

## Developmental Milestones & Widely Held Expectations at 2-3 Years

(Taken from the Quebec Minister of the Family Educational Program for CPE's, as well as

Child Development: A Primer by Ingrid Crowther & NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice)

*Note: Experts say every child develops differently. These Developmental Milestones are designed to give a general idea of how a child of this age may develop.*

### Affective Dimension

- Building secure relationships with educators
- Making and expressing choices, plans and decisions with respect to favorite toys/activities
- Integration/learning the routines

### Physical and Motor Dimension:

#### A) Fine Motor Development (small muscles of thumb & fingers)

- **Manipulation**—increased dexterity moving away from using palmer (in the fist) grasp to pincer (thumb & finger) or tripod grasp (thumb & 2 fingers); holds things in one hand while drinking from cup, etc; easily fits pegs into pegboard; laces a cord shoelace through holes in a lacing toy or places beads on a wire; peels off stickers; takes items apart and fits them together (Duplo blocks , trains, etc); experiments with children's scissors
- **Artwork**—produces wider variety of scribbles, with lines and smaller controlled marks; generally still uses whole arm rather than moving wrist.

#### B) Gross Motor Development (movement of large muscles of arms & legs)

- **Balancing**—stands on one foot for few moments before losing balance; falls less frequently when walking or running; squats with balance for long periods of time; walks on balance beam for a few steps
- **Walking/Running**—has a more upright posture; navigates smoothly around obstacles
- **Climbing**—climbs onto chairs or platforms then turns around to sit; towards end of period can coordinate simultaneous arm & leg movements and may alternate feet when climbing up or down stairs, ladders, etc. (one foot each step)
- **Jumping**—jumps down from short heights; achieves higher on-the-spot jumps
- **Ball skills**—throws ball underhand; catches ball with two arms outstretched more often; kicks ball while running and continues to chase & kick it

#### C) Development of sensory perception from the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch & taste), as well as the development of a healthy lifestyle

- Seems to hear and see well; willing to participate in sensory experiences such as water-play, shaving cream, finger-painting; willing to try new foods
- Washes hands with soap & water; enjoys being active and has age appropriate strength, balance, coordination and stamina; learning to cough/sneeze into upper arm and request or use tissues rather than sleeve/hand to wipe nose; eats a balanced diet

### Cognitive Dimension (thinking skills):

- A) **Attention**—increased attention span for areas of interest; may return to an activity over several days
- B) **Memory**—remembers words/people/events as demonstrated by rapid vocabulary growth and the naming of familiar adults, peers and objects; repeats sequences of familiar routines
- C) **Symbolic Function**—pretend play is dominated by the type of objects provided (eg: dishes lead to pretend eating, toy animals lead to animal role playing); uses one object to represent another if similar in shape (eg: stick for sword)
- D) **The Ability to Categorize & Conceptualize**—sorts like objects into categories (eg: all cars in one group and all animals in another); starts to sort into more finite categories (all dogs in one group and all cows in another)
- E) **Reasoning :**
  - **Cause & Effect**—has greater knowledge of cause & effect (eg: that a toy must be wound up to operate, squeezing a toy will make a noise, etc)
  - **Problem Solving**—solves simple problems (eg: how to get down from a climber or how to find a toy that is out of sight); enjoys age-appropriate puzzles, matching games, etc.
- F) **Awakening to Mathematics and Science**—curious and enjoys exploring the world; develops simple concepts of time (eg: school days/weekend, day/night, before/after); grasps simple space concepts (eg: inside/outside, up/down, near/far); size concepts of small/medium/big; identifies quantities generally (eg: lots, more); points to/matches/names some colors and shapes; rote counts to 5 or 10 + (but may miss or insert incorrect numbers)

### Communication & Language Dimension:

- A) **Pre-linguistic Language**-- understands frequently used words & simple phrases with increasing comprehension as exposed to the daily routines, and through songs, books, and play activities.
- B) **Oral Language:**
  - **Language Usage**—uses language not just noises to get attention; uses three or more words together, asks many questions (eg: ‘Why?’ ‘What’s that?’); uses plurals (eg: dolls, cats) but generalizes grammatical rules to create words (mices, foots); starts to talk about events that have occurred in the past; may stammer
  - **Vocabulary Size**—average number of words at 2 yrs is 311; 2 ½ is 574; 3 ranges 2,000- 4,000
- C) **Awakening to Reading & Writing**—names pictures in books; looks at books; asks/enjoys to have book read out loud; interested in alphabet as it relates to their name; may start to use writing-like scribbles & letter-like forms
- D) **Second (or 3<sup>rd</sup>) Language Development to Foster English/French Bilingualism**
  - **Receptive Language (Phase 1)**-- develops an ear for the sounds common to the language; begins to understand frequently used words & phrases; gradually moves towards more comprehension as the child accumulates many hours of exposure in the course of the daily routines, and through songs, books, and engaging play activities.
  - **Expressive Language (Phase 2)**—the ability to speak a new language comes much more slowly, at first by simple repetition of common words & phrases; mixing of languages is typical as children search for the right word and substitute the word they know; As concentration, memory,

confidence and desire to communicate increases—which varies by individual-- the ability to express an ever increasing amount in the target language results in eventual fluency.

- **Reading & Written Language (Phase 3)**—begins in earnest only around age 7, however, the foundation for later school learning is laid down at the preschool age by learning the letters of the alphabet in both languages through use of the ABC song, various alphabet books, discussion of letters that start names, and a print rich environment.

#### Self-Expression/Creativity Dimension:

- **Water, Sand & Playdough**—explores & experiments with the sensation of the material; enjoys filling and dumping activities; flattens and cuts playdough with cookie cutters, or may start to roll into shapes such as snakes & balls
- **Music & Movement**—enjoys listening to music, moves rhythmically, and imitates others' movements to music; starts to sing simple songs; uses rhythm instruments to “play along” to music or a song; uses different body parts to mark a simple beat (eg: clapping, stamping, jumping)
- **Art**—enjoys experimenting with different art mediums (markers, paint, glue, etc.)
- **Blocks/Construction toys**—builds in rows & towers; may make enclosures
- **Dramatic Play**—available objects dictate the type of dramatic play that occurs (eg: using construction vehicles in the sand may lead to digging, road making or driving activities)

#### Social/Emotional Development

- **Self Confidence/Self-Esteem**— develops as children explore, follow their interests, and are supplied with age appropriate challenges which they are able to master
- **Pride in Accomplishments**—shows pride in accomplishments
- **Making of Choices**—easily distracted but towards the end of the period shows increased ability to focus & sustain interest in self chosen activities & materials; enjoys age-appropriate group games/activities led by educator
- **Autonomy & Self-Help Skills**—the ability to do things for themselves continue to expand & become refined so that by the end of the period is able to do the following with verbal prompts & minimal assistance: wash own hands; use the toilet; independently dress/undress (needing help with starting zippers, doing buttons or tying shoes); eat with a spoon & drink with a cup; help to clean up toys, snack/lunch items
- **Self-Regulation/Coping Skills**—increasingly able, with advanced warning, to change activities or deal with changes in the regular routine with little fuss; able to lie quietly on his/her bed
- **Identity**-- progressively sees themselves as separate from parents/caregivers with own unique individuality (a sign of growth & maturation), which leads to testing of rules & limits
- **Emotional Control**—uses hugs & kisses to comfort others; egocentric and finds it difficult to wait for something or to take turns; grabbing, biting & hitting decrease as verbal competence increases; may show increased fearfulness (dark & monsters)
- **Peer Interaction**—continues to be possessive of toys & finds it hard to share; observes other children play and may imitate that play; begins to see the benefits of peer relationships