenging environments, the perceptions of young children about their competencies become more accurate and satisfying.

# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## Standards

### Birth to 8 Months

#### A. Trust and Emotional Security

1. Experiences and develops secure relationships
2. Responds to the environment

#### B. Self Regulation

1. Develops early emotional regulation
2. Develops early behavioral regulation
3. Develops early social problem-solving

#### C. Self-Concept

1. Forms and maintains mutual relationships with others
2. Becomes aware of oneself as a unique individual while still connected to others
3. Demonstrates emerging sense of competence and confidence in growing abilities

### 8 to 18 Months

#### A. Trust and Emotional Security

1. Experiences and develops secure relationships
2. Responds to the environment

## 8 to 18 Months (continued)

### **B. Self-Regulation**

1. Demonstrates developing emotional regulation
2. Demonstrates developing behavior regulation
3. Demonstrates developing social problem-solving

### **C. Self –Concept**

1. Forms and maintains mutual relationships with others
2. Becomes aware of oneself as a unique individual while still connected to others
3. Demonstrates increasing sense of competence and confidence in growing abilities

## 18 to 24 Months

### **A. Trust and Emotional Security**

1. Forms and maintains secure relationships with others
2. Responds to the environment

### **B. Self-Regulation**

1. Demonstrates increasing emotional regulation
2. Demonstrates increasing behavior regulation
3. Demonstrates increasing social problem-solving

### **C. Self-Concept**

1. Forms and maintains mutual relationships with others
2. Becomes aware of self as a unique individual while still connected to others
3. Demonstrates increasing sense of competence in growing abilities.

## 2-Year-Olds

### **A. Trust and Emotional Security**

1. Forms and maintains secure relationships with others
2. Responds to the environment

## 2-Year-Olds (continued)

### B. Self-Regulation

1. Demonstrates increasing emotional regulation
2. Demonstrates increasing behavior regulation
3. Demonstrates increasing social problem-solving

### C. Self-Concept

1. Forms and maintains mutual relationships with others
2. Becomes aware of oneself as a unique individual while still connected to others
3. Demonstrates increasing sense of competence and confidence in growing abilities

## 3-Year-Olds

### A. Pro-social Behaviors

1. Develops positive relationships and interacts comfortably with familiar adults
2. Interacts with and develops positive relationships with peers
3. Joins in group activities and experiences within early learning environments
4. Shows care and concern for others

### B. Self Regulation

1. Follows simple rules and routines with support
2. Begins to use materials with increasing care and safety
3. Adapts to transitions with support
4. Shows developing ability to solve social problems with support from familiar adults

### C. Self-Concept

1. Shows growing confidence in their abilities
2. Begins to independently initiate and direct some experiences

## 4-Year-Olds

For Four-Year-Old Standards related to social and emotional development see the “Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011), <http://www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/feldsfyo.pdf>,” which is incorporated by reference into rule 6A-1.099823, F.A.C., and which is hereby incorporated by reference into this rule and which may be obtained from Florida’s Office of Early Learning at the following address: 250 Marriott Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, (866) 357-3239, TTY/Florida Relay 711, and at the Internet website: <http://www.floridaearlylearning>.



# LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION



## Guiding Principles

Language, communication, and early reading and writing are critical to children’s ability to learn, work, and play with others. Communication through oral language and the written word are essential in daily living. Adaptive languages or strategies are especially important for individuals who have no or limited verbal or literacy skills (due to developmental, mental, or physical status). The development of language is a complex process that enables children to actively communicate their questions, desires, and understanding of the world around them. Children’s communication then allows adults to plan and respond to children’s needs and inquiries. Language and communication skills impact all other areas of development and are essential for the development of cognition, logic, and reasoning skills. Good communication skills help children negotiate relationships and get their needs met. Supportive adults and a print-rich environment are important to children’s success in developing early reading and writing skills.

Infants are born “wired” for developing language. They come into the world able to recognize human speech and different sounds. Young infants use their own sounds, facial expressions, and body movements to communicate their feelings and needs. They gaze intently at the faces of their parents, caregivers, and teachers and quickly learn to direct the adult’s attention to particular objects by “pointing” with their eyes. The developing communication skills of young infants are reinforced when adults respond positively to their smiles, frowns, and coos. Older infants become better at

expressing themselves through gestures, babbling, and their first words. They enjoy having books read to them and listening to stories and songs.

Young toddlers expand their vocabulary with new words at a very rapid pace. Their larger vocabulary allows them to begin stringing words together into two-word sentences. They understand that pictures can represent real objects and delight in acting out familiar routines and using pictures to represent ideas in their play. The marks and scribbles that toddlers make when coloring or painting (with their fingers or tools) become purposeful and are the precursor to developing early writing skills. Three- or four-word sentences are typical for older toddlers, as are an appreciation for books and a preference for familiar books (or books on familiar topics).

Preschool children begin to use language in multiple ways. They use language to communicate their needs, to interact with others, and to describe their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Over the course of only a few years, children gain an understanding of the meaning and structure of words, the There are four components of language development in young children. **Listening and understanding** refers to receptive language. When parents, caregivers, and teachers talk to children, the hearing, social, emotional, and language centers of the brain are all stimulated. As young children are exposed to rich vocabularies, they develop an understanding of commonly used words and are able to react in ways that demonstrate their understanding. **Communicating and speaking** refers to expressive language, which is what is said or expressed to others. Spoken or sign language has several elements to it, including the production of sounds or signs, rules of the language, and the social aspects of speech.

**Early reading** is a complex task of recognizing and understanding the meaning of a set of language symbols that describe people, objects, feelings, events, relationships, and ideas. The foundation for reading is built during the early years, beginning with hearing and speaking the language of the home. **Early writing** is the ability to express ideas and meaning through the use of symbols to represent language. Writing includes both the physical and cognitive elements of language and communication.

Language and the power to communicate develop through interactions. This development is motivated by the desires of young children to communicate their individual needs and is enhanced by the amount and richness of the language experiences provided to them. Parents, caregivers, and teachers are powerful

contributors to the developing language and communication skills of young children. They encourage language and literacy by talking with children, by reading to them, by responding to their language, and by expressing joy in their emerging abilities.

For children who are learning English as a second language, development and maintenance of the vocabulary and language conventions of their primary language increases the likelihood that they will become readers and writers of English. Children learning multiple languages from birth appear to develop each language in a similar fashion to children reared with only one language. Developing a solid foundation in multiple languages requires a partnership among parents, caregivers, and teachers to ensure that a rich, multilingual environment is consistently available. Partnerships among parents, caregivers, and teachers are also particularly important for children with disabilities. It is very important to have knowledge, skills, and a plan to help children with special needs develop language and communication skills. Communication strategies for these children may include swallows, eye movements, head nods, communication boards, sounds, or other gestures. It is imperative that children of all abilities are exposed to language-rich environments.

# LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION



## Standards

### Birth to 8 Months

#### A. Listening and Understanding

1. Responds to frequently heard sounds and words.

#### B. Communication and Speaking

1. Uses a variety of sounds and movements to communicate.

#### C. Early Reading

1. Shows enjoyment of the sounds and rhythms of language.

#### D. Early Writing

1. Develops eye-hand coordination and more intentional hand control
2. Watches activities of others and imitates sounds, facial expressions, and actions

### 8 to 18 Months

#### A. Listening and Understanding

1. Shows increased understanding of gestures and words

#### B. Communicating and Speaking

1. Uses consistent sounds, gestures, and some words to communicate

## 8 to 18 Months (continued)

### C. Early Reading

1. Builds and uses vocabulary with language, pictures, and books

### D. Early Writing

1. Uses tools to make scribbles
2. Repeats actions that symbolize ideas

## 18 to 24 Months

### A. Listening and Understanding

1. Gains meaning through listening

### B. Communicating and Speaking

1. Uses a larger number of words and uses words together
2. Attends to and tries to take part in conversations

### C. Early Reading

1. Learns that pictures represent real objects, events, and ideas (stories)
2. Shows motivation to read

### D. Early Writing

1. Makes purposeful marks on paper
2. Uses beginning representation through play that imitates familiar routines

## 2-Year-Olds

### A. Listening and Understanding

1. Gains meaning through listening

### B. Communicating and Speaking

1. Speaks clearly and is understood by most listeners
2. Participates in conversations

## 2-Year-Olds (continued)

### C. Early Reading

1. Shows growing interest in print and books
2. Shows motivation to read

### D. Early Writing

1. Uses scribbles, marks and drawings to convey messages
2. Uses more complicated imitative play as symbolic thought processes and mental concepts or pictures are developed

## 3-Year-Olds

### A. Listening and Understanding

1. Listens to and understands spoken language
2. Shows understanding by following simple directions

### B. Communicating and Speaking

1. Shows improving expressive communication skills
2. Shows increased vocabulary and uses language for many purposes

### C. Early Reading

1. Shows an appreciation and enjoyment of reading
2. Demonstrates beginning phonological awareness
3. Shows awareness of letters and symbols
4. Demonstrates comprehension and responds to stories

### D. Early Writing

1. Begins to use writing, pictures and play to express ideas
2. Shows beginning writing skills by making letter-like shapes and scribbles to write

## 4-Year-Olds

For Four-Year-Old Standards related to language, communication, and emergent literacy see the “Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011), <http://www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/feldsfyo.pdf>,” which is incorporated by reference into rule 6A-1.099823, F.A.C., and which is hereby incorporated by reference into this rule and which may be obtained from Florida’s Office of Early Learning at the following address: 250 Marriott Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, (866) 357-3239, TTY/Florida Relay 711, and at the Internet website: <http://www.floridaearlylearning>.

# COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE



## Guiding Principles

Cognitive Development refers to the skills and strategies that children use to explore and learn about their worlds and to solve challenges and problems. General Knowledge is the collection of information that children gain through interaction with adults, other children, and materials. Children’s surroundings and interactions with others play an important role in this domain’s development. In safe and supporting environments, children can carry through with their natural desire to act on the world around them.

During the first three years of life, children demonstrate rapid growth in cognition and general knowledge. The link between nurturing early experiences and cognitive development has been supported by recent brain development research. Scientists have helped parents, caregivers, and teachers understand that safe, healthy, and supportive prenatal and infant/toddler environments are critical for optimal development.

The cognitive development of infants and toddlers has three components. **Exploration and discovery** are ways that young children learn about their worlds by first using their senses and reflexes. The initial spontaneous responses of infants become more purposeful as they gain mobility. The expanding physical and motor capacities of toddlers enable them to engage in ever-widening explorations which can promote new brain connections.



**Concept and memory** involve learning the relationships between objects and experiences. Young infants understand and respond primarily to people and objects in their immediate environment. Older infants have more specific memories which facilitate their ability to label objects and people, and to relate them to new experiences. Understanding concepts like color and size help toddlers approach new situations. As infants and toddlers seek out strategies for meeting their immediate needs, **problem-solving and creative expression** emerge. Toddlers are able to identify challenges and obstacles in their environments; consider steps for responding based on previous experience; test out those steps; and consider new steps when the first attempts are not successful.

# COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE



## Standards

### Birth to 8 Months

#### A. Exploration and Discovery

1. Responds in simple ways to people and objects
2. Establishes primary relationships
3. Begins to actively seek out responses

#### B. Concept Development and Memory

1. Responds in simple ways to people and objects
2. Establishes primary relationships
3. Begins to make things happen

#### C. Problem-Solving and Creative Expression

1. Responds in simple ways to people and objects
2. Establishes primary relationships
3. Begins to make things happen

## 8 to 18 Months

### A. Exploration and Discovery

1. Responds in varied ways to people and objects
2. Establishes more complex relationships
3. Initiates more events

### B. Concept Development & Memory

1. Responds in varied ways to people and objects
2. Establishes more complex relationships
3. Initiates more events

### C. Problem-Solving and Creative Expression

1. Responds in varied ways to people and objects
2. Establishes more complex relationships
3. Initiates more events

## 18 to 24 Months

### A. Exploration and Discovery

1. Shows more complex responses to people and objects
2. Expands relationships
3. Initiates more complex interactions

### B. Concept Development and Memory

1. Shows more complex responses to people and objects
2. Expands relationships
3. Initiates more complex interactions

### C. Problem-Solving and Creative Expression

1. Shows more complex responses to people and objects
2. Expands relationships
3. Initiates more complex interactions

## 2 year-olds

### A. Exploration and Discovery

1. Demonstrates varying responses to people and objects
2. Engages in multiple productive relationships
3. Initiates rich and varied events

### B. Concept Development and Memory

1. Demonstrates varying responses to people and objects
2. Engages in multiple productive relationships
3. Initiates rich and varied events

### C. Problem-Solving and Creative Expression

1. Demonstrates discriminating responses to people and things
2. Engages in multiple productive relationships
3. Initiates rich and varied events

## 3-Year-Olds

### A. Mathematical Thinking

1. Demonstrates interest in mathematical problem solving
2. Sorts objects into groups by one characteristic
3. Shows knowledge of numbers and counting
4. Recognizes some geometric shapes
5. Shows beginning understanding of spatial relationships and position words
6. Demonstrates beginning ability to compare and contrast
7. Engages in activities that explore measurement

### B. Scientific Thinking

1. Uses senses to collect information through observation and exploration
2. Begins to use simple tools for observing and investigation
3. Begins to compare objects

## 3-Year-Olds (continued)

### C. Social Studies

1. Begins to recognize and appreciate similarities and differences in people
2. Begins to understand family characteristics, roles and functions
3. Shows awareness of some social roles and jobs that people do
4. Demonstrates awareness of group rules
5. Demonstrates awareness of the environment around them

### D. The Arts

1. Uses many different creative art materials to express and explore
2. Engages in musical experiences
3. Engages in creative movement and dramatic play
4. Shows understanding and appreciation of artistic creations or events

## 4-Year-Olds

For Four-Year-Old Standards related to cognitive development and general knowledge see the “Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011), <http://www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/feldsfyo.pdf>,” which is incorporated by reference into rule 6A-1.099823, F.A.C., and which is hereby incorporated by reference into this rule and which may be obtained from Florida’s Office of Early Learning at the following address: 250 Marriott Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399, (866) 357-3239, TTY/Florida Relay 711, and at the Internet website: <http://www.floridaearlylearning>.