

What Children Need to Know

A Practical Guide to the Social, Emotional, Moral, and Attachment Development of Infants and Young Children



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How to Use This Guide

Children do not come with instructions, leaving parents and teachers without clear indicators about best childrearing practices. Developmental assessment instruments (tests and questionnaires) provide useful clues about tasks that children must master. Often, however, the developmental frameworks fail to translate into practical and actionable instruction and intervention for the home and classroom.

This guide focuses on practical and common sense knowledge, capacities, and abilities of young children that can be easily translated into instructional and intervention plans. Parents can review the list of “**Things Parents Want Children to Do at Home**” while teachers can review the list of “**Things Teachers Want Children to Do in Class.**” Check the developmental tasks or capacities that the child already demonstrates.

Review the unchecked developmental tasks (those the child has not yet demonstrated) and identify the top 5 items that are a priority. For example, children who lack social skills may benefit from a first course of intervention to address such social skills as communication and playing with others. Identify the top 5 target developmental capacities for that child. Refer to the schedule of “**Practical Things That Children Need to Learn to Do**” and construct corresponding intervention strategies.

Transfer the data to the “**Developmental Worksheet**” to track the child’s response to the intervention. Make adjustments to the intervention plan to ensure ongoing progress. Once reasonable gains have been made in any area(s) of development, move on to address the next developmental capacity in order of descending importance to overall success of the child. Continue until the child has developed a full spectrum of capacities.

Contents

Things Parents Want Children to Do at Home	4
Things Teachers Want Children to Do in Class	5
Practical Things That Children Need to Learn to Do	6
List Interventions and Correlating Capacities	9
Developmental Worksheet	10

Things Parents Want Children to Do at Home

- Be a Friend / Have Friends
- Be Kind / Caring to Others (Have Compassion / Empathy)
- Be Loving to Others (Connect with Others; Eye Gaze; Accept Touch)
- Clean Self and Possessions
- Communicate (Verbal, Tone, Gestures, Expressions)
- Contribute to Family, Groups, and/or Community
- Follow Instructions
- Identify Emotions of Self and Others
- Impulse Control
- Know Right from Wrong (At Developmentally Appropriate Level)
- Learn
- Listen
- Obey Rules and Boundaries
- Play with Others
- Seek Adult's Attention to Handle Upsetting Feelings and Situations
- Accept Comfort from Other(s)
- Self-Calm and Self-Soothe
- Share & Take Turns
- Touch Others with Love and Respect

Things Teachers Want Children to Do in Class

- Be a Friend / Have Friends
- Be Kind / Caring to Others (Have Compassion / Empathy)
- Be Loving to Others (Connect with Others; Eye Gaze; Accept Touch)
- Clean Self and Possessions
- Communicate (Verbal, Tone, Gestures, Expressions)
- Contribute to Class and/or Community
- Follow Instructions
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Practical Things That Children Need to Learn to Do

A. Be a Friend / Have Friends

1. Ask “Do you want to be my friend?” or “Can I be your friend?”
2. Ask “Will you play with me?” or “Can I play with you?”
3. Say “Please stop _____; please be gentle with me.”
4. Ask “Can I have a turn?” or “Can I have it next?”
5. Say “Let’s take turns.”
6. Say “You can have it when I’m done.”
7. Say “Would you like one/some?” or “May I have one/some?”
8. Say “Let’s do it together.” or “How about we do it as a team?”
9. Ask “Can I help?” or say “I can help!”

B. Be Kind / Caring to Others (Have Compassion / Empathy)

1. Recognize when hurting/harming others.
2. Ask “Are you okay?” or “Can I help?” or say “I can help!”
3. Say “I’m sorry.” or “I apologize.”
4. Recognize that others have sad/bad feelings when they are hurt.
5. Recognize when others are sad/mad/hurt/upset.
6. Comfort others; say “I hope you feel better.”

C. Be Loving and Connect with Other(s)

1. Engage in meaningful eye contact.
2. Allow/Enjoy contact with others (cuddle, hug, pat on head/shoulder, high five)
3. Say “I like/love you.” or ask “Do you like/love me?”
4. Share with others.
5. Do kind/caring things for others.

D. Clean Self and Possessions

1. Wash hands/face; brush teeth/hair.
2. Use bathroom, use toilet tissue, flush, wash hands.
3. Use apron or art smock.
4. Clean and organize toys, school/art supplies.
5. Throw away trash; put away clothes; clear table after meal.

E. Communicate (Verbal, Tone, Gestures, Expressions)

1. Say “I’m mad/sad/scared/upset.”
2. Say “I feel (emotion).” or “I feel (body sensation from emotion).”
3. Show feelings by facial expression, words, tone of voice, gestures.
4. Ask “Can you help me with my bad/sad/upsetting feelings?”
5. State “I need help with my feelings.”

F. Contribute to Family, Groups, and/or Community

1. Ask “Can I help?” or “What can I do?”
2. Do chores independently or with others.
3. Engage in group activity (singing, playing, watching video, reading book).
4. Feel/Discuss pride about contributing and belonging.

G. Follow Instructions

1. Listen when given directions.
2. Pay attention when others provide instructions (tasks, games, academics).
3. Acknowledge and repeat instructions.
4. Recognize when instructions have been followed and completed.

H. Identify Emotions of Self and Others

1. Recognize when experiencing emotions or related body sensations.
2. Distinguish between good/pleasant and bad/unpleasant feelings.
3. Identify feeling/emotion by name.
4. Notice feeling/emotion of others by clues (expression, tone, posture, words).

I. Impulse Control

1. Control the impulse to break a rule, harm a person/animal, disrupt order.
2. Stop/Avoid the urge to do something not socially appropriate or disrespectful.

J. Know Right from Wrong (At Developmentally Appropriate Level)

1. Recognize things that are morally right or wrong.
2. Consider moral/ethical issues (like “It’s not nice to steal”).
3. Decide to do the morally right/correct thing.

K. Learn

1. Pay attention to new things and information.
2. Hold focus to allow learning to take place.
3. Handle feelings of frustration or confusion while learning new things.

L. Listen

1. Remain quiet while being spoken to.
2. Think about what is being said/asked.
3. Adjust behavior/attitude/thought in response to what was said.

M. Obey Rules and Boundaries

1. Recognize and acknowledge rules, boundaries, limits.
2. Modifies behavior to reflect compliance.
3. Identifies when others obey versus break rules, boundaries, limits.

N. Play with Others

1. Invite others to play; or ask permission to join play.
2. Take turns.
3. Share toys, supplies, materials, equipment.
4. Play in same space as others.
5. Engage in parallel play alongside others.
6. Play games or engage in playful activities with other(s).
7. Express feelings of happiness or fun when playing.

O. Seek Adult's Attention to Handle Upsetting Feelings and Situations

1. Seek comfort/support/attention of adult to handle bad/sad/angry feelings.
2. Request adult assistance with words, gesture, expression, action.
3. Allow adults to help with difficult situation or emotion.

P. Accept Comfort from Others; Self-Calm and Self-Soothe

1. Seek comfort from others or objects to self-regulate (self-calm or self-soothe).
2. Allow others to provide comfort (Allow/Enjoy being held, touched, caressed).
3. Walk away from a challenging situation/environment.
4. Use mental skill to self-regulate (i.e. focus on something else like happy things).
5. Engage in pleasurable activity (like singing, dancing, playing) to self-calm.

Q. Share & Take Turns

1. Be willing to share desirable objects, time, attention, food with others.
2. Be willing to accept less than everything/all of something desirable.
3. Problem-solve a lack of resources by dividing among multiple individuals.
4. Relinquish control of an activity or object, to allow others to take a turn.
5. Problem-solve a lack of resources by taking turns.

Developmental Worksheet

Primary Focus of Intervention: _____

List interventions in descending order of importance:

Example: N1 - Play with others. Ask "Will you play with me?" Current frequency zero (0) times per week; target frequency for behavior is five (5) times per week.

1. _____

Current versus target (desired) frequency/intensity/duration of behavior:

2. _____

Current versus target (desired) frequency/intensity/duration of behavior:

3. _____

Current versus target (desired) frequency/intensity/duration of behavior:

4. _____

Current versus target (desired) frequency/intensity/duration of behavior:

5. _____

Current versus target (desired) frequency/intensity/duration of behavior:
